

Johnson City Fire Department
Fire Prevention Division

Tent and Outdoor Assembly Events Requirements

Purpose

This guideline establishes minimum fire safety requirements for tents, membrane structures, and outdoor assembly events to protect life and property and ensure compliance with applicable fire codes.

Definitions

Membrane Structure: A structure constructed of flexible materials supported by air pressure, cables, or a frame. Not considered a tent.

Tent: A structure made of fabric or pliable material supported by poles or other means except air pressure. (**Includes Canopies** - Examples: Instant Shelter, Commercial, Straight-Leg, Slant-Leg Canopies; common sizes include 10'x10', 10'x15', 12'x12', etc.)

Umbrella Structure: A fabric structure supported by a central pole. Large or connected umbrellas are considered tents.

General Requirements (All Tents, Membrane & Umbrella Structures)

- Must meet NFPA 701, CSFM, or CPAI-84 standards.
- Certification tags must be affixed and available upon request.
- Must be anchored: (*Anchoring on asphalt/concrete or city owned green spaces with irrigation lines shall require anchoring with **no less than 40 pounds of weight per corner** as recommended by tent manufacturers.*)
- Must not block fire department access, hydrants, or Fire Department Connections (FDCs).
- Generators must be at least 20 feet away from any tent or structure.

Assembly Tents (400 sq. ft. or Larger)

- Require Fire Prevention approval.
- Must have a **5lb 2A/10BC** fire extinguisher.
- Open flames prohibited unless approved by the Fire Code Official.

Vendor Tents (*Small, Non-Cooking Tents*)

- No separation required if under 15,000 sq. ft. and no cooking.
- Open flame craft vendors must have a 5lb 2A/10BC extinguisher **and approval from the Fire Code Official.**
- Includes Canopies (*see definitions*)

Tents Associated with Cooking Operations

- Must be 10 feet from other structures and combustibles.
- No cooking under tents producing flames or grease vapors.
- **Class K** extinguisher required for cooking operations that produce grease laden vapors, and/or, solid fuel cooking (wood or charcoal).
- Generators require **3A:40BC** extinguisher.
- **LP-Gas tanks** used for cooking operations shall be secured in an approved manner to prevent heat exposure and tip over and shall be located outside of the tent/structure at least 10 feet away.

Outdoor Assembly Events

- All events require approval by the Fire Code Official.
- Must comply with IFC Section 3106.

Inspections and Contact

- Inspection requests must be submitted to fireinspectionrequest@johnsoncitytn.org
- Inspections must be completed **at least two weeks** prior to the event to ensure any deficiencies are corrected prior to the event.

Enforcement

Non-compliance may result in permit denial, event shutdown, or removal of structures.

Summary

- **All tents** must meet NFPA 701, CSFM, or CPAI-84
- Proper anchoring required
- Fire department access must be maintained at all times
- 20 ft separation for cooking setups
- Fire extinguishers where required
- Approval required for large tents (over 400 sq. ft.)

References

International Fire Code (IFC) 2018

- **3103.2** (Tents - area over 400ft²)
- **3103.8.2** (20' Separation- Tents Associated with Cooking)
- **3104** (NFPA 701, CSFM, CPAI-84)
- **3103.9** (Anchoring of Tents)
- **3106-3106.2.1** (General Requirements – Temporary Structures for outdoor assembly events, Approval by Fire Code Official)
- **3106.2.3-3106.2.3.1** (FD Access)
- **3106.4.4, 906** (Fire Extinguishers 2A/10BC)
- **3107.3** (No Smoking Signs)
- **3107.4** (Open Flame Inside Tents)
- **3107.12.3** (Cooking and heating equipment shall not be located within 10 feet of exits or combustible materials.)
- **3107.12.6** (Tent separation form Grease-Laden Vapors)
- **3107.13** (LP-Gas tanks for cooking operations)
- **3107.16** (Generators)

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Approved by: Steve Alexander, Fire Marshal