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Requirements for a Tent Inspection

Temporary tents and membrane structures **over 900 square feet** are required to be permitted. This permit shall be obtained from the Building Official's Office. Once permit is issued contact the Fire Marshal's Office at (540) 665-6350 to schedule an inspection.

Tent - defined 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

Membrane Structure - defined as an air-inflated, air-supported, cable or frame-covered structure as defined by the *International Building Code* and not otherwise defined as a tent

Approval of a temporary tent or membrane structure is finalized through a site inspection by the Fire Marshal's Office. The tent or membrane structure must be erected onsite prior to the scheduled Fire Marshal's inspection

The items listed below are the minimum requirements according to Chapter 31 of the current edition of the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code.

Tents without walls or sides:

- Permit and tent documentation shall be available at the time of inspection.
- At least one 5lb. multipurpose 2-A10BC portable fire extinguisher shall be hung and tagged within 75 ft of travel distance (*3104.12 Portable fire extinguishers*)
- Smoking is prohibited under or located within 20 feet of tents. "**No Smoking**" signs shall be visibly displayed (*3104.6 Smoking; 3104.7 Open or exposed flame*)
- Certificate of Fire Retardant shall be affixed to the tent or documentation to show that the tent has been tested and certified (*3104.2 Flame propagation performance treatment; 3104.3 Label; 3104.4 Certification*)
- Tent or membrane structure shall be located a minimum of 20 feet from lot lines, buildings, parked vehicles or internal combustion engines (*3103.8.2 Locations*)
- Fire Department access shall have to be maintained at all times (*3103.8.1 Access*)

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- Tent or membrane structure shall be located a minimum of 20 feet from lot lines, buildings, parked vehicles or internal combustion engines *(3103.8.2 Locations)*
- Fire Department access shall have to be maintained at all times *(3103.8.1 Access)*
- Tents that will have 10-199 occupants must have 2 exit openings with a minimum width of 72 inches each; 200-499 occupants must have 3 exit openings with a minimum width of 72 inches each *(3103.12.2 Number)*
- Exit signs are required anytime the occupant load exceeds 50 people. Exit signs shall be easily seen via natural lighting or artificial lighting. If artificial lighting is used to illuminate the sign then the lighting shall be split between two separate electrical circuits or an internally illuminated electrical sign with battery backup can be used *(3103.12.6.1 Exit sign illumination)*
- Exit pathway shall be illuminated. If artificial lighting is being used to illuminate the exit pathway then the lighting shall be split between two separate electrical circuits or emergency lighting with battery backup can be used *(3103.12.7 Means of egress illumination)*

An example that would meet the above exit sign and exit pathway illumination would be an illuminated exit sign/emergency light combo with battery backup.

Cooking (with or without walls):

- Cooking equipment located inside a tent or membrane structure shall not be located within 10 feet of exits or combustible materials *(3104.15.3 Location)*
- Tents with cooking operations inside shall be separated from other tents or membrane structures by a minimum of 20 feet *(3104.15.5 Cooking tents)*
- Any cooking operations outside, shall be at least 20 feet away from tent or membrane structure *(3104.15.6 Outdoor cooking)*
- LP-gas containers shall be located outside and securely fastened in place to prevent movement. Safety valves shall be pointed away from the tent or membrane structure *(3104.16.2 Location of containers; 3104.16.3 Protection and security)*

If you have any questions, please contact the Fire Marshal's office at (540) 665-6350 for additional assistance.