

## North Carolina Fire Prevention Code Requirements For Tents and Canopies Erected On State Property

The NC Fire Prevention Code (NCSFC) requires tents, canopies and other membrane structures to be evaluated for fire and life safety and a permit issued prior to the event. For all State-owned property the NC Department of Insurance (DoI) is responsible for that evaluation and granting of a permit. Upon obtaining satisfactory evidence that the proposed structure will be in accordance with minimum Code requirements, NCDol issues a permit in the form of a signed approval letter (or an E-mail). DoI's approval merely acknowledges Code compliance and does not constitute an agreement for use of the space. That is obtained from the Department of Administration or the owning agency/university.

The following apply when planning to erect tents, canopies or other membrane structures:

1. Any tent over 200 square feet (SF) or canopy in excess of 400 SF requires a permit and approval from a fire code official.
2. All such structures are to be certified as either being composed of flame resistant material or treated with a flame retardant.
3. In addition, any such structure which can be occupied by more than 50 persons is to have a detailed floor plan submitted indicating the seating arrangement, means of egress, and any cooking, cooling, heating or electrical equipment. If the occupancy exceeds 200 persons, auxiliary emergency power is required.  
NOTE: The occupancy is to be calculated using the North Carolina State Building Code (NCSBC) Table 1004.1.2 with 5 SF per person for standing, 7 SF per person for seating, and 15 SF per person for table and chairs.
4. The plans are to also indicate the location of the required 20 foot wide fire access lane around the structure, the 20 foot separation between tents, canopies, membrane structures, lot lines, buildings line, parked vehicles, or internal combustion engines.
5. Please refer to NC State Fire Code Chapter 24 for additional code requirements and guidance.
6. The plans are to indicate if the tents and other structures will have flaps or not. This determines the placement of exit signs, fire extinguishers, and other life safety equipment. Smoking is not allowed within these structures.
7. Open flames or other devices emitting flame, fire, heat or any flammable or combustible liquids, gas, charcoal or other cooking devices or any unapproved equipment are not allowed inside or within 20 feet of such structures while open to the public.
8. In addition to the above, restrooms accommodations are to be provided for the public and accessibility features provided for the disabled.

The owner must direct the event organizer to submit plans for the event to DoI, at the address below. This must be done as soon as the event is scheduled to allow time for our review and for the vendor to respond to any resulting questions and/or possible site visit by one of our staff to better assess the plan. If the owner or vendor does not submit their plans to DOI soon enough to allow a reasonable time for evaluation and approval, the event can not be approved and must be either rescheduled or cancelled.

If a situation arises where it is necessary for DOI to ask the local building official to review the event plans and/or inspect the structure on our behalf (e.g., due to a time or location issue), the cost for such local government inspection permit will be borne by the owner or event organizer, as applicable.

If there are any questions, please contact us at 919-661-5880 and ask to speak to a State Property Code Consultant. Our mailing address is State Property Plan Review, 1202 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1202. Plans can be delivered to 322 Chapanoke Rd. Suite 200, Raleigh or faxed to 919-662-4414.

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