



1.0 Objectives

It is the objective of this standard operating guideline to establish policy regarding fire code requirements and inspections of tents and canopies. Exception: Tents and canopies used for the storage or sale of Consumer Fireworks.

2.0 Policy

The Tucson Fire Code regulates all tents and canopies regardless of size. Permitted structures shall be inspected prior to persons occupying the structure. If cooking operations are expected, persons responsible shall be given a copy of the TFD Cooking Booth Information handout.

3.0 Procedures

● Permits

- Permits are required for tents in excess of 400 square feet or canopies in excess of 900 square feet in size. Permits can be obtained at the Development Services Center, 201 North Stone Avenue.
- A detailed site plan for all structures with an occupant load over 50 shall be provided.
- All tents and canopies shall be fire resistive (w/ label affixed or certificate present).
- Permitted structures shall not be occupied prior to fire department inspection.
- All permits shall be on the premises and clearly posted.
- The permit applicant is required to call for an inspection at least 24 hours prior to any public event being held within the tent or canopy. The application is not considered a valid permit until approval is given and the permit is signed by the fire and/or building inspector.

● Construction Stability

- All structures of any size shall be adequately braced and anchored to prevent collapse or movement.
- Structures shall have tethered stakes or water filled barrels (35-55 gal.) at each post. Tents or canopies 400 square feet or larger shall have 2 stakes or 2 water filled barrels at each corner post. Each corner post shall be anchored with a separate tie rope and secured at 90-degree angles or in line with the tent or canopy sides.
- The manufacture's recommended construction and use guidelines shall be used and followed.
- Booths or other temporary structures used outdoors may be constructed of any material, which will provide the necessary structural integrity.

● Location

- Tents, canopies, or membrane structures shall not be located within 20 feet of lot lines.

- Means of Egress

- Exits, exit accesses, and exit discharges shall be maintained clear at all times.
- All required exits shall remain open, as per approved plans. If a covering is needed over an exit, it shall be a curtain made of flame resistant material. The exit curtain shall be clearly distinguishable, free sliding, signed with exit signs, and of a contrasting color to that of the tent walls.
- Doors shall swing in the direction of travel.
- Doors that latch shall be equipped with panic hardware. The panic hardware shall be the only locking device.

- Exit Signs

- Exit signs shall be installed in tents at the exits and where necessary to indicate clearly the direction of egress when the exit serves an occupant load of 50 or more.
- Exit signs shall be installed in canopies when the exit is not clearly distinguishable.
- Exit signs shall be internally or externally illuminated at all times.
- Required exit signs shall be provided with emergency backup power when the occupant load is 50 or more.

- Lighting

- The means of egress shall be adequately lit at all times that the tent or canopy is occupied. During daylight hours, natural light may provide the required light intensity. At night, an additional source of light may be required. When an additional source of lighting is required, emergency lighting shall also be required to provide light in case of a power failure.
- Emergency lighting shall be provided with emergency backup power when the occupant load is 50 or more.

- Portable Fire Extinguishers

- A portable fire extinguisher with a minimum 2A rating shall be provided for every tent or canopy.
- If several smaller tents or canopies are arranged in long lines then extinguishers need not be provided at every structure, but shall be provided within 75 feet travel distance from any point within the structure.
- Extinguishers shall be maintained unobstructed and shall not be obscured from view.
- Extinguishers shall be mounted on hangers or brackets in a manner that allows the extinguisher to be removed easily.

- Electrical Requirements

- All electrical service must be GFCI protected.
- All electrical service shall be per the current local electrical code.
- Only listed power strips with circuit breaker protection are allowed as multi-plug adapters.
- Flexible electrical cords (extension cords) shall be grounded (3-wire), adequately protected, secured from mechanical and environmental damage, and free from splices.

- Halogen lighting shall not make contact with any combustible surface or material.

- Cooking

- **COOKING BOOTH:** A tent, canopy or booth which utilizes *exposed* open flame cooking devices, open flames, or flammable and combustible liquids within 20' of the structure.
 - These devices shall not be inside or under any covered structure.
Exceptions: 1.) Devices utilizing gel or wick type fuels which do not create grease laden vapors provided the surface beneath the warming device is covered with foil and there is 36" clearance to any combustible materials. 2.) Non-exposed open flame cooking devices (e.g. kettle corn or griddles) if approved by the fire code official.
 - All devices and appliances shall be utilized on fire-resistant surfaces, with adequate clearance from any combustible materials.
 - LP-gas used for heating/cooking shall be located outside of tents or canopies with safety release valves pointed away from the structure.
Exception: Compressed gas cylinders with a maximum water capacity of not more than 2.7 lbs.
 - **For additional requirements and information regarding cooking booths refer to the Tucson Fire Department Exterior Cooking Booth Information handout.**
- **NON-COOKING (Vendor Booth):** A tent, canopy or booth, which does not have any *exposed* open flame cooking/warming devices, open flames, or flammable and combustible liquids within 20' of the structure.
 - Electrically powered food cooking/warming devices may be approved for use in tents or canopies (non-cooking) as long as the devices do not produce flames, smoke, or grease laden vapors.
 - All devices and appliances shall be utilized on fire-resistant surfaces, with adequate clearance from any combustible materials.
- All cooking appliances shall be isolated from contact with the public by fencing, enclosure, or other approved means.

- HVAC

- Electric heating equipment (space heaters) may be located within a tent or canopy, provided they are located at least 3 feet from combustibles and at least 10 feet from exits.
- Electrically powered heating equipment used in tents and canopies shall comply with the current local electrical and mechanical codes.
- LP-gas used for heating equipment shall be located outside of tents or canopies by approved means. Safety release valves shall be pointed away from the tent, canopy or membrane structure. LP-gas cylinders shall be located not less than 10 feet from openings. *Exception:* Compressed gas cylinders with a maximum water capacity of not more than 2.7 LB.

- Self-contained LP-gas, mushroom type heaters, shall not be located within tents or canopies. Exception: Compressed gas cylinders with a maximum water capacity of not more than 2.7 LB.
- All heating equipment must be listed for indoor use.
- **Smoking**
 - Smoking is not permitted in tents or canopies.
 - “No Smoking” signs shall be posted conspicuously in tents and canopies.
- **Open Flame**
 - Open flame or other devices emitting flame, fire, or heat, shall not be located in or within 20 feet of a tent or canopy which is not considered a cooking booth.
- **Fire Precautions**
 - Combustible materials that could create a fire hazard shall not be within 20 feet of the structure.
 - Combustible trash shall be removed at least once a day from the structure during the period the structure is occupied by the public.
 - Combustible vegetation shall be removed from the area occupied by the tent or canopy and the grounds within 30 feet of the structure.
 - Flammable or combustible liquids shall not be located in or within 20 feet of a tent or canopy not considered a cooking booth.
- **Combustible Merchandise and Decorations**
 - Natural cut trees shall be checked daily for dryness. Trees shall be removed from the tent or canopy whenever the needles or leaves fall off readily when a tree branch is shaken or if the needles are brittle and break when bent between the thumb and index finger.
 - Motor vehicles shall not be located under canopies unless approved.
 - Generators and other internal combustion power sources shall be separated from tents, canopies or membrane structures by a minimum of 20 feet and shall be isolated from contact with the public by fencing, enclosure or other approved means.
 - Loose straw, hay, or similar combustible material shall not be allowed within any tent or canopy containing an assembly occupancy, except when the materials are necessary for the daily feeding and care of animals.
 - Sawdust and shavings utilized for a public performance or exhibit shall not be prohibited provided they are kept damp.
 - Electrical cords, lighting and any heat generating appliances shall be separated from hay or straw bales or similar combustible materials
 - A water hose shall be available and ready when natural cut trees, hay, or straw bales are present.
 - Hay and straw bales shall not be stacked higher than 5 feet. Bales shall not block aisles or exits.