

University of Pittsburgh Safety Manual	EH&S Guideline Number: 01-022	
Subject: TENT GUIDELINE	Effective Date: 04/13/2018 Review Date: 05/27/2020	Page 1 of 3

TENT GUIDELINE

1. Definition

A Tent shall be defined as a structure, enclosure or shelter constructed of fabric or pliable material supported in any manner other than air pressure or the contents that it protects.

2. Purpose

The purpose of these safety guidelines is to assure that tents are installed and used in a safe manner at the University of Pittsburgh.

3. Approval for Installation of a Tent

- 3.1. Tents and membrane structures covering an area in excess of 400 square feet (37 m2) shall not be erected, operated, or maintained for any purpose without first obtaining approval from University of Pittsburgh Department of Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S). Contact EH&S at 412-624-9505.
- 3.2. The City of Pittsburgh requires permits for tents exceeding a size greater than 700 square feet. See <https://eproval.pittsburghpa.gov/> for more information.

4. Tent Installation

- 4.1. All tents must be installed and maintained in compliance with these Guidelines, the International Building Code, and all applicable codes adopted by the City of Pittsburgh.
 - 4.1.1. Tent suppliers must be able to certify that tents have been erected in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations, industry standards, and code requirements.
 - 4.1.2. The tent supplier must provide proper guidelines for appropriate anchorage for the tent. These documents should be forwarded to the University of Pittsburgh Department of Environmental Health and Safety for review prior to installation. Upon approval, EH&S may conduct an on-site inspection. If anchorage points or anchorage instructions are not provided by the tent supplier, EH&S approval will not be granted, and another supplier should be contacted.
 - 4.1.3. Guy wires or Guy ropes must not cross an exit at a height of less than 8 feet.
 - 4.1.4. Tent stakes must be protected, capped, and covered.
 - 4.1.5. All tent fabric must be flame resistant. A certificate or other proof of approval by a certified testing laboratory must be provided upon request.

University of Pittsburgh Safety Manual	EH&S Guideline Number: 01-022	
Subject: TENT GUIDELINE	Effective Date: 04/13/2018 Review Date: 05/27/2020	Page 2 of 3

4.2. Any University representative contracting for the installation of a tent must obtain from the tent supplier and provide to EH&S prior to installation of a tent:

- 4.2.1. Copies of permit applications and permits
- 4.2.2. Required "Lawful Occupancy" signs
- 4.2.3. Flame resistance documentation for the membrane material
- 4.2.4. Site and floor plans indicating the location of the tent, seating arrangements, anchorage, type of heating/cooling (if any) and the means of egress

5. Use of Tents

5.1. An area of 20 feet beyond all exits from the tent must always be maintained in an unobstructed manner and be available for immediate egress. The minimum number of exits according to the size of the tent shall be as follows:

Minimum Number of Exits

Occupant Load	Minimum Number of Exits
10 - 199	2
200 - 499	3
500 - 999	4
1,000 - 1,999	5
2,000 - 2,999	6
Over 3,000	7

5.2. Exits from a tent must be at least six (6) feet in width for an occupant load of up to and including 500 persons. Exits must be at least Eight (8) feet in width for an occupant load of 501 to 999 people. Exits must be at least ten (10) feet in width for an occupant load of 1,000 people or greater.

5.3. The travel distance to an exit must never be more than 100 feet from any point inside a tent.

5.4. Any lighting and electrical wiring shall be in accordance with the standards of the National Electrical Code and National Fire Protection Association.

5.5. Each exit in an enclosed tent must provide a plainly legible exit sign. Exit signs must be of photo luminescent material or have back up power and means of egress must be illuminated with light having an intensity of at least one (1) foot-candle while the structure is occupied.

- 5.5.1. A tent/structure cannot block access to fire lanes, fire hydrants, standpipe connections, building exits or any other building safety equipment.

University of Pittsburgh Safety Manual	EH&S Guideline Number: 01-022	
Subject: TENT GUIDELINE	Effective Date: 04/13/2018 Review Date: 05/27/2020	Page 3 of 3

5.6. Emergency lighting is required for structures used for public assembly with an occupant load of 100 or more persons and which are to be used after sunset. All electrical wiring must be properly secured to avoid entanglement hazards. Temporary electrical wiring must be properly isolated from the public by proper evaluation or guarding. Cables on the ground in areas of public travel must be placed in trenches or protected by approved covers.

5.7. All tents must have at least one portable fire extinguisher for every 2000 square feet of enclosable space. Each fire extinguisher must be prominently mounted, available for immediate use, and have a 2-A:10-B-C rating.

5.8. Cooking in a Tent

- 5.8.1. Tents used for cooking of food must be used exclusively for that purpose.
Clarification: Stern-heated trays are allowed in any tent and are not considered cooking under these guidelines.
- 5.8.2. Cooking tents must be twenty feet from other tents and any building.
- 5.8.3. A minimum of two (2) fire extinguishers must be prominently mounted and available for immediate use in each cooking tent. One Class K extinguisher shall be provided in any tent where oil is used for cooking.
- 5.8.4. Propane tanks must be kept outside of the tent and properly secured.
- 5.8.5. One fire extinguisher must be behind each serving area.
- 5.8.6. Generators and other internal combustion power sources must be isolated from the general public and must be 20 feet away from the tent.

5.9. Any piece of equipment and the fuel used for heating or air conditioning in any tent must be ten (10) feet from all other tents and buildings. Ductwork must not obscure exits. Devices, fuel, and ductwork must be separated and protected from areas intended for occupancy by members of the public. Refueling heating equipment during operation is not permitted.

5.10. The University of Pittsburgh prohibits smoking and the use of candles inside of tents.

5.11. "No Smoking" signs should be prominently posted inside any tent requiring a permit.

5.12. Weather Conditions

- 5.12.1.** Tent users must follow all wind, rain, and snow restrictions found in the tent's instructions that are documented by the manufacturer or installer. If the manufacturer or installer does not address such restrictions, users are expected to vacate any tent in conditions of severe weather, tornado warning, or hurricane warning, or in conditions with winds in excess of 30 mph (according to WeatherSTEM). In the event rain or snow is creating significant pooling on the surface of the tent, vacate the tent immediately.