

Guideline: Use of Tents on University of Michigan Property

Issue: February 28, 2024

Revision:

Applies to: Any persons making a request to erect tents or membrane structures for temporary use on University of Michigan owned buildings on the Ann Arbor, Dearborn, and Flint campuses.

Summary

The International Fire Code defines a tent as a structure, enclosure, or shelter, with or without sidewalls or drops, constructed of fabric or pliable material supported by any manner except by air or the contents that it protects. Tents larger than 120 square feet and greater shall complete a fire safety review and inspection.

The following guidelines are established in order to accommodate requests for use of tents on University of Michigan property. The University of Michigan reserves the right to conduct subsequent inspections at any time.

Procedure

Any person(s) wishing to install a tent on University of Michigan property must follow the procedures as outlined below.

- Contact University of Michigan Facilities and Operations Special Events Office at 734-615- 9075 and/or fo-events@umich.edu at a minimum of two-weeks in advance of the proposed event date. A [Special Event Request Form](#) with a detailed site and floor diagram for review.
- Upon application, the applicant shall contact the University of Michigan EHS Fire Safety Office at EHS-FireSafety@umich.edu to be placed into contact with the assigned fire inspector.
- A detailed site and floor plan shall be submitted illustrating the following criteria:
 - Means of egress, seating capacity, seating arrangement, equipment setup, exit signs, and location of fire extinguishers.
 - Location, type, and size of generators, electrical, cooking, and heat producing equipment.
- EHS Fire Safety will review the site plan to ensure fire department accessibility and operations are not impeded. If deficiencies are identified within the site plan, EHS Fire Safety will contact the applicant.
- A 3-foot radius of clearance shall be maintained for fire hydrants and Fire Department Connections and shall not be hidden or covered.
- Tents shall not be located within 20 feet of lot lines, buildings, other tents, parked vehicles, or internal combustion engines. Supports and guidewires shall be considered as part of the tent.
- The University is a smoke free campus, applicants may be asked to post no smoking signs within the tent.
- EHS Fire Safety will require the placements of fire extinguishers within the tent(s), details regarding the placement location and how to obtain needed fire extinguishers will be provided at the time of the review.



- EHS Fire Safety will identify within the site review means of egress in accordance with table 3103.12.2 of the International Fire Code illustrated below.
 - Occupant Load 10-199
 - 2 exits, 72 inches wide
 - Occupant Load 200-499
 - 3 exits, 72 inches wide
 - Occupant Load 500-999
 - 4 exits, 96 inches wide
 - Occupant Load 1000-1999
 - 5 exits, 120 inches wide
 - Occupant Load 2000-2999
 - 6 exits, 120 inches wide
 - Occupant Load over 3000
 - 7 exits, 120 inches wide
- Exit signs to be internally or externally illuminated per NFPA 70 for tents occupied by 50 or more persons, or at the sole discretion of an EHS fire inspector.
- Emergency lighting may be required and identified within the site review.
- A manufacturer flame resistant tag must be attached to the tent membrane at time of inspection.
- Combustible materials and / or decorations (Hay, straw, wood shavings, etc.) shall not be located within or adjacent to any area of a tent.
- Open flames or other devices emitting flame or heat, or any flammable or combustible liquids, gas, charcoal, or other cooking devices are not permitted inside or located within 20 feet of the tent unless approved by an EHS fire inspector.
- If heating equipment within the tent is used, type and placement of the equipment must be identified on the site plan.
- Tent heaters shall be identified on the detailed site and floor diagrams with a minimum separation between the structure and the tent heater of not less than 10 feet. Heat shall be conducted through non-combustible duct work.
- Generators that are rated at 10K or above must have a Generator Inspection Request submitted by the applicant. This inspection request can be found within the Special Events Request process. An EHS electrical inspector will inspect generator operations for compliance according to NFPA 70.
- Power cords and cables must meet all requirements of the National Electrical Code and be protected from pedestrian traffic.
- A multi-purpose dry chemical fire extinguisher shall be posted within each generator's immediate operational area at all times the generator is in use.
- Generator(s) must be positioned no closer than 20 feet from any tent and isolated from contact with the public by fencing, enclosure or other approved means of UM EHS Fire Safety Services and do not obstruct egress from any building(s) or interfere with fire department access requirements.
- A responsible person for the generator(s) must be present during all fuel transfers to ensure no leaks or spills. Generators must be turned off while being fueled.