

University of Rochester

Guidelines for the Use of Tents/Special Events

FS-G003

TENTS

RULES AND GUIDELINES

Assistance in the compliance of the University of Rochester's requirement guideline is available from the Environmental Health & Safety's (EH&S) Fire Marshal's Office.

Phone: (585) 275-3243

Fax: (585) 274-0001

REQUIRED: Proof of inspection of all booths, tents, propane tanks, portable generators, charcoal grills, electrical appliances, fire extinguishers and any other festival structure or equipment.

All vendors should be aware the Fire Marshal will inspect the site prior to the opening of the event and that all of the items contained herein are the responsibility of the vendor and must be in place or the vendor will not be allowed to open for business. If during the course of the event an onsite inspection determines there is a violation of any of these conditions, the vendor's business shall be closed until such time as the proper corrective measures have been taken and inspected by the Fire Marshal or designee.

All other operations shall be conducted in a safe manner which is consistent with nationally recognized good practices.

Inspection

The EH&S Fire Marshal's Office shall inspect all tents to determine compliance with this guideline. Any violations of the Fire Code, City of Rochester Rules for Festivals/Events/Site/Food Vehicles or Building Code of New York State must be corrected prior to the tent approval or immediately, if discovered during the event.

Placement and inspection of booths, tents and other structures to ensure:

- a. Access for emergency vehicles. NYSFC 503.1.1 & 3103.8
- b. Access to fire hydrants. NYSFC 507.5.4
- c. Unobstructed public ways at all times. NYSFC 3103.8.1
- d. Means of egress from booth, tents and other festival/event structures. NYSFC3103.12
- e. Fire extinguishers with at least a 2A: 20-B:c rating (6 L for grease and/or solid fuel) with current inspection tag. NYSFC 906.3, 901.6.1, NFPA 10-18 & NFPA 96-17
- f. Proper clearances between cooking appliances and the public and a public way.
- g. Vendors and their employees are familiar with event site rules.
- h. Cooking vendors are approved by the Rochester Fire Department.

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Required Permits

Any use of propane will require a permit for the propane and the tent issued by the City of Rochester Fire Department. To obtain this permit contact City of Rochester's Fire Marshal's Office at (585) 428-3680.

All vendor booths, tents, propane tanks, portable generators, charcoal grills, electrical equipment, appliances, fire extinguishers or any other event structures or equipment shall be subject to inspection by the EH&S Fire Marshal's office prior to the start of or anytime during the event. NYFSC 3104 (tents), 3808.2 (LPG)

Booths shall be placed to allow access to fire hydrants for fire department vehicles, and provide for unobstructed ways of travel at all times to permit free escape from any point of danger in case of fire. 503.1.1 & 3103.8 (access)

Flame Retardant and Structure

All tents and flap material shall be manufactured from inherently flame resistant material. A certificate or other proof of approval from the manufacturer or a testing laboratory will be required if a label certifying flame resistance is not permanently attached to the tent or flap material. NYSFC 3103.7 (inspection), 3104.2 (treatment), 3104.3 (label), 3104.4 (certification).

A copy of the certificate must be provided to EH&S's Fire Marshal's Office. Certificates are generally available from the tent supplier. As a minimum, the certificate shall have the following:

1. Name and address of the owners of the tent.
2. Date the fabric was last treated.
3. Trade name or kind of chemical used in treatment.
4. Name of person or firm treating the material.
5. Name of testing agency and test standard.

Combustible Material

The area enclosed by any tent and not less than 20 feet outside of such tent must be cleared of all flammable, combustible material or vegetation prior to erecting the tent and the duration of its use. No hay, straw, shavings, or similar combustible materials are permitted within any tent unless they have been treated to make them flame retardant and a certificate or similar proof is supplied to the EH&S department prior to its placing. Certificates may be obtained from the manufacturer or supplier. Combustible trash shall be removed at least once a day during the period the tent is occupied.

Smoking

Smoking shall not be permitted in tents, canopies or membrane structures. Approved "No Smoking" signs shall be conspicuously posted. NYSFC 3107.3.

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Open or Exposed Flame

Open flame or other devices emitting flame, fire, heat or any flammable or combustible liquids, gas, charcoal or other cooking devices **shall not be permitted** inside or located within 20 feet of the tent. Device(s) must have a dedicated 10-pound multipurpose fire extinguisher within 25 feet.

Propane (LP Gas)

1. Propane tanks shall be placed a minimum of 10 feet from sources of ignition, outside of tents or other structures and must be secured to an immovable object with chain or ratcheting tie downs (no bungee cords) to prevent tanks from being tipped or knocked over. Suitable fencing shall be placed around propane tanks. The safety release valves must be pointed away from the tent. Propane tanks on grassy areas shall be chained or securely attached to an immovable object. NYSFC 3107.13, Chapter 3.
2. LP hose shall be designed for a working pressure of 350 psig (2.4 MPag), shall be continuously marked with "LP-GAS, PROPANE, 350 PSI WORKING PRESSURE" and with the manufacturer's name or trademark. NYSFC Chapter 3 & NFPA 58 – 5.9.6.4(a)
3. Propane tanks, hoses and fittings shall be free from leaks and are subject to inspection by the EH&S Fire Marshal's Office.
4. Only rubber hose stamped "Approved for LP Gas" or rigid black pipe shall be used to transport gas from tanks to appliances. Copper piping shall NOT be used. Rubber hose shall be kept off the ground and be protected from physical damage. NYSFC 3107.13.1. First connection from regulator at tank shall be flexible rubber type.
5. "No Smoking" signs shall be posted when required by the code enforcement official. NYSFC 3107.3.
6. LP-gas shall **NOT** be used for the purpose of operating devices or equipment unless such device or equipment is approved for use with LP-gas. NYSFC 3107.13

Charcoal/Wood (solid fuel) Cooking

1. Charcoal appliances shall be placed a safe distance away, in an open area outside of tent or structure. NYSFC 3107.4.
2. Charcoal appliances shall be installed on noncombustible surface, be properly supported and protected.
3. Only approved charcoal lighter fluid shall be used to start the fire, and once the fire is

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ignited, lighter fluid shall be removed from the booth and stored properly (50 feet).
NYSFC 3107.14.2. Charcoal chimneys that do not require starter fluid for starting an appliance are recommended and accepted.

4. Shall have a Class "K" fire extinguisher for solid fuel with current inspection tag.
NYSFC 906.4.1. 901.6.1, NFPA 96-17.

Generators & Electrical Cords

All Generators

1. Must be UL listed with tags on unit, located on the ground and isolated from any vehicle or structure.
2. Distribution boxes must be commercial type with ratings label, proper cables between distribution boxes and generator and all unmodified. NEC
3. All commercial generators must be grounded with a 6ga copper wire terminated to an 8' copper rod driven into earth. Alternatives to this grounding must be approved by a licensed electrician and Rochester Fire Safety. Small portable generators must only be located on earth unless grounding need is determined by Code official. NEC
4. All connections must be ground fault protected.
5. Once started, portable generators shall be capable of running continuously, without refueling, for the entire length of the event as long as the event is open to the public. Refueling a hot portable generator, or the storage of fuel on site, shall not be permitted. Exception Fire Marshal present at generator and approves.
6. Assure excess fuel is properly stored (50; + distance). NYSFC 3107.14.2.
7. Each portable generator shall be inspected and approved by the Fire Marshal or his designee before it may be started and used.
8. An approved fire extinguisher with a minimum rating of 2A:20-B:C, shall be kept close to the generator. The approved fire extinguisher must have been commercially serviced within the past twelve (12) months. Proof of inspection shall be provided. NYSFC 3106.6.3, 906.2
9. All generators shall be located away from the public and public pathways with a barrier installed around every generator so as to prevent persons from tampering with electrical cords, and prevent persons from coming in contact with hot

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equipment. Fire Department access must be maintained. NYSFC 3107.16.

10. Whenever commercial generators are to be used at an event, a Fire Inspector or City Electrical Inspector may perform a safety inspection and may be required to be on site during the entire length of the event. NYSFC 3107.17. If any of this time falls outside of regular working hours there shall be a minimum 4-hour overtime charge, as provided under 54-12(f) of the Municipal Code, for the services of the Fire Inspector.

Electrical/Extension Cords

1. Extension cords shall be plugged directly into an approved receptacle except for approved multi plug extension cords and shall serve only one portable appliance. No "pigtailed", splicing or "daisy chaining". NYSFC 604.5
2. The ampacity of the extension cords shall not be less than the rated capacity of the portable appliance supplied by the cord. *(Never can a small cord supply a larger)* NYSFC 604.5.2
3. Extension cords shall be maintained in good condition without splices, deterioration or damage. NYSFC 604.5.3
4. Extension cords shall be grounded when serving grounded portable appliances. NYSFC 604.5.4
5. Open junction boxes and open-wiring splices shall be prohibited. Approved covers shall be provided for all switch and electrical outlet boxes. NYSFC 604.6
6. Power cords shall be protected from physical damage and from becoming a tripping hazard. Where this may occur, power cords shall be installed overhead and/or run through a PVC conduit or commercial wire chase. Use of carpets, tape or equivalent is prohibited.
7. Electric receptacles shall be ground fault protected.
8. All connections shall be of weather tight protection from rain and water.
9. All electrical cords shall be U.L. listed electrical cords rated for outdoors use. NO HOUSEHOLD OR NON-WEATHER TIGHT POWER CORDS OR ELECTRICAL OUTLETS WILL BE PERMITTED. All electrical wiring and devices shall be in compliance with the National Electrical Code

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Power Cord Chart

Maximum Load	Maximum Length	Minimum Gauge
20 amps	100 ft	12 AWG
30 amps	50 ft	10 AWG
>30 amps	See site electrician and/or Fire Marshal	

Electrical

The electrical system and equipment must be isolated from the public by proper elevation or guarding. All electrical fuses and switches must be enclosed in approved enclosures.

For occupant loads of 300 or less, two separate circuits are required. For occupant loads greater than 300, one of the two circuits must be from an approved emergency system.

Generators must be placed so that exhaust fumes do not enter tents. Generators must be a minimum of 20 feet from the tent and shall be fenced in.

Portable generators shall be UL listed or equivalent. Vendors should have the manufacturer's written specification for each portable generator and made available to the Fire Marshal.

Mobile Food Vehicles

Requirements for Food Trucks and Trailers

1. All vendors and their employees shall attend the Rochester Fire Department's safety class. All employees must wear their city ID tag while working. (Note: ID tags are renewed annually; the RFD Safety Class must be renewed every three years.)
2. All trucks and enclosed trailers that produce grease laden vapors must have a Type 1 hood. NYSFC 607.2
3. Portable fire extinguishers shall be located in conspicuous locations where they will be readily accessible and immediately available for use. All employees working in the vehicle shall be trained in the proper use of the fire extinguishers. Fire extinguishers shall

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bear a current inspection tag validated within the past twelve months OR a receipt of purchase within the last 12 months shall be available for inspection. NYSFC 906.6, 906.1, 906.5, 904.12.5 (cooking), 906.2 (“K”), 3808.2 (LPG), NFPA 10-18 & NFPA 96-17

4. Vehicles using a liquid or gas fuel source shall have a minimum 2A:20-B:C fire extinguisher. Vehicles using a solid fuel source shall have a minimum of a 6L Class K fire extinguisher for solid fuel.
5. Vehicles that have a deep fat fryer shall have a 6L Class “K” rated fire extinguisher. NYSFC 906.4.2
6. In all vehicles it is recommended that there be a 2A:20-B:C and a 6L Class “K” type located within or attached to the vehicle and near means of egress. NYSFC 906.5
7. Vehicles shall have a current RFD inspection tag.
8. Only rubber hose stamped “Approved for LP Gas” used from tank to the attached black pipe that is secured to vehicle shall be used to transport gas through vehicle to appliances. Copper piping shall NOT be used. NYSFC 3803.1, NFPA 58-5.9.6.4 (a)
9. LPG pressure relief valves shall be located within a safe distance away from any ignition source (open flame or generator). 3804.3 (e2) (i.e., 5 feet)
10. The main system shutoff valves located on or closest to the fuel tanks and sufficient to stop the supply of fuel from all fuel tanks must be clearly marked with the words “PROPANE SHUTOFF VALVE” or “NATURAL GAS SHUTOFF VALVE” permanently affixed to the outside of the vehicle in reflective decal material with letters 2” high at a minimum.
11. A “No Smoking” sign next to or directly above the propane container and visible to the public. Such sign shall be posted with a minimum of 2-inch lettering. NYSFC 310.3, 3107.3.
12. Shall be equipped with a working carbon monoxide detector that meets standards set forth in NFPA 1192-6.4.6. and equipped with an LPG (propane) leak indicator according to NFPA 1192-6.4.8.
13. Rear mounted DOT approved LP tanks must be mounted at a minimum height of 46 inches above the ground with DOT approved rear bumper.
 - *ALTERNATIVE: A maximum of two 30 gallon tanks built to ASME code and DOT standards for mounting under carriage to rails and side wall*

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venting. If under carriage type is used, they must be approved by the City of Rochester Fire Department.

14. As of January 01, 2015, all vehicles producing grease laden vapors shall have a fire suppression system installed with the Type 1 hood. NYSFC 609.3
15. As of January 1, 2015, all hood fire suppression systems shall be inspected by a servicing company every 6 months and properly tagged to indicate such. NYSFC 904.4.

Lighting

Spot or effect lighting shall only be by electricity and all combustible construction located within 6 feet of such equipment shall be protected by non-combustible insulation not less than 9-1/4" thick.

Exits and Occupant Load for Enclosed Tents

Tents that have sides attached and rolled up or are capable of being enclosed must meet these requirements even if it is intended for the tent to remain unenclosed during the event. The number of separate exits required for enclosed tents is based on the floor area of the tent. The maximum number of occupants, called the occupant load, is also based on the floor area of the tent.

Occupant load (floor area of tent)	Number of exits (minimum)	Minimum width/exit (inches)
Between 10 to 199	2	72
Between 200 (1400 SF) & 499 (3493 SF)	3	72
Between 500 (3500 SF) & 999 (6993 SF)	4	96
More than 1000 (7000 SF)	5 (more may be needed)	120

The occupant load is decreased when tables and chairs are used (banquet style) – the number of required exits remains the same because exits are based on floor area. The following calculations will determine the occupant load with tables and chairs.

Net square footage of tent floor area/15 = occupant load with tables and chairs

Example: The number of occupants allowed, with tables and chairs, in a 50 x 50' tent with a 10' x 20' stage.

2,500 square feet (floor area) – 200 square feet (stage area) – 3' clearance between contents and fabric envelope (50+50+50+50 = 200 square feet/15 = 140 people.

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Please Note: These calculations are for planning purposes only and do not represent a legal capacity. The EH&S's Fire Marshal's Office will provide legal capacities based on submitted set-up plans.

Exit Signs

Each exit must be provided with an exit sign. The word "EXIT" must be plainly legible in letters at least 6 inches high and with strokes not less than $\frac{3}{4}$ inches wide. If the tent is to be occupied after sunset, the exit sign shall be self-illuminated or lit by emergency lighting. Exits shall be clearly marked. Exit signs shall be installed at required exit doorways and where otherwise necessary to indicate clearly the direction of egress when the exit serves an occupant load of 50 or more. NYSFC 3103.12.6.1.

Means of egress illumination: Emergency lighting must be provided if the tent is to be occupied after hours. Exit signs shall be installed at required exit doorways and where otherwise necessary as determined by the Fire Marshal to indicate clearly the direction of egress.

Means of egress shall be illuminated with light having an intensity of not less than 1 foot-candle (11 lux) at floor level while the structure is occupied. Fixtures required for means of egress illumination shall be supplied from a separate circuit or source of power. NYSFC 3103.12.7

Exit Requirements for All Tents

- There shall be a minimum clearance of at least 3 feet between the fabric envelope and the inside contents.
- Exits shall be spaced at approximately equal intervals around the perimeter of the tent.
- Exits shall be located such that all points are 100 feet or less to an exit.
- The minimum width of an exit must not be less than 72 inches.
- Guy wires or guy ropes must not cross an exit at a height of less than 7 feet.
- Where tents are placed near fences or other obstructions, a clear exit path must be maintained to an area sufficiently away from the tent.
- Tent stakes must be railed off, capped or covered.
- Unobstructed aisles must be a minimum of 44 inches and shall increase 1 foot for each 50 persons served by such aisle at that point.
- Cooking or heating equipment shall not be located within 20 feet of an exit or combustible materials.

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Fire Extinguishers/Fire Protection

Extinguishers shall be located in an area that is conspicuous and easily accessible for use. All employees working in the booth or tent shall be trained in the proper use of the fire extinguishers. Fire extinguishers shall bear a current inspection tag validated within the past 12 months **OR** a receipt of purchase within the last 12 months shall be available for inspection. NYSFC 901.6, 906.1, 906.5, 904.11.5 (cooking), 3106.4.4 (all tents), 3106.4.4 ("K"), 3106.4.4 (LPG), NFPA 10-18 & NFPA 96-17.

- a. Cooking booths or any booth using a liquid or gas fuel source shall have a minimum 2A:20-B:C fire extinguisher in booth accessible in open ready for quick use.
- b. Cooking booths using a solid fuel source shall have a minimum 6L Class K for solid fuel fire extinguisher within 30 feet and in booth.
- c. Cooking booths that have a deep fat fryer shall have a "K" rated fire extinguisher within 30 feet in booth.
- d. In all cooking booths it is recommended there be a 2A:20-B:C and a "K" located within the booth and no more than 30 feet reach.
- e. Any place with a posted occupancy over 50 persons shall have a 2A:20-B:C **within 75 feet** from all areas.
- f. One portable fire extinguisher (dry chemical, ABC type) must be furnished at each exit of an enclosed tent. The University sponsor for the event using the tent is responsible for ensuring those fire extinguishers are provided. If necessary, arrangements for portable fire extinguishers may be made by contacting the EH&S's Fire Marshal's Office at (585) 275-3243. There is a charge for any fire protection equipment that is not returned or used improperly.

Operations such as warming foods or cooking demonstrations (including use of sterno and other food warming devices), must be approved in advance by the EH&S's Fire Marshal's Office.

Cooking appliances shall be isolated from the public by at least 5 feet or a suitable barrier placed between the cooking device and the public. Cooking appliances shall be installed per the manufacturer instructions. U.L. listed appliances shall have clearances or not less than 36 inches at the back and sides and 48 inches in the front.

Flammable liquids shall not be used in the tent.

Operation

Lightning: When thunder can be heard, lightning is close enough to strike. Therefore, any time you hear thunder or see lightning the tent must be evacuated.

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Wind: While the tents are usually designed to withstand substantial winds, most people become uncomfortable when the tent fabric is making noise. Therefore, the University will evacuate our tents when there are sustained winds of 25 mph or greater or if gusts exceed 30 mph.

Site

Tents must be placed to provide access to fire hydrants for Fire Department vehicles and provide unobstructed ways of travel at all times to permit prompt escape from any point of danger in case of fire.

To assist in planning, please refer to the Special Event Checklist which is available as a pdf document: [Special Event Checklist](#)

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Special Event Checklist

Event Name: _____

EH&S Inspector: _____ Date: _____

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>1. Propane used for any part of this function</i> | YES: <input type="checkbox"/> | NO: <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>a. If yes, permit obtained from the city</i> | YES: <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A: <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>2. Flame Resistance Certificate</i> | YES: <input type="checkbox"/> | NO: <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>3. Combustible Material >20' from tent</i> | YES: <input type="checkbox"/> | NO: <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>4. "No Smoking" signs posted</i> | YES: <input type="checkbox"/> | NO: <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>5. Open or Exposed Flam >20' from tent</i> | YES: <input type="checkbox"/> | NO: <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>6. Lighting >6' away from combustibles or protected by non-combustible material</i> | YES: <input type="checkbox"/> | NO: <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>7. Occupant Load posted for tent</i> | YES: <input type="checkbox"/> | NO: <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>8. Number of exits and width sufficient for posted occupancy</i> | YES: <input type="checkbox"/> | NO: <input type="checkbox"/> |

<u>Occupant load (floor area of tent)</u>	<u>Number of exits (minimum)</u>	<u>Minimum width/exit (IN)</u>
Between 10 to 199	2	72
Between 200 (1400 sq ft) and 499 (3493 sq ft)	3	72
Between 500 (3500 sq ft) and 999 (6993 sq ft)	4	96
More than 1000 (7000 sq ft)	5 (more may be needed)	120

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9. *Exit and Exit Directional signs clearly marked* YES: NO:

10. *Exit Requirements for All Tents*

- Is there a minimum 3' clearance between the fabric envelope and the inside contents? YES: NO:
- Are exits spaced at approximately equal intervals around the perimeter of the tent? YES: NO:
- Are *Exits* located so all points are <100' to an exit? YES: NO:
- Is the minimum width of an *Exit* not less than 72"? YES: NO:
- Do guy wires or guy ropes cross an exit at a height less than 7 feet? YES: NO:
- Is there a clear exit path where tents are placed near fences or other obstructions? YES: NO:
- Are tent stakes railed off, capped or covered? YES: NO:
- Are unobstructed aisles a minimum of 44 inches and do they increase 1 foot for each 50 persons served by such aisle at that point? YES: NO:
- Is cooking or heating equipment located a distance greater than 10 feet of an exit or combustible materials? YES: NO:
- When curtains are used for privacy or that would block wind, do they comply with the NY State Fire Code section 3103.12.3? YES: NO:

11. *Fire Protection Equipment:*

- One portable fire extinguisher (ABC type) at each exit of an enclosed tent YES: NO:
- Commercial cooking equipment such as grills and broilers, used with proper ventilation, fire suppression systems, and a minimum of 20' from the occupied tent YES: NO:
- LP gas containers having a capacity of 500 gallons or less shall be properly secured at least 10 feet away from the tent YES: NO:
- Cooking area must have a minimum of 20 lb BC rated fire extinguisher and, if using a deep fryer, a "K" rated extinguisher. Fire extinguisher shall show proof of inspection within the last twelve months YES: NO:
- Appliances isolated from the public by at least four feet between the cooking device and the public. Cooking appliances, U.L. listed, shall have clearances of not less than 36 inches at the backsides and 48 inches at the front. YES: NO:

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12. Electrical

- The electrical system and equipment isolated from the public by proper elevation or guarding. Cables on the ground, in areas traveled by the public must be placed in trenches or protected by approved covers YES: NO:
- All electrical systems properly grounded YES: NO:
- For occupant loads of 300 or less, two separate circuits are required. For occupant loads greater than 300, one of the two circuits must be from an approved emergency system YES: NO:
- Generators must be a minimum of 20' from the tent and fenced in YES: NO:
- Portable generators shall be U.L. listed or equivalent YES: NO:
- Generators capable of running continuously, without refueling for the entire length of the event YES: NO:

13. Site:

- Access to fire hydrants for Fire Department vehicles unobstructed at all times YES: NO:

14. Set up and Safety:

- Stakes need to be at least 1" in diameter YES: NO:
- Stakes need to be driven into the ground YES: NO:
- Stakes need to be driven straight down into the ground – not at an angle YES: NO:
- Rope needs to be tied at the top of the stake YES: NO:
- Winds over 30 mph – no one is to be in tent YES: NO: