



Tents and Canopies

The following handout is a simplified version of Chapter 31 of the California Fire Code regarding tents, temporary membrane structures, and Canopies.

A **tent** is a temporary structure, enclosure, or shelter, constructed of fabric or pliable material supported by any manner except by the contents it protects.

A **canopy** is a temporary membrane structure, enclosure, or shelter constructed of fabric or pliable materials supported by any manner except by the contents it protects and is open without sidewall or drops on 75 percent or more of the perimeter.

An **awning** is a shelter supported entirely from the exterior wall of a building.

A **temporary membrane structure** is an air-inflated, air-supported, cable, or frame-covered structure as described in the Building Code and not otherwise defined as a tent, canopy, or awning.

Permits: Tents or temporary membrane structures in excess of **400 square feet** and canopies in excess of **700 square feet** shall be required to obtain a fire permit. (209-468-3380).

Use period: Tents, canopies, or temporary membrane structures shall be used for a period of not more than **180 days within a 12-month period on a single premise.**

- **Exception:** Tents, canopies, or membrane structures installed for more than 180 days shall comply with the California Building Code and be installed with a Building Permit.

Flame resistance: The sidewalls, tops, and drops of tents, canopies, and temporary membrane structures shall be composed of flame-resistant material or treated with a flame retardant in an approved manner by an approved application concern.

Portable Fire Extinguishers: A minimum of one 2A10BC portable fire extinguisher shall be provided in a tent, canopy, or temporary membrane structure and additional ones may be required as outlined in CFC 906

Smoking: Smoking shall not be permitted in tents, canopies or temporary membrane or in adjacent areas where combustible materials are stored. **"No Smoking" signs shall be conspicuously posted.**

Open or exposed flames: Shall not be permitted inside or located within 20 feet of the tent or membrane structures while open to the public unless approved by the Fire Code Official.

Fireworks: Shall not be used within 100 feet of tents or membrane structures.

Vegetation Removal: Combustible vegetation shall be removed from the area occupied by a tent, canopy, or temporary membrane structure and from areas within 30 feet of such structures.

Heating and Cooking: Heating and cooking equipment, tanks, piping, hoses, valves, tubing, and other related components shall be approved and in accordance with the Mechanical Code.

- a) Cooking and heating equipment shall not be located within 10 feet of exits or combustible materials.
- b) **Cooking tents** with sidewalls or drops where approved cooking is performed shall be separated from other tents or membrane structures by not less than 20 feet.
- c) Outdoor cooking that produces sparks or grease-laden vapors shall not be performed within 20 feet of temporary membrane structures, tents, and or canopies.
 - o **Exception:** Cooking and heating equipment, tanks, piping, hoses, valves, tubing, and other related components that are approved and are in accordance with the Mechanical Code.