



2015 Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code

Tent Regulations

107.2 Temporary Membranes Structures or Tents

An OPERATIONAL PERMIT is required to operate an air-supported temporary membrane structure or a tent.

Exceptions:

1. Tents used exclusively for recreational camping purposes.
2. Tents and air-supported structures that cover an area of 900 square feet or less, including all connecting areas or spaces with a common means of egress or entrance and with an occupant load of 50 or less persons.

3103.2 Approval Required

Tents and membrane structures having an area in excess of 900 square feet shall not be erected, operated or maintained for any purpose without first obtaining a permit and approval from the fire code official in accordance with Table 107.2.

3103.2.1 Multiple Tents

The aggregate area of multiple tents separated by less than 12 feet shall not exceed 900 square feet unless approved in accordance with Section 3103.2

3103.5 Use Period

Temporary tents, air-supported, air-inflated or tensioned membrane structures shall not be erected for a period of more than 180 days within a 12- month period on a single premises

3103.8.2 Location

Tents or membrane structures shall not be located within 20 feet of lot lines, buildings, other tents or membrane structures, parked vehicles or internal combustion engines. For the purpose of determining required distances, support ropes and guy wires shall be considered as part of the temporary membrane structure or tent.

Exceptions:

1. Separation distance between membrane structures and tents not used for cooking is not required where the aggregate floor area does not exceed 15,000 square feet.
2. Membrane structures or tents need not be separated from buildings when all of the following are met:
 - 2.1 The aggregate floor area of the membrane structure or tent shall exceed 10,000 square feet
 - 2.2 The aggregate floor area of the building and membrane structure or tent shall not exceed the allowable floor area including increases as indicated in the International Building Code.
 - 2.3 Required means of egress are provided for both the building and the membrane structure or tent including travel distances.
 - 2.4 Fire apparatus access roads are provided in accordance with Section 503.



3103.9 Anchorage Required

Tents or membrane structures and their appurtenances shall be adequately roped, braced and anchored to withstand the elements of weather and prevent against collapsing. Documentation of structural stability shall be furnished to the fire official upon request.

3103.10.3 Blowers

An air-supported structure used as a place of assembly shall be furnished with not less than two blowers, each of which has adequate capacity to maintain full inflation pressure with normal leakage. The design of the blower shall be so as to provide integral limiting pressure at the design pressure specified by the manufacturer.

3103.12.1 Distribution

Exits shall be spaced at approximately equal intervals around the perimeter of the tent or membrane structure, and shall be located such that all points are 100 feet or less from an exit.

3103.12.6 Exit Signs

Exits shall be clearly marked. Exit signs shall be installed at required exit doorways and where otherwise necessary to indicate clearly the direction of egress where the exit serves an occupant load of 50 or more.

3103.12.6.1 Exit Sign Illumination

Exit signs shall be either listed and labeled in accordance with UL 924 as the internally illuminated type and used in accordance with the listing or shall be externally illuminated by luminaries supplied in either of the following manners.

1. Two separate circuits, one of which shall be separate from all other circuits, for occupant loads of 300 or less.
2. Two separate sources of power, one of which shall be an approved emergency system, shall be provided where the occupant load exceeds 300. Emergency systems shall be supplied from storage batteries or from the on-site generator set, and the system shall be installed in accordance with NFPA 70. The emergency system provided shall have a minimum duration of 90 minutes when operated at full design demand.

3104.2 Flame Propagation Performance Treatment

Before a permit is granted, the owner or agent shall file a certificate executed by an approved testing laboratory certifying that the tents and membrane structures and their appurtenances, sidewalls, drops and tarpaulins; floor coverings, bunting and combustible decorative materials and effects, including sawdust where on floors or passageways, are composed of material meeting the flame propagation performance criteria of Test Method 1 or Test Method 2, as appropriate, of NFPA 701, and that such flame propagation performance criteria are effective for the period specified by permit.

3104.3 Label

Membrane structures or tents shall have a permanently affixed label bearing the identification of size and fabric or material type.



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(540) 372-1059 (540) 372-1050 (Fax)



3104.5 Combustible Material

Hay, straw, shavings or similar combustible materials shall not be located within any tent or membrane structure containing an assembly occupancy, except the materials necessary for the daily feeding and care of animals. Sawdust and shaving utilized for public performance or exhibit shall not be prohibited provided the sawdust and shavings are kept damp. Combustible materials shall not be permitted under stands or seats at any time.

3104.6 Smoking

Smoking shall not be permitted in tents or membrane structures. Approved "No Smoking" signs shall be conspicuously posted in accordance with Section 310.

3104.7 Open or Exposed Flame

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 or membrane structures while open to the public unless approved by the fire code official.

3104.11 Clearance

There shall be a minimum clearance of at least 3 feet between the fabric envelope and all contents located inside membrane structures.

3104.12 Portable Fire Extinguishers

Portable fire extinguishers shall be provided as required by section 906. (Minimum 3A-40BC).

3014.15.3 Location

Cooking and heating equipment shall not be located within 10 feet of exits or combustible materials.

3104.15.4 Operations

Operations such as warming of foods, cooking demonstrations and similar operations that use solid flammables, butane or other similar devices that do not pose an ignition hazard, shall be approved.

3104.15.5 Cooking Tents

Tents with sidewalls or drops where cooking is performed shall be separated from other tents or membrane structures by not less than 20 feet.

3104.16.2 Location of Containers

LP-gas containers shall be located outside. Safety release valves shall be pointed away from the tent or membrane structure.



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3104.16.2.1 Containers 500 Gallons or Less

Portable LP-gas containers with a capacity of 500 gallons or less shall have a minimum separation between the container and structure not less than 10 feet. 10 foot hose required.

3104.16.2.2 Containers More than 500 Gallons

Portable LP-gas containers with a capacity of more than 500 gallons shall have minimum separation between the container and the structures not less than 25 feet. 25 foot hose is required.

3104.16.3 Protection and Security

Portable LP-gas containers, piping, valves and fittings that are located outside and are being used to fuel equipment inside a tent or membrane structure shall be adequately protected to prevent tampering, damage by vehicles or other hazards and shall be located in an approved location. Portable LP-gas containers shall be securely fastened in place to prevent unauthorized movement.

3104.19 Separation of Generators

Generators and other internal combustion power sources shall be separated from tents or membrane structures by not less than 20 feet and shall be isolated from contact with the public by fencing, enclosure or other approved means.

3104.20 Standby Personnel

Where, in the opinion of the fire code official, it is essential for public safety in a tent or membrane structure used as a place of assembly or any other use where people congregate, because of the number of persons, or the nature of the performance, exhibition, display, contest or activity, the owner, agent or lessee shall employ one or more qualified persons, as required and approved, to remain on duty during the times such places are open to the public, or when such activity is being conducted.

3104.22 Combustible Waste Material

The floor surface inside tents or membrane structures and the grounds outside and within 30-foot perimeter shall be kept free of combustible waste and other combustible materials that could create a fire hazard. Such waste shall be stored in approved containers and removed from the premises not less than once a day during the period the structure is occupied by the public.