



## **GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE ERECTION OF TEMPORARY TENTS AND MEMBRANE STRUCTURES WITHIN LANCASTER CITY**

### **I. Application Process:**

- A. Vendor must possess a 'Certificate of Fitness' issued by the Fire Marshal *before* any application to erect a tent is accepted for processing.
- B. Approval Required. Tents and membrane structures (hereinafter 'tents') in excess of 200 SQUARE FEET require a permit and approval of the Fire Marshal prior to erection. Tents erected for the purpose of public assembly (e.g., circus, carnival, tent show, theater, skating rink, dance hall, etc.) or other uses or purposes are subject to these provisions as are tents for private assembly.
- C. At time of permit application, a site sketch containing the size and configuration of the tent(s) shall accompany the application – the sketch must be legible and reference to the nearest public way (street or road) shall be included on the sketch (for fire apparatus access).
- D. Erected tents shall be inspected by a Fire Marshal prior to use.
- E. An issued permit is valid for 180 days.

### **II. Tent Specifications:**

- A. Tent fabric shall be certified to meet flame propagation performance criteria of NFPA 701.
- B. Tents must be erected at least 20 feet from lot lines, buildings, other tents, parked vehicles or internal combustion engines – for the purposes of determining required distances, support ropes and guy lines/wires shall be considered part of the tent (separation exceptions may apply in certain situations – to be determined at time of application) – certain spacing requirements may apply when multiple tents are in an array – contact the Fire Marshal in such circumstances.
- C. Tents shall be adequately roped, braced and anchored to withstand the elements of weather and prevent against collapsing.
- D. Occupant load factors: If concentrated seating (chairs only) or unconcentrated seating (tables & chairs) is planned for inside the tent(s), maximum occupancy limits and aisle lengths & widths shall apply and are based on the prevailing requirements of the Lancaster City Fire Code – a dimensioned floor plan may be required to accurately determine occupant load – contact the Fire Marshal Division for specific details when applicable.
- E. Where required, doors, aisles, exit signs, means of egress illumination and means of egress shall be maintained in accordance to the provisions of the Lancaster City Fire Code.

**Bureau of Fire  
120 N. Duke Street  
P.O. Box 1599  
Lancaster, PA 17608-1599**

**III. Tent Use Restrictions and Requirements:**

- A. Smoking is prohibited inside tents and all tents shall be placarded accordingly.
- B. Combustible materials (e.g., hay, straw, shavings) shall not be located within any tent containing an assembly occupancy – sawdust and shavings utilized for a public performance are permitted but shall be kept damp.
- C. A minimum of one Class ABC rated portable fire extinguisher (PFE) - 2-A:40-B:C recommended - shall be provided, either by the tent vendor or the customer – PFEs shall be conspicuously located and available to occupants while the tent is in use – PFEs must have a current, valid service tag attached – the last PFE service inspection shall not be more than 12 months old.
- D. Where LPG powered heaters are used, the LPG supply must be situated a safe distance away from the tent(s) – not less than 10 feet – portable LPG containers and appurtenances shall be protected from tampering – LPG containers shall be secured to prevent unauthorized movement.
- E. Whenever sidewalls are in use, or may be installed by the customer, EXITS shall be identified and conspicuously marked – one EXIT is required – travel distance to an exit shall not exceed 100 feet.

**IV. Lancaster City Council Resolution 18-2008 of Chapter 142 of the Code of the City of Lancaster, adopted by Council on May 13, 2016:**

- A. Establishes the fee for a Certificate of Fitness, Tent Erection - \$100.00 per year.
- B. Each tent over 200 Sq. Ft. requires a permit - \$110.00 per tent.
- C. Tent vendors may consolidate annual permit to erect tents - \$4,000.00 per year.

**❖ FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH ANY OF THE PROVISIONS SECTION II AND III ABOVE MAY RESULT IN THE USE OF YOUR TENT BEING RESCINDED AND DISCONTINUED IMMEDIATELY BY THE FIRE MARSHAL.**

For more detailed information, contact the Fire Marshal: [firemarshal@cityoflanasterpa.com](mailto:firemarshal@cityoflanasterpa.com)

*Revised: 2/2020*

**Bureau of Fire  
120 N. Duke Street  
P.O. Box 1599  
Lancaster, PA 17608-1599**