

Special Events

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 erected for Special Events. The following list has been created to ensure minimum health and life safety requirements are provided for the patrons, vendors and volunteers. Please consult with the Recreation Coordinator, Recreation Department at 250-490-2437 or at events@penticton.ca for Special Event Applications.

References and Background

Prior to the start of a Special Event the event organizer shall ensure that:

1. A Special Event Business Licence is obtained when vendors are involved. Please contact the Business Licence Department at (250)490-2488 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.
2. 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.
3. Electrical and Gas systems shall be maintained and operated in a safe manner, and:
 - a. Be approved by the BC Safety Authority <http://safetyauthority.ca/>;
 - 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 be 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.
4. Backflow prevention devices for all concession stands and medical tents containing sinks. Plumbing permits may be required.
5. Cooking within tents is not permitted unless provided with approved commercial ventilation systems. Note: Mobile vendors are to contact the City of Penticton's Fire Department regarding approvals prior to operating within the City. Contact the Fire Department Operations at 250-490-2300.
6. Combustible materials such as hay, straw or shavings shall not be permitted within **3 m (10')** outside the structure and shall be cleared of flammable material, vegetation and combustibles.
7. 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



8. If **more than 1000 persons** occupy a tent, a fire alarm system and dedicated firewatch must be provided. Building Permits will be required.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. Tents or air supported structures occupied by the public:
 - a. Must be placed no closer than 3 m (10') to other 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 is 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.

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.

A site visit by the Building and Fire Departments is mandatory for all Special Events that have structures or fencing. Please coordinate Special Event inspections through Development Services prior to the event starting.

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.