

# Capitol Grounds

## Fire and Life Safety Requirements For Tents

### Introduction:

Fire and life safety requirements for tents are designed to comply with Codes and Standards from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). NFPA 101, 2012 Edition. The Life Safety Code sets minimum requirements which provide for a measure of safety from fire and the requirements for means of emergency egress.

Any questions should be directed to the Capitol Fire Marshal, John Nichols at (512) 463-5479 office, or e-mail address [john.nichols@tspb.state.tx.us](mailto:john.nichols@tspb.state.tx.us).

### Flame Resistance:

Tent Fabric - The tent fabric shall be flame resistant in compliance with NFPA 701, Standard Methods of Fire Tests for Flame Propagation of Textiles and Films. Certificate of flame resistance shall be attached to the tent and the certificate of evidence of compliance with NFPA 701 shall be provided to the State Fire Marshal's. (NFPA 101 - 11.11.2)

Contents, Furnishings, and Decorations - Fabrics such as draperies, curtains, and other loosely hanging furniture and decorations shall be flame resistant in compliance with NFPA 701 and the quantity limited to maintain life safety from fire. Compliance with NFPA 701 shall be provided to the State Fire Marshal's. Compliance listing should be available on the product manufacturer specification sheets or the original product package. (NFPA 101 - 12.7.4 and 10.3.)

### Portable fire extinguishers:

Portable fire extinguishers are required in all tents. (NFPA 101 - 11.11.5) Arrangements should be made with the vendor supplying the tent(s) or a local fire extinguisher vendor for supplying portable fire extinguishers. The fire extinguisher(s) shall be mounted or affixed to the tent poles in a manner they can be easily retrieved. Fire extinguishers are not permitted to sit on the ground.

- a. A minimum of 1 portable fire extinguisher is required in tents not exceeding 75 feet in length. Tents exceeding 75 feet in length shall have a minimum of 2 portable fire extinguishers. (NFPA 10 - Table 6.2.1.1)
- b. The minimum rating for portable fire extinguishers is 3A:40B:C. Portable fire extinguisher sizes of 5lb. or 10lb. with ABC rating will typically meet the rating requirement.
- c. Portable fire extinguishers shall be maintained fully charged and in operable condition. (BFPA 10 - 6.1.2)
- d. The maximum travel distance to portable fire extinguishers shall not exceed 75 feet. (NFPA 10 - Table 6.2.1.1)
- e. Portable fire extinguishers shall not be obstructed from view or access. (NFPA 10 - 6.1.3.3.1)
- f. Brackets for the portable fire extinguishers shall be securely mounted so the top of the fire extinguisher is not more than 5 feet from the floor (ground). (NFPA 10 - 6.1.3.8.1)
- g. Portable fire extinguishers shall have a current inspection tag (inspection within the past 12 months) from a State of Texas licensed fire extinguisher vendor.

### Location and Spacing:

Adjacent tents shall provide an area to be used as means of emergency egress. There shall be a minimum of 10 ft. between stake lines. (NFPA 101- 11.11.3.1) Spacing shall be approved by the Capitol Fire Marshal.

Placement of tents relative to other structures shall be approved by Capitol Fire Marshal, with consideration given to occupancy, use, opening, exposure, and other similar factors. (NFPA 101- 11.11.3.3)

## **Ground Within and Near the Tent:**

The ground enclosed within tents, and the ground for a reasonable distance but not less than 10 ft. outside tents shall be cleared of all flammable or combustible material or vegetation. (NFPA 101 - 11.11.4.1)

This portion of the Code prohibits the use of hay or other combustible materials as ground covering.

## **Cigarette Smoking:**

Smoking is not be permitted in tents or within 10 feet of tent stake lines. (NFPA 101 - 11.11.4.2)

## **Open Flames:**

Sterno type devices for heating prepared food for serving is permitted in tents. Other open flame devices are not permitted in tents.

- a. A separate tent is preferred to be used for food serving at a minimum of 10 feet from the dining tent(s).
- b. When the food serving is in the dining tent, the serving area shall be minimum of 10ft from the nearest dining tables.
- c. Candles are not permitted in tents.

## **Heaters for Cold Weather:**

- a. Fired Heaters: Only labeled heating devices shall be permitted. Fuel-fired heaters and their installation shall be approved by the Capitol Fire Marshal. (NFPA 101 - 11.11.6.1.2)
- b. Electric Heaters: Only labeled heaters shall be permitted. Heaters shall be connected by electric cable suitable for outside use and is of sufficient size to handle the electrical load. Electric heaters and their installation shall be approved by the Capitol Fire Marshal. (NFPA 101 - 11.11.6.2)
- c. Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) heaters are not permitted unless the tanks are a minimum of 5 feet from any tent and shall be secured in the upright position and protected from vehicular traffic.  
LPG heaters and their installation shall be approved by the Capitol Fire Marshal. (NFPA 101 - 11.11.6.1.3).

## **Dining Tents - Aisle access ways and aisles:**

Aisles shall be maintained so that any individual is able to move without undue hindrance at any time to the exits. Aisles are also maintained so crowd management, security, and emergency services personnel are able to reach any individual at any time, without undue hindrance. Layouts shall be approved by the Capitol Fire Marshal.

- a. Exits shall be located and exit access shall be arranged so exits are readily accessible at all times. (NFPA 101 - 13.2.1 and NFPA 101 - 7.5.1.1)
- b. Exits shall be arranged so the total length of travel distance from any point to reach an exit shall not exceed 200 ft. (NFPA 101 - 13.2.6)
- c. The Minimum distance between dining tables providing seating on both sides of table shall be 50 inches from table edge to table edge. This distance allows 19 inches each for seating at each table and 12 inches for walkway. (NFPA 101 - 13.2.5.7)
- d. The Minimum distance between dining tables providing seating on one side shall be 31 inches from table edge to table edge. This allows 19 inches for the seat and 12 inches of walkway. (NFPA 101 - 13.2.5.7)

- e. The main center walk way aisle shall be a minimum of 44 inches in clear width.  
(NFPA 101 - 13.2.5.8.2)

### **Tents With Side Panels:**

When side panels are used to enclose the tent a minimum of two remotely located exits are required.

- a. A minimum of two exits shall be located at a distance from one another not less than one-half the length of the maximum overall diagonal dimension of the tent, measured in a straight line between the nearest edge of the exits. The location of the exits shall be approved by the Capitol Fire Marshal. (NFPA 101 - 7.5.1.3.2)

# **Texas State Capitol Grounds Texas Governor's Mansion Grounds Installing Portable Fire Extinguishers In Tents**

November 7, 2013

This document sets out approved means of installing (mounting) fire extinguishers in tents.

## **Requirements:**

1. Each portable fire extinguishers shall be securely mounted on a hanger or bracket supplied by the extinguisher manufacturer.
2. The hanger shall be securely attached or fastened to the tent support pole.
3. The top of the extinguisher shall be no more than 5 feet from the ground or flooring.
4. The extinguisher operating instructions on the front of the extinguisher shall be clearly visible.

## **Acceptable Means of Mounting Fire Extinguishers in Tents:**

The extinguisher hanger or mounting bracket can be directly attached to the tent support pole. However, I understand attaching the hanger or mounting bracket directly to the tent support pole is not practical. A temporary mounting means can be accomplished by attaching the extinguisher hanger or bracket to a piece of lumber sized for the pole. The piece of lumber is then securely fastened to the pole and the extinguisher placed on the hanger or bracket.

Fire extinguishers with vehicle mounting brackets can be used. Check the bracket prior to purchase to ensure tie straps can fit around the bracket to secure to the tent pole and not interfere with extinguisher fitting into the bracket.

Other means of securely hanging extinguishers must have prior approval of the fire marshal.

## **Unacceptable Means of Mounting or Placing Extinguishers:**

The below described means of mounting or placing extinguishers is not acceptable.

1. Using tie straps to create a loop so the extinguisher handle goes into the loop to hang.
2. Using tie straps to strap the extinguisher directly to the tent pole.
3. Placing extinguishers inside a bag.
4. Placing extinguishers on the ground.

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