



**City of White Bear Lake
Building Department
4701 Highway 61 N.
White Bear Lake, Minnesota 55110
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TEMPORARY TENTS / MEMBRANE STRUCTURES

This handout is a summary of the permit & inspection process as well as standard requirements based on State Building Code and State Fire Code regarding temporary tents or membrane structures in excess of 400 square feet. Examples of these are garden centers, firework sales tents & other special event tents. If signage is also needed for your tent, it will require a sign permit (see community development web page for more information.) Information contained herein does not contain all of the specific codes for construction, and shall only be used as a guide.

Exceptions:

1. Tents/canopies used exclusively for recreational camping purposes
2. Tents/canopies open on all sides that comply with **all** of the following:
 - Individual tents/canopies having a maximum size of 700 sq. ft.
 - The aggregate area of multiple tents/canopies placed side by side without a fire break clearance of 12 feet, not exceeding 700 sq. ft. total
 - A minimum clearance of 12 feet to all structures and other tents/canopies

Permit Submission Requirements:

- Completed Building Permit Application
- Site plan drawing showing tent location and setbacks to property lines
- Tent information/specs
- Property owner approval letter

Tent Permit Fees: See the White Bear Lake Fee Schedule at www.whitebearlake.org

Licensing Requirements:

- No licensing required

Inspection Requirements: The inspection card and approved plans must be on site upon the start of work until the final inspection has been performed and passed. All construction work shall remain accessible and exposed for inspection until approved by the Building Inspection Department.

All required inspections will be listed on the permit card. A 24-hour notice is required for all inspections (period is subject change during busy times). Inspections will be required by:

Building Department – 651-429-8518

Fire Marshal 651-762-4842

Information and Guidelines (Fire & Building):

FIRE REQUIREMENTS:

The 2020 Minnesota State Fire Code (MSFC) Chapter 31 governs placement, construction and use of temporary membrane structures, tents and canopies. The following guidelines must be followed when using a temporary membrane structure, tent or canopy for your event. Tents, canopies or temporary membrane structures shall be:

- A. Located a minimum of twenty (20) feet from the property line, buildings, other tents or canopies, parked vehicles or internal combustion engines. **Note: Support ropes or guywires are considered as part of the membrane structure, tent or canopy for distance measurement.**
- B. Located to provide fire apparatus access to the temporary structure(s) at all times.
- C. Adequately braced and anchored to prevent weather-related collapse. Bracing and anchors shall not obstruct traffic lanes.
- D. Constructed of flame retardant materials and have a permanently affixed label with the following information:
 - Identification of fabric or material type and size of temporary structure.
 - For flame resistant materials, necessary information to determine compliance with the MSFC.
 - For flame retardant treated materials, the date of the last fire retardant treatment.
 - The trade name and type of flame retardant material used to treat the fabric.
 - The name of the person and firm applying the flame retardant.
- E. Equipped with portable fire extinguishing equipment located inside as required. A minimum fire extinguisher classification of 2A is required for all permitted tents, canopies and temporary membrane structures. Actual travel distance to a fire extinguisher from any location in the tent, canopy or temporary membrane structure shall not exceed 75 feet. If the view of a fire extinguisher is obstructed or obscured, signs shall be installed to readily identify the fire extinguisher location.
- F. Posted with "No Smoking" signs inside the structure and at entrance(s).
- G. Restricted for use of open flames, hot objects or fireworks inside or adjacent to temporary membrane structures, tents or canopies unless otherwise approved by the fire code official. Open flame or other devices emitting flame, fire or heat or any flammable or combustible liquids, gas, charcoal or other cooking device or any other unapproved devices shall not be permitted inside or located within 20 feet of the tent, canopy or membrane structures while open to the public unless approved by the fire code official.
- H. Means of egress for temporary tents, canopies and membrane structures shall be in accordance with the 2020 MSFC, Chapter 31. Occupant load of the temporary structure may not exceed the calculations required by 2020 MSFC and SBC Chapter 10.

Additional provisions include the following:

1. Cooking and heating equipment shall not be located within ten (10) feet of exits or combustible materials. Tents where cooking is located must be located at least twenty (20) feet from other temporary structures.
2. Flammable or combustible-liquid or gas-fueled equipment may not be used in temporary structures.

3. Operations such as warming of foods and similar operations which use solid flammables or other similar devices which do not pose an ignition hazard, shall be approved prior to use.
4. Flammable or combustible liquids and gases shall be located a minimum of fifty (50) feet from temporary structures. Refueling operations may be performed in an approved located not less than twenty (20) feet from temporary structures. Refueling operations should also be protected by portable fire extinguishers.
5. Generators and other internal combustion power sources must be located outside a temporary structure and a minimum of twenty (20) feet away. This area must also be isolated from the public by means of an enclosure, fencing or other means approved by the fire code official. If refueling of generators is anticipated during the event, the area should be protected with a portable fire extinguisher.
6. During construction of the temporary structure, combustible vegetation must be removed in the area where the temporary structure will be located and within a thirty (30) foot perimeter of the structure. While using the temporary structure, the floor surface and grounds within thirty (30) feet of the structure must be kept clear of combustible waste.
7. Other code provisions including occupant load, seating, emergency egress paths, aisle widths, placement of means of egress, exit signage and emergency egress illumination may be required for your event.
8. Fire lanes designated for fire apparatus access to permanent structures on the event site must be kept open and clear at all times. This rule includes vehicle access to hydrants, fire department connections on the permanent building, lot driveways and fire apparatus access to and around the permanent structure as well as tents, canopies and temporary membrane structures. No parking signage and yellow restricted parking areas may be ordered and shall be enforced during the event.
9. Temporary barriers may be erected to guide foot traffic or for control of private vehicle access control but are subject to the approval of the fire official conducting the inspection temporary structure, the floor surface and grounds within thirty (30) feet of the structure must be kept clear of combustible waste.
10. LP tanks stored outside for use during the event must be secured in an upright position, protected to prevent tampering and damage by vehicles, located in an approved location and clear of other hazards. Also, safety release valves or pressure relief shall be pointed away from temporary membrane structures, tents or canopies located on the site. Empty LP tanks must be stored and secured in the same manner as full or partially full tanks and prevented from accidental dislodgement or physical upset.
11. Compressed gas tanks, including non-flammable gases, which are intended for use during your event, shall be stored in an upright position and secured to prevent accidental dislodgement or physical upset when placed or used in a tent, canopy or temporary membrane structure.

Codes and Standards Used for this Review

- ❖ This review is based on the following codes and standards as adopted and in effect in the State of Minnesota at the time of plan submittal.
 - 2020 Minnesota State Fire Code

BUILDING REQUIREMENTS

Tent structures erected for a period of less than 180 days are defined as temporary structures. Temporary tents, umbrella structures and other membrane structures shall comply with the International Fire Code. Temporary structures and uses shall conform to the structural strength, fire safety, mean of egress, accessibility, light, ventilation and sanitary requirements of the code as necessary to ensure public health, safety and general welfare. Temporary structures that cover an area greater than 120 square feet including connecting area or spaces with a common means of egress that are used or intended to be used for the gathering together of 10 or more persons shall not be erected, operated or maintained for any purpose without obtaining a permit from the building official. A permit application and construction documents shall be submitted for each installation of a temporary structure. The construction documents shall include a site plan indicating the location of the temporary structure and information delineating the means of egress and occupant load. Temporary structures shall be setback a minimum of 10 feet from adjacent buildings and property lines to meet the fire separation requirements. Temporary structures shall conform to the means of egress requirements of IBC Chapter 10 and shall have an exit access travel distance of 100 or less.

This document is for informational purposes only and not intended to address every situation for the permitting and plan review process.

2023