



**CATAWBA COUNTY  
FIRE MARSHAL'S  
OFFICE**

INFO FOR CUSTOMER SUCCESS

**Guidelines For Tents,  
Canopies and Membrane  
Structures used during  
Special Events**

**GUIDE SHEET**

**#003**

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March 2006

**1. Tents, Canopies or Membrane Structures.** For events located in the Catawba County Fire Marshal's jurisdiction the following requirements apply:

**[ ] 1.1 Permits when required.**

**1.1.1 Tent or Membrane Structures** - A permit must first be obtained before erecting or using a tent or membrane structure having an area in excess of 200 square feet.

**1.1.2 Canopy** - A permit must first be obtained before erecting or using a canopy in excess of 400 square feet.

**1.1.3** If a Fire Code permit is required relating to tent or canopy construction, application shall be submitted to the Catawba County Permit Center located in the Catawba County Government Center.

**[ ] 1.2 Stability.** Provide documentation to the Building Services Department that the structural stability of tents, canopies and their appurtenances will be adequately roped, braced and anchored to withstand the elements of wind, weather and prevent against collapse.

**[ ] 1.3 Tent & Canopy Fabric.** Fabric must be flame resistant and a certificate executed by an approved testing laboratory verifying one of the following:

**1.3.1** Fabric is composed of flame resistance material.

**1.3.2** Fabric has been treated with a flame retardant in an approved manner and meets the requirements for flame resistance in accordance with NFPA 701 and that the flame resistance is effective for the period specified by the permit.

**[ ] 1.4 Labeling.** Tents & canopies shall have a permanently affixed label bearing the identification of the size and fabric or material type. Provide an affidavit or affirmation that attests to the following:

**1.4.1** Date the fabric was last treated with flame-resistant solution.

**1.4.2** Trade name or kind of chemical used in treatment.

**1.4.3** Name of person or firm treating the material.

**1.4.4** Name of testing agency and test standard by which the fabric was tested.

**[ ] 1.5 Cooking Tents.**

**1.5.1** Tents where cooking is performed shall be separated from other tents, canopies, and membrane structures by a minimum of 20 feet regardless of permit requirements.

**1.5.2** Outdoor cooking that produce sparks or grease-laden vapors shall not be permitted within 20 feet from a tent, canopy, or membrane structure.

**1.5.3** Public is not allowed within a tent, canopy, or membrane structure during cooking operations unless approved by code enforcement official.

**1.5.4** All approved cooking tents shall provide a minimum of one Class K Fire extinguisher for every 50 feet of travel distance. The extinguisher shall be fully charged.



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[ ] **1.6 Open Cooking.** Open flame or other cooking device is not permitted inside or located within 20 feet while open to the public unless approved by the fire official.

[ ] **1.7 Placement.** Tents, canopies, membrane structures must not be located within 20 feet of lot lines, buildings, other membrane structures, other tents, and canopies, parked vehicles or internal combustion engines (generators). Support ropes and guy wires are considered as part of the tent, canopy, and membrane structure. Please contact the fire marshal to identify any alternate methods for compliance.

[ ] **1.8 Fire Extinguisher.** All tents requiring a Fire Code Permit shall provide a minimum of one 10 lb. ABC type multi-purpose fire extinguisher for every fifty feet of travel distance to an extinguisher. All other tents shall provide one 10 lb. ABC type multi-purpose fire extinguisher.

[ ] **1.9 Combustibles.** Combustible materials such as hay, straw, shavings shall not be located within any tent or canopy or below stands or bleachers at any time. The areas within and adjacent to tents shall be maintained clear of all combustible materials or vegetation that could create a fire hazard within and 20 feet from the structure. All combustible trash shall be removed at least once a day from the structure while occupied by the public.