



Ohio Department of Commerce

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Bureau Policy for Tent Permit

❖ Introduction:

- Occasionally we receive applications for erecting temporary or permanent tents at schools or commercial establishments. This policy is generated to give a general guideline for the tent approval procedures and documentation.
- Section 3102 Ohio Building Code provides general guidelines for membrane structures. Chapter 24 of International Fire Code and section 1301:7-7-24 Ohio Fire Code also provides some guidelines for the construction of tents and membrane structures.

❖ Code Requirements and References:

- Tents and membrane structures, for temporary or permanent use, having an area larger than **200 square feet** and **canopies (open without sidewalls or drops on 75% or more of the perimeter)** larger than **400 square feet** will require approvals from the building official. **Exceptions** are given for the following conditions (**i.e. a permit application is not required**):

- ❖ Tents used exclusively for **recreational camping** purposes,
- ❖ Canopies **open on all sides** and meeting **all** the following criteria:
 1. Individual canopy having a maximum 700 square feet in size,
 2. The aggregate area of multiple canopies not exceeding 700 square feet in area and placed side by side with a minimum clearance of 12 feet.
 3. A minimum clearance of 12 feet to all structures and other tents.

- **Height and area limitations of tent structures:**

The height and area limitations for tent structures shall be evaluated in accordance with table 503 and section 506 OBC based on the use group and construction type classifications as specified in chapter 3 and section 3102.3 OBC.

- For tents with **non-combustible (steel, etc.) frames or poles** (2B Construction type) used for **assembly purposes (A-2/A-3/A-4 use groups): a single tent or a group of tents with aggregate areas of not more than 9,500 square feet can be applied under one application for approval.**
- For tents with **combustible (wood, etc.) frames or poles** (5B Construction type) used for **assembly purposes (A-2/A-3/A-4 use groups): a single tent or a group of tents with aggregate areas of not more than 6,000 square feet can be applied under one application for approval.**
- A single tent or a group of tents under one permit shall be separated from another tent or group of tents, or other existing structures by a **minimum distance of 20 feet**. Otherwise, the adjacent sides of the tent(s) shall have a minimum **one-hour fire resistance rating tested and approved by acceptable standards in OBC.**
- See section 3102 OBC for other requirements of various types of tent structure.

❖ Tent approval procedures:

▪ Application form and fees:

- ❑ **For permanent tent(s):** processed through a regular building plan approval application. Complete and submit the form “**Ohio application for building plan approval**” (DIC3016) and associated fees for each scope of work including electrical and sprinkler if required and provided.
- ❑ **For temporary tent(s):** processed through inspection without sealed plan application. Complete and submit the form “**Application for inspection not requiring sealed plans**” (DIC3018) and associated fees for each scope of work including electrical and sprinkler if required and provided.

▪ Plan requirements:

1. Submit **three (3) sets** of construction drawings showing the size of each tent, the location of tents including distances to property lines, adjacent buildings, structures, or other tents, and construction details of the tent structure(s).
 2. Plans shall also include electrical design, cooking equipment, and fire suppression system if required and provided for tents intended for interior lighting, cooking and dining activities.
 - a. For tents housing **cooking activities**, submit drawings for type and layout with dimensions of all cooking appliances, type of exhaust hood and/or hood suppression system, etc., if applicable in accordance with code requirements.
 - b. For tents of **assembly** use purpose **with food and/or drink consumption (A-2)**, submit sprinkler system design if the fire area exceeds **5,000 square feet** or occupant load exceeds **100 people** in the tent or in the group of tents. **For temporary tents, a “fire watch plan” approved by the local fire authority may be submitted in lieu of sprinkler system design.**
 - c. For tents of **assembly** use purpose **without food and/or drink consumption (A-3 or A-4)**, submit sprinkler system design if the fire area exceeds **12,000 square feet** or occupant load exceeds **300 people** in the tent or in the group of tents. **For temporary tents, a “fire watch plan” approved by the local fire authority may be submitted in lieu of sprinkler system design.**
 3. Submit **certificate(s)** for membrane materials meeting the provisions of section 703.4 OBC or fire propagation performance criteria in **NFPA 701** and the manufacturer’s test protocol.
- A walk-in plan review appointment can be scheduled for tent approvals. Call Ms. Felicia Bolin at the Division of Industrial Compliance at (614) 995-1420 to schedule an appointment.
 - Applicant shall be responsible to call for the required inspections when the work is ready.