



County of Prince George, Virginia

“A welcoming community • Embracing its rural character • Focusing on its prosperous future”

Tent Requirements

(2018 VUSBC)

A building permit is required to erect a tent if the tent area exceeds 900 square feet in area or the tent will accommodate more than 50 people. We recommend that you contact Zoning at (804) 722-8678 prior to submitting an application for a tent permit to discuss any zoning requirements related to installation of the tent.

If a permit is required, please provide four (4) sets of plans that include:

- A Tent Plan that includes the following:
 - A Seating Chart /Layout that shows tables, chairs, aisles, and features that will be arranged within the tent.
 - The estimated maximum number of occupants that may be within the tent at one time.
 - What the tent will be used for.
 - Provide the length of time that the tent will be set up.
 - The names, occupation, address and phone number of the primary contact for the tent set-up.
 - If any cooking takes place within the tent provide a complete description of the cooking operation and appliances proposed for use.
 - That the tent is open sided or closed sided and note the locations of exits from the tent if closed sided.
 - If the tent is closed sided and the occupant load exceeds 50 exit signs and egress lights will be required. If the tent is open sided and will be used after dark egress lights will be required.
 - Note if any electrical service will be provided to the tent, and if so what type (extension cord from a building, generator, etc.). An extension cord from a building or a direct plug-in connection from a generator to the appliance does not require an electrical permit. A panel board and distribution system installed between the power source and the tent does require a separate electrical permit. Generators must be located at least 20 feet away from tents.
- A Site Plan showing the dimensions of the tent and the tent’s location on the property in relation to property lines, other tents, buildings, or structures.
 - Tents cannot be closer than 20 feet to any other tent or building and should be located to not interfere with the normal operations of any permanent use located on the property.
 - No tent shall be situated such that established egress paths or exits from other tents or structures are blocked.
- A copy of the Flame Spread Certificate from the tent manufacturer:
 - Tents and/or canopies must be composed of flame-resistant material or shall be treated with an approved flame retardant in a manner that meets the requirements for flame resistance as determined in accordance with NFPA 701.

General Tent Information:

All tents must be anchored to the ground and secured to prevent collapse and/or rollover during high winds.

Combustible materials – If a tent or canopy is used for the gathering of persons for an event or meeting then hay, straw, shavings or similar combustible materials shall not be located within the tent or canopy, however, sawdust and shavings utilized for a public performance or exhibit shall not be prohibited provided they are kept damp. Combustible materials shall not be permitted under stands or seats at any time. The areas within and adjacent to the tent or canopy shall be maintained clear of all combustible materials within 20 feet. Combustible vegetation shall be removed from the area occupied by a tent or canopy and from areas within 30 feet of such structures. Combustible trash shall be removed at least once a day from the tent or canopy during the period the structure is occupied by the public.

Smoking - Smoking is not permitted in tents or under canopies. Approved “No Smoking” signs shall be conspicuously posted within the tent.

Open or exposed flame – If the tent or canopy is open to the public then open flames 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 within 20 feet of the tent or canopy.

Cooking tents – Cooking tents may be permitted only where the public does not utilize or access the tent. Where cooking is performed, it shall be separated from other tents or canopies by a minimum of 20 feet. Cooking and heating equipment shall not be located within 10 feet of exits or combustible materials. Warming of foods or limited cooking demonstrations and similar operations that use solid, flammables, butane, or other similar devices and which do not pose an ignition hazard may be approved on a case-by-case basis.

Flammable and combustible liquids shall be stored outside in an approved manner not less than 50 feet from tents or canopies. LP-gas containers or similar flammable fuel containers shall be located outside the tent with safety release valves pointed away from the tent or canopy. Portable LP-gas containers with a capacity of 500 gallons or less shall have a minimum separation between the container and tent or canopy not less than 10 feet and LP-gas containers having a capacity of more than 500 gallons a minimum separation of not less than 25 feet is required.

Separation of generators - Generators and other internal combustion power sources shall be separated from tents or canopies by a minimum of 20 feet and isolated from contact with the public by fencing, enclosure, or other approved means.

Electrical equipment - All electrical equipment, lighting, outlets, wiring, etc. shall bear a U.L. label or label from an approved testing laboratory and be installed in accordance with the National Electrical Code. Spot or effect lighting shall only be by electricity and all combustible construction located within 6 feet of such equipment shall be protected with approved noncombustible insulation not less than 9.25 inches thick.

Egress and Exits – The number and size of exits shall be based on the occupant load of the tent as determined by the tent’s use. All paths of egress to tent exits shall be always maintained clear of obstructions. Exit signs shall be clearly posted at each exit. Where the tent or canopy is used for seating, the seats, benches, or chairs shall be arranged in such a manner that aisles and exit access paths are clearly defined.

Provide fire extinguishers dispersed such that all areas within the tent are within 75 feet of a fire extinguisher. Fire extinguishers must be clearly visible, or their locations identified with clearly visible signs.

***OSHA requires tent stakes to be safety capped to prevent impalement or other injuries. ***