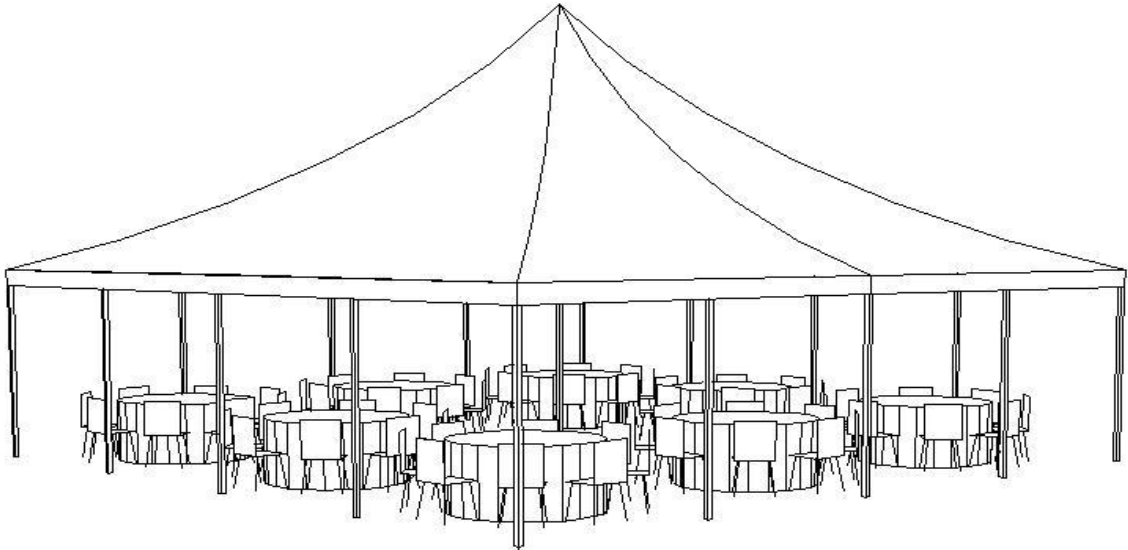




Temporary Tents – Submission and Inspection Guidelines

Version 2023-12



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Overview

The Temporary Tents – Submission and Inspection Guidelines provide the information for obtaining the permit and inspections related to installing a temporary tent for a temporary event. When a building permit is required, a submittal package shall be submitted at least 4 weeks prior to the event. The submittal shall follow the guidelines stated in this publication and the project shall go through the full plan review process.



VUSBC Definitions

AISLE – An unenclosed exit access component that defines and provides a path of egress travel.

AISLE ACCESSWAY – That portion of an exit access that leads to an aisle.

SEPARATION DISTANCE – To determine separation distances, support ropes, guy wires, and other similar anchoring devices shall be considered as part of the temporary tent. If these devices are outside the tent, measurements shall be taken from them.

TENT – A structure, enclosure, umbrella structure or shelter, with or without sidewalls or drops, constructed of fabric or pliable material supported by any manner except by air or the contents that it protects (“see Umbrella Structure”).

TENT AREA – Ground area directly beneath tent roof, including within that area all connecting areas or spaces with a common means of egress or entrance.

UMBRELLA STRUCTURE – A structure, enclosure, or shelter with or without sidewalls or drops, constructed of fabric or pliable material supported by a central pole or poles (see “Tent”).

General Requirements

A Prince William County building permit and inspections are required for the following:

- All individual tents with a tent area larger than 900 square feet.
- All individual tents with an occupant load as defined by Chapter 10 of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (VUSBC) greater than 50 occupants.

When the separation distance between individual tents is less than 12 feet, the tents shall be grouped together and evaluated as an individual tent.

A tent erected for a period of less than 180 days shall comply with the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code. A tent erected for a longer period shall comply with the Virginia Construction Code.

All tents shall meet the minimum requirements of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code regardless of the tent area, occupant load, or issuance of a permit.

While there can be multiple tents per building permit, applicable permit fees shall be charged for each temporary tent.

When temporary stages or platforms are to be installed under a tent, please refer to the Prince William County [Temporary Stage and Platform Submission and Inspection Guidelines](#).



Submission Requirements

GENERAL SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

To obtain permits from the Building Development Division for the construction, assembly and inspection of temporary tents, please submit a Prince William County Building Permit Application; a Prince William County Contact Information Form; Prince William County Trade Permit(s) Applications, as applicable; and a copy of each of the following items for review and approval:

- Temporary Tent Site Layout Plan – See requirements listed below.
- Temporary Tent Interior Layout Plan – See requirements listed below.
- All layout plans shall be at a minimum scale of 1/8" = 1'-0" on standard sized paper.
- A copy or printed photograph of Flame Resistance Certification complying with NFPA 701 listing.

All building plans are required to be submitted via Prince William County's [ePortal](#) system. Consult the [customer electronic plan review \(ePlans\) guide](#) for information on how to prepare and submit documents for electronic plan review and the [electronic plan review guide](#) for building ePlan submission guidelines.

TEMPORARY TENT SITE LAYOUT PLAN REQUIREMENTS

1. Provide a site layout (a marked print from Google Earth is acceptable) indicating the location of proposed temporary tent(s) and the location of the restroom facilities. Provide distances in relation to other tents, permanent structures, fences, parking lots, property/lot lines, portable generators, etc. The layout shall confirm that each individual tent with a tent area of less than 15,000 square feet in area has a minimum separation distance of 12 feet between itself and other tents, fences, permanent structures, and property lines. The separation distance requirement shall increase to a minimum of 50 feet for each individual tent with a tent area of 15,000 square feet or greater.
2. On the site layout plan, identify the electrical power source that will be used. Show the location for any permanent power and state the location and distance to power equipment. If portable generators are planned, show the location and type of wiring to be used for the conductors.
3. On the site layout plan, show the location of all open or exposed flame or other devices emitting flame, fire or heat and all flammable liquids, gas, charcoal or other cooking devices. These items are not permitted inside or located within 20 feet separation distance of the tent without the specific approval of the Fire Marshal.
4. See the Page 5 for a list of common deficiencies found during inspections.

TEMPORARY TENT INTERIOR LAYOUT PLAN REQUIREMENTS

1. Provide a short narrative statement describing the proposed use of the temporary tent. List the name of the event; address; dates of set-up, event, and takedown; and duration (time of day and/or night).
2. Provide a complete layout plan of each tent area. Identify exit locations with exit signs, aisles, tables, chairs, seating, equipment, stages, and platforms. State if sidewalls are to be used. Identify all items to be supported by the tent structure.
3. Provide the tent manufacturer's installation instructions and/or specifications demonstrating required anchorage and stating the maximum allowable wind speed before the tent is evacuated.



4. State or show the location and description of the following items:
 - All power sources for each tent.
 - All portable fire extinguishers.
 - All open flames.
 - All heating/cooling equipment and provide the specifications for this equipment.
 - If any of these items will not be used, please state this on the plan.
5. State the occupant load as determined by Chapter 10 of the VUSBC for each temporary tent.
6. State the width at each of the following locations verifying compliance with the noted minimum widths:
 - At each exit with a minimum size of 72 inches.
 - At each aisle with a minimum clear width of 48 inches with seating on each side and 36 inches with seating on one side.
 - At each aisle accessway between rows of tables or chairs with a minimum clear width of 12 inches.
7. See Pages 5 and 6 for a list of common deficiencies found during inspections. Please ensure that the interior layout plan ensures compliance with these items.

Inspection Guidelines

GENERAL BUILDING INSPECTION GUIDELINES

1. Required Inspection Types:
 - Building Permit Inspections: Code #1500 (Building Final Inspection).
 - Trade Permit Inspections, as applicable.
 - Fire Marshal's Operational Permit: Code #149 (Fire Marshal Final Inspection).
 - All inspections shall be scheduled at the time the building permit is issued. If possible, inspections shall be scheduled during normal business hours – Monday through Friday, 8am – 2pm. Overtime inspections shall comply with Prince William County policy.
2. The approved submittal package and manufacturer documentation shall be on site and presented to the inspector.
3. All temporary tents shall be fully inspected before the event is opened to the attendees.
4. The final inspection report will serve as the temporary tent's Temporary Occupancy Permit.
5. See the next two pages for a list of common deficiencies found during inspections.



COMMON DEFICIENCIES

(Does not encompass all potential violations)

FOUND BY PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE:

1. The required 12-foot unobstructed open space (firebreak) is not observed on all sides of the temporary tent. This includes being free from support ropes, guy wires, similar anchoring devices, and other obstructions.
2. The temporary tent do not have permanently affixed labels bearing the identification of size and fabric or the material type referencing flame propagation performance treatment.
3. "No Smoking" signs are not posted in the temporary tent.
4. 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 are observed within 20 feet of the temporary tent while open to the public.
5. Fireworks are intended to be used within 100 feet of the temporary tent.
6. The clearance between the fabric envelope and the contents within temporary tent is less than 3 feet.
7. Outdoor cooking equipment that produces sparks or grease-laden vapors are located within 20 feet of the temporary tent.
8. Cooking and heating equipment are located within 10 feet of tent exits or combustible materials.
9. Combustible vegetation and combustible waste material that could create a fire hazard are observed on the floor surface inside or within a 30-foot perimeter of the temporary tent.
10. Regarding fire extinguishers, the following comments apply:
 - It is obstructed or obscured from view.
 - The travel distance to an extinguisher exceeds 75 feet.
 - No fire extinguisher is located within 30 feet of all outdoor cooking operations.
11. Exterior generators and other internal combustion power sources are separated from tents by a distance less 20 feet and they are not isolated from contact with the public.
12. Fire Department vehicle access is observed to be one or more of the following:
 - Travel distance to all sides of every tent exceeds 150 feet.
 - Access width less than 20 feet wide.
 - Access unable to support the imposed loads of fire apparatus (80,000lbs).



FOUND BY PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY BUILDING INSPECTORS:

1. Separation distances from fences, permanent structures, and property lines are not observed.
2. Anchors are not driven in the ground properly.
3. Manufacturer's documents are not on site.
4. Seating is not set up to verify proper egress routes.
5. Certificate on tent fabric does not match certification provided to the county

FOUND BY PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY ELECTRICAL INSPECTORS:

1. Cables and cords are not rated for damp/wet location.
2. Cables and cords are not properly supported.
3. Cables and cords do not have proper physical protection where subject to damage.
4. Conductor splices are not made within an approved enclosure.
5. GFCI protection is not provided for receptacles.
6. In-use covers are not installed on receptacles.
7. Guards for lamp protection are not installed where required. See [Building Official Interpretation 2018-11](#).
8. Emergency lighting and self-illuminated exit signs are not working properly.



LINKS TO PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY DOCUMENTS

- Temporary Tent Submission and Inspection Guidelines (this document):
www.pwcva.gov/assets/2021-04/tentguidelines.pdf
- Temporary Stage and Platform Submission and Inspection Guidelines:
www.pwcva.gov/assets/2021-04/stageguidelines.pdf
- Building Permit Application:
eservice.pwcgov.org/ebuildingdevelopmentforms/forms/buildingpermitapplication.pdf
- Contact Information Form:
eservice.pwcgov.org/ebuildingdevelopmentforms/forms/contactinformationform.pdf
- Policy 1.10 Inspections – Scheduling Overtime Inspections:
www.pwcva.gov/assets/2021-04/005771.pdf
- Prince William County Trade Permit Application Forms:
www.pwcgov.org/BDForms
- [Temporary Lighting Building Official Interpretation 2018-11](#)