



# Standard Operating Procedures

Fire Prevention Services  
Office of Campus Safety

*The University of Texas at Austin*

304 E. 24<sup>th</sup> Street, SER Suite 202, Austin, TX 78713

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SCOPING & APPLICATION

**TEMPORARY TENTS/CANOPIES  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN**

## PURPOSE

The intent of this Standard Operating Procedure is to provide minimum requirements required to erect tents and/or canopies at The University of Texas at Austin.

## SCOPE

All temporary tents and canopies erected for use at the UT Austin Campus shall comply with the requirements of this Standard Operating Procedure. Temporary tents shall not be erected for a period of more than 180 days within a 12-month period on a single premises.

This document does not address temporary air-supported membrane structures, temporary air-inflated membrane structures, temporary tension membrane structures, or other temporary structures. Contact Fire Prevention Services (FPS) a minimum of thirty (30) days in advance if these type structures are being considered.

## I. FLAME RESISTANCE

- A. All tents and their appurtenances; sidewalls, drops, tarpaulins, floor coverings, bunting and combustible decorative materials and effects shall be composed of materials that meet the flame propagation performance criteria of Test Method 1 or 2, as appropriate, of NFPA 701 for each material.

- B. One of the following shall serve as evidence that the tent, sidewalls, drops, tarpaulins and other fabric materials have the required flame propagation performance:
  - a. The tent provider shall provide a flame retardant certificate or other evidence of acceptance by an organization acceptable to Fire Prevention Services.
  - b. The tent provider shall provide a report of tests performed by other inspection authorities or organizations acceptable to Fire Prevention Services.
  - c. The material shall have a label affixed indicating the material has been tested and meets the requirements of NFPA 701.

## **II. TENT LOCATIONS AND CLEARANCES**

- A. Tents shall be erected such that they cover not more than seventy five (75) percent of the premises.
- B. There shall be a minimum of ten (10) feet between stake lines.
  - a. Tents that do not meet these separation requirements will be regarded as a single structure for the purposes of enforcing this standard.
- C. Tents shall be located a minimum of ten (10) feet from any existing structure. FPS may permit tents under 10,000 square feet to be located closer to existing structures on a case-by-case basis.
- D. Generators and other internal combustion power sources shall be separated from tents by a minimum of five (5) feet and shall be protected from contact by fencing, enclosure or other approved means.
  - a. Fuel tanks shall be of adequate capacity to permit uninterrupted operation during normal operating hours. Refueling shall be conducted only when not in use.
- E. Portable LP-gas containers shall be located a minimum of five (5) feet from tents and be arranged such that their safety release valves are pointed away from the tent.
- F. Flammable liquids shall be stored outside in an approved manner and shall be located a minimum of twenty five (25) feet from the tents and shall be protected from contact by fencing, enclosure or other approved means.
- G. The finished ground level enclosed by any tent, and the finished ground level for a reasonable distance, but not less than ten (10) feet outside each tent shall be cleared of

all flammable or combustible material or vegetation that is not required for support equipment. The premises shall be kept free from such flammable or combustible materials for the duration of the period for which the premises are utilized by the public.

### **III. CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS**

#### **A. STRUCTURAL REQUIREMENTS**

- a. All tents shall be anchored appropriately in accordance with the manufacturer's requirements (note that UT Landscape Services does not permit tents to be staked, for more information on this policy please contact UT Landscape Services).
- b. Structural details shall be provided to FPS with the permit application for all tents greater than one hundred and forty (140) square feet. Documentation indicating adequate anchoring shall be in the form of one of the following:
  - i. Manufacturer's guidelines and/or instructions.
  - ii. A structural analysis prepared by a registered professional engineer.
  - iii. Calculations demonstrating adequate anchorage for wind speeds up to twenty (20) miles per hour (mph) as described below.
    1. Required Ballast pounds = (Tent Area sf X 5 lbs./sf) X 1.5 safety factor.
    2. Where water filled barrels are to be utilized as ballast, divide the product of the above equation by 0.4 to provide the required ballast weight (this adjustment accounts for the reduced friction coefficient of plastic).
- a. All tents and canopies shall be removed when wind speeds are expected to exceed 25 mph or greater.

#### **B. MEANS OF EGRESS**

- a. Exits shall be spaced at approximately equal intervals around the perimeter of the tent(s) and shall be located such that all points are one hundred (100) feet or less from an exit.
- b. The number of exits required and minimum widths of exit openings shall be in accordance with the table below. Under no circumstances shall the total width of the means of egress in inches be less than 0.2 inches per person for level components and ramps and 0.3 inches per person for stairs.

<b>OCCUPANT LOAD</b>	<b>MINIMUM NUMBER OF MEANS OF EGRESS</b>	<b>MINIMUM WIDTH OR EACH MEANS OF EGRESS (inches)</b>
50 to 199	2	72
200 to 499	3	72
500 to 999	4	96
1,000 to 1,999	5	120
2,000 to 2,999	6	120
Over 3,000	7	120

- c. Where two exits are required they shall be located at a distance from one another of not less than one-half the length of the maximum overall diagonal dimension of the tent or canopy.
- d. Tent exit openings shall remain open unless covered by a flame resistant curtain. The curtain shall be free sliding on a metal support installed a minimum of eighty (80) inches above the floor and no part of the curtain shall obstruct the exit when open. Curtains shall be of a color that contrasts with the color of the tent.
- e. Doors from tents shall swing in the direction of egress. Doors serving tents with an occupant load of one hundred (100) or more shall be provided with a latch or lock other than panic or fire exit hardware.
- f. Exits shall be maintained clear of obstructions. Guy wires, ropes, fences and other support members shall not cross a means of egress at a height of less than eight (8) feet.
- g. Aisles serving seating areas shall have a clear width of not less than forty four (44) inches.
- h. Common paths of travel shall not exceed twenty (20) feet.
- i. Dead ends shall not exceed twenty (20) feet.

**C. LIGHTING**

- a. The means of egress shall be illuminated with light having an intensity of one (1) foot-candle at floor level while the tent is occupied.
- b. Tents larger than one thousand two hundred (1,200) square feet shall be provided with emergency lighting.

**D. EXIT SIGNS**

- a. Exit signs shall be provided at every exit.
- b. Exit signs shall have letters at least six (6) inches in height.
- c. Exit signs shall be readily visible and be illuminated by either an internal or external source.

#### **E. FIRE EXTINGUISHERS**

- a. Portable fire extinguishers shall be provided for each tent in accordance with NFPA 10. At least one (1) 2A40BC rated fire extinguisher shall be provided for every three thousand (3,000) square feet of space with no more than seventy five (75) feet of travel required to reach an extinguisher, regardless of square footage.

### **IV. OPERATIONS**

- A. Open flames including candles, heating, cooking and food warming shall not be permitted inside tents.
  - a. FPS may permit open flames on a case-by-case basis where it is determined that appropriate safeguards are put into place. A request for approval shall be submitted to FPS for all tent installations where open flames are to be utilized, regardless of the size of the tent.
- B. Pyrotechnics and flame effects shall not be permitted in tents.
- C. Flammable liquids shall not be permitted in tents.
- D. Combustible materials such as hay, straw, wood shavings or similar materials that have not been treated to make them flame retardant shall not be located in any tent containing a public assembly.
- E. Crowd managers shall be required for all tents used as an assembly occupancy. The number of required crowd managers and training for crowd managers shall be in compliance with FPS-SOP-101-07 Crowd Managers.
- F. Seating arrangements shall comply with the requirements of NFPA 101 for assembly occupancies. Seats in tents accommodating more than two hundred (200) occupants shall be in compliance with FPS-SOP-101-10 Unsecured Seating.
- G. All tents and canopies shall be removed when wind speeds are expected to exceed twenty five (25) mph or greater.

### **V. ACTIVITIES REQUIRING SPECIAL APPROVAL**

#### **A. OPEN FLAMES**

- a. Written approval from FPS is required for any tent installation where open flames including candles, heating, cooking and food warming equipment will be utilized, regardless of tent size.

## B. COOKING

- a. Written approval from FPS is required for any tent installation where cooking will be performed, regardless of tent size.
- b. Cooking shall not take place within tents occupied by the public.
- c. Cooking equipment shall not be located within ten (10) feet of an exit from a tent.
- d. A K-class fire extinguisher shall be provided for all cooking operations.
- e. Fuel fired cooking or frying operations shall only be performed in designated kitchen tents. Kitchen tents for fuel fired cooking or frying operations shall be located not less than twenty (20) feet from all other tents.
- f. Outdoor cooking that produces flames, sparks or grease-laden vapors shall not be performed within twenty (20) feet of a tent.

## VI. APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS

- A. Written approval from FPS is required for all tent installations that meet any of the following conditions:
  - a. A tent size greater than one hundred forty (140) square feet. Tents that do not meet the clearance requirements of this policy will be considered to be a single tent structure for the purposes of this requirement.
  - b. Tent installations that will include any of the activities requiring special approval identified in Section IV of this policy (open flames, cooking, heating).
- B. To obtain required approvals for tent installations submit a written request via email to [ray.battalora@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:ray.battalora@austin.utexas.edu) and [daniel.cardona@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:daniel.cardona@austin.utexas.edu). Requests for approval shall include site plans and floor plans containing the information outlined below.
  - a. A site plan shall be provided with all tent approval requests and shall include the following:
    - i. A campus location map.
    - ii. Dimensions of the tent(s).
    - iii. Dimensions indicating distances to buildings.
    - iv. Dimensions indicating distances between tents.
    - v. Tent exits.

- vi. Locations of all equipment and activities associated with the tent installation.
- b. Floor plans shall be provided with all tent approval requests and shall include the location of the following:
- i. Tent exits
  - ii. Exit signs
  - iii. Lighting
  - iv. Emergency lighting
  - v. Fire Extinguishers
  - vi. Seating
  - vii. Furniture
  - viii. Platforms
  - ix. Egress Pathways
  - x. Heating equipment
  - xi. Cooking equipment