

Guidelines for Tents

- All Tents or other membrane structures erected within the City of Springfield shall adhere to all provisions of Chapter 31 of the 2018 Edition of the International Fire Code as adopted by the city, including all related addenda. Additional provisions of Chapter 31 will be required as determined by the fire code official. The following is a summary of the requirements:
- All commercial tents with sidewalls (in excess of 400 sq. ft.) and without sidewalls (in excess of 700 sq. ft.) shall not be erected, operated, or maintained for any purpose without first obtaining a permit and approval from the Springfield Fire Department. All requests are subject to inspection, review, and approval by the local code enforcement official through the Fire Prevention Division of the Springfield Fire Department.
- All commercial tent installations must comply with the requirements set forth in the 2018 IFC amendments/addendums concerning vendor certification, master installer certification and proper staking/bracing/ballasting guidelines.
- All vendors installing commercial tents within the City must obtain a Tent Vendor license.
- A Certified Master Installer must be present on site during the erection of the tent(s).
- The following requirements and documentation must be met in order to obtain a permit:
 - A representative of the Tent Rental Company is required to obtain a tent permit on behalf of the individual(s) renting the tent(s);
 - The tent permit must be obtained no less than 5 business days prior to event date;
 - A site layout plan (the staging specifics), including fire apparatus access, seating capacity, exits, and means of egress.
 - Approved staking/ballasting plan on file with the fire department.
 - Permitted tents are required to have a tent flame resistance certificate. A copy of this certification is to be available on-site for review by the code enforcement official;
 - After hours/emergency contact information shall be provided by the vendor/installer;
 - If food is being prepared, the Springfield-Greene County Health Department will need to be contacted by the renter in order to obtain the appropriate guidelines and permits.
 - Location and type of cooking and/or heat producing equipment is to be indicated on the site layout plan.

Tent Erection & Set Up Considerations

- All internal combustion engines, including motor vehicles, must be kept a minimum of 20' from the tent (to include the stakes and rope/guy wire).
- Multiple tents must be staged at least 20 feet from one another, and at least 12 feet of unobstructed areas surrounding the tent must be maintained as a fire break. For the purposes of determining these distances, the supports, guy ropes and any weights, fasteners or anchors are considered part of the tent—exceptions:
 - If the aggregate quantity of 2 or more tents is less than 15,000 square feet, and neither tent is used for cooking, then this 20 foot rule does not apply (only as it relates to the distances between the membrane structures).
- Occupancy requirements:
 - Tents used for public events and assembly must be sized based upon the expected number of occupants (or, the occupancy must be limited to that allowed by the size of

the tent), with consideration given to “usable” floor space. Tent occupancies are determined as follows:

- Tents set up as a table and chair event (i.e. a sit down meal) require 15 square feet per person.
 - Tents set up as a chaired event only (i.e. a speaking arrangement) require 7 square feet per person.
 - Tents set up without seating, for standing room only, require 5 square feet per person.
 - Please take note that this guidance is based upon “usable floor space” which is that space open for patron use and not occupied by stage, serving lines or similar.
- Exit requirements:
 - Distribution- Required exits shall be spaced at approximate equal intervals around the perimeter of the tent. All point within the ten shall be within 100 feet of an exit. Exits per occupant level are required as follows:
 - 10-199—2 exits at 6’ each
 - 200-499—3 exits at 6’ each
 - 500-999—4 exits at 8’ each
 - 1000-1999—5 exits at 10’ each
 - Exit signs must be posted at each exit, and they must be either self-luminous, or capable of being illuminated by power (with other requirements). [*EXCEPTION*: Exit signs not required on tents open on all side].
 - Other issues:
 - At least one 2A-10BC dry chemical fire extinguishers should be staged at each tent event. An extinguisher must be within 75' of travel distance from any location in the tent. Additional fire extinguishers are required as the occupancy of the event increases, incrementally as follows—500 requires 4, 1000 requires 5, 1500 requires 6, etc. All fire extinguishers must be mounted in a manner to keep them stable, visible and readily useable. Finally, they should be staged near exits, just inside the tent, and/or near any food warming stations.

Tent Use Considerations

- Cooking and food warming issues:
 - Open/exposed flames for cooking or other purposes are not permitted in tents open to the public (the event crowd/assembly).
 - Food cooking operations using open/exposed flames (or that generate sparks or grease-laden vapors) must be staged at least 20 feet from tents used for assembly activities. If a tent is set up specifically for food cooking activities (i.e. a food cooking tent), this tent has to be staged at least 20 feet away, and may not be open to the public—exceptions:
 - A food cooking tent may be open to the public if it is open on all sides. If cooking activities are performed in a tent (not open on all sides), the public may access the cooking areas only if it is staged at a leading edge of the tent, such that the public may approach the cooking area without entering the tent itself.

- Food warming operations (using sterno or other warming devices) are permitted in public assembly tents, but they should be set up with at least a 10-foot clearance from any combustible materials (including tablecloth linens), and a 4A-20BC dry chemical fire extinguisher must be staged within 10 feet.
- Heating/Lighting issues:
 - The following are absolutely prohibited (within 20 feet) in tents open to the public:
 - Open flame or other devices emitting flame, fire or heat (with exception for the sterno style food warming devices);
 - Any flammable or combustible liquids, gas, charcoal or other cooking devices.

- Please note - tent permits are not valid until:

- ✓ The fully erected tent passes an onsite inspection. The vendor/installer is responsible for calling 864-1500 at least 48 hours in advance of the beginning of the event to schedule an inspection.
- ✓ The certificate of flame retardant rating for the tent is obtained and presented at the time of the onsite inspection.
- ✓ Tents must be adequately roped, braced, and anchored to withstand weather conditions at the time of the event. Calculations for the required tent ballasting / weight calculations must be provided prior to the tent inspection and available on site.
- ✓ A certified Master Installer must sign the assurance statement on the permit.
- ✓ This permit shall remain in effect from the issue to expiration date and shall be revoked if the Guidelines for Tents, Chapter 54 of the Springfield City Code, and the currently adopted International Fire Code, are not followed.
- ✓ The permit is good for one event only.
- ✓ Absolutely no refunds on permit.
- ✓ A copy of this permit must be kept onsite and presented during the inspection.

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