

Temporary Structures

General Requirements for Temporary Tents, Stages, and Air-Supported Structures

Purpose

The purpose of this handout is to outline the City's requirements with respect to temporary tents, stages, air-supported structures and other structures to ensure minimum zoning, health and life safety requirements are met. Please consult with the Recreation Coordinator, Recreation Department at 250-490-2437 or at events@pentiction.ca for Special Event Applications.

References and Background

Prior to the use of temporary structure the operator shall ensure that:

1. A building permit is obtained for Temporary structures over 10 square meters (108 sq ft) or when used for public use. Temporary permits are valid for up to 6 months. Contact the Building Department - 250-490-2571 buildinginfo@pentiction.ca for permit inquiries. Applications can be found at www.pentiction.ca/permits/applications
2. For Special Events, a Special Event Business Licence is required when vendors are involved. Please contact the Business Licence Department at (250)490-2488 or businesslicences@pentiction.ca for further information. A site inspection is required by the Building Official and Fire Inspector prior to the start of the event to ensure the conditions are met.
3. Temporary structures are not to be placed in required parking stall areas, over easements or block fire lanes.
4. Every tent and air-supported structure and all tarpaulins and decorative materials used in connection with these structures shall conform to CAN/ULC-S109, "Flame Tests of Flame-Resistant Fabrics and Films". Please review with your supplier/rental company that this can be confirmed on site (BCBC 3.1.6.5.1)
5. Electrical and Gas systems shall be maintained and operated in a safe manner, and:
 - a. Be approved by Technical Safety BC. See <http://www.technicalsaftybc.ca/> for more information
 - b. The electrical system and equipment in a tent or air-supported structure, including electrical fuses and switches, shall be inaccessible to the public;
 - c. Electrical cables on the ground shall protected from damage by traffic and all devices shall be suitable for conditions (i.e. indoor or exterior use); and
 - d. Emergency lighting meeting BC Building Code requirements to be provided for structures where events run past dusk or within an enclosed tent or air supported structure.
6. Backflow prevention devices for all concession stands and medical tents containing sinks. Plumbing permits may be required.
7. Cooking within tents is not permitted. See [Mobile Vendors Bulletin](#) for more information.
8. Combustible materials such as hay, straw or shavings shall not be permitted within **3 meters (10') outside** the structure and shall be cleared of flammable material, vegetation and combustibles. An exception would be that any sawdust or shavings to be used must be kept damp.



9. Tents or fenced enclosures greater than 150 sq. m (1614 sq. ft.) will require a minimum of two exits clearly marked and kept free from obstructions
10. If **more than 1000 persons** occupy a tent, a fire alarm system and dedicated fire-watch must be provided. Building Permits will be required. The person assigned to be fire watch shall be familiar with all fire safety features including the fire safety plan as provided in conformance with Section 2.8 of the BC Fire Code, condition of exits and patrol of the area to ensure that the means of egress are kept clear.
11. Blower engines, if used:
 - a. Must comply to section 6.5 of the BC Fire Code; and
 - b. For more than 200 persons shall have either an emergency engine/generator capable of powering one blower for 4 hrs. or a supplementary blower powered by an internal combustion engine.
12. Propane heaters shall not be used in tents occupied by the public, however, if the public is not in the tent, the heater is permitted, providing:
 - a. There is a minimum of a one-foot clearance around the heater; and
 - b. The propane automatically shuts-off if the heater is knocked over or jarred.
13. Propane cylinders are to be either chained or secured outside of the tent, in a manner where they will not be subject to tipping and where the public does not have access.
14. Tents or air supported structures occupied by the public:
 - a. Must be placed no closer than 3 m (10') to other temporary structures and with sufficient space between tents to allow for a means of egress;
 - b. Shall be sufficiently distant from one another to provide an area to be used as a means of emergency egress;
 - c. Are restricted from smoking and open flame devices, except that Sterno-can-style chafing dish warmers are permitted, providing a staff member, knowledgeable and able to use an extinguisher, is in attendance and a fire extinguisher is available in proximity to the table;
 - d. Require a minimum of two clearly marked exits when the structure is greater than 150 sq. m (1614 sq. ft.) in floor area. Exits are to be kept clear at all times; and
 - e. An Engineer¹ may be required to review the installation and anchorage of the structure if erected by non-qualified personal² or company. Please discuss with the Building Department regarding large tents for high occupant loads such as a carnival or a circus. See Number 8.
*Note – please be careful of underground and overhead services
 - f. Braces or tie-downs do not block exit doors or pathways (including adjacent units).
15. Smoking and open flame devices shall not be permitted in a tent to air-supported structure while it is occupied by the public.

Stages:

1. An Engineer¹ shall be retained to review design loads and anchorage for all stages more than 1.2m above finished grade and/or incorporating a roof or overhead lighting/speaker rigging if erected by a non-qualified personal² or company.

Ramps, Viewing platforms and walkways:

1. All ramps, bleachers, viewing platforms and walkways, if not constructed on the ground, will require a:
 - a. An Engineer¹ to review design loads and anchorage of these structures if erected by non-qualified personal² or company.

Please note that other approvals may be required, such as development permits, electrical permits (BC Safety Authority), special event approvals, fire department approval, engineering approval for water and sewer connections, Liquor Control Board approval, and health approval.

Definitions:

¹ Engineer means an Engineer registered or licenced to practice in British Columbia and who is practicing in Structural Engineering.

² Qualified personnel means a person who has been trained for the erection of temporary structures using good engineering practices.

Have questions? We're here to help. Please contact the Building Department at 250-490-2571 or buildinginfo@penticton.ca for more information.