

Temporary Structures Reference Sheet For Special Events

A tent or a stage is a building without any foundation and can include a soft-sided or other structure designed to serve as a temporary structure for a special event. All structures must conform to the Alberta Building Code (ABC) and the Alberta Fire Code (AFC).

The list below provides the common code requirements applying to tents, stages, electrical, and lighting requirements in regards to temporary structures for special events. Additional requirements may apply depending on occupancy and use. All applicable legislation and conditions of the Safety Codes Act shall apply when installing a temporary tent and/or stage.

For the purpose of special events in Rocky View County, a temporary structure is described as a structure that has minimal impact on the surrounding neighbourhood and is erected for a maximum of fourteen (14) consecutive days.

Permit Requirements:

1. Building Permits are required for:
 - 1.1. A tent, or group of tents, collectively covering more than 60 m² (645 ft²) in total area.
 - 1.2. A tent located less than 3 m (10 ft.) from any other structure.
 - 1.3. A tent used for commercial purposes.
 - 1.4. A tent containing cooking equipment.
 - 1.5. Stages over 1.2 m (4 ft.) above the ground.
2. Building Permits are not required for:
 - 2.1. Tents, or a group of tents that collectively cover less than 60 m² (645 square ft²).
 - 2.2. Tents that are more than 3 m (10 ft.) from any structure.
 - 2.3. Tents that do not contain cooking equipment.
 - 2.4. Stages that are less than 1.2 m (4 ft.) above the ground.

Submission Requirements for Temporary Tents and Stage Permits:

1. A Site plan showing the location of the structure and the distances from all other structures.
2. Description of the tent size, intended use, and length of time the tent will be erected.
3. Every tent, tarpaulins, and decorative materials used in connection with a tent shall conform to the CAN/ULC-S109 "Standard for Flame Tests of Flame Resistance Fabrics and Films". Provide verification of the materials and installation requirements when completing your special event application. (This information can be found in the manufacturer's information sheet or can be provided by the professional installer.)
4. Engineering installation requirements, including anchoring details. The engineering drawings should be stamped by a qualified engineer. (This information can be found in the manufacturer's information sheet or can be provided by the professional installer.)
5. Description of stage size, including length, height, and width. (This information can be found in the manufacturer's information.)

Tent Requirements:

1. The ground enclosed by a tent and not less than 3 m of ground outside the structure shall be cleared of all flammable material and vegetation that could spread fire.
2. Anchorage of a tent under 300 m² (3,229 ft²) shall be as per manufacturers recommendations. Anchorage of a tent that exceeds 300 m² shall have its anchorage designed by a professional engineer.
3. Multiple tents shall be considered as one tent when they are less than 3 m (9.8 ft.) placed with no separation between them in determining area for maximum tent size and area for anchorage.
4. Emergency lights must be provided if the occupancy is greater than 60 people.
5. Emergency exit signs are required if the occupancy is greater than 150 people.
6. Portable fire extinguishers shall be provided in all tents so that the travel distance does not exceed 75 ft. between extinguishers unless otherwise required by code.
7. An approved ventilation system is required if there is cooking that produces grease/oily vapors inside the tent.
8. Combustible materials such as hay, straw, and shavings are not permitted within a tent where open flame or smoking is occurring.

Electrical & Gas Requirements:

1. Permits are always required where plumbing, electrical, or gas work is being completed.
2. Emergency lighting must be provided if the occupancy is greater than 60 people.
3. Exit signs are required if the occupancy is greater than 150 people.
4. All electrical system and equipment in a tent including electrical fuses and switches shall be inaccessible to the public.
5. Cables on the ground in areas used by the public in a tent shall be placed in trenches or protected by covers to prevent damage from traffic or from becoming a tripping hazard.
6. Electrical permits are required for all electrical installations.
7. Gas permits are required for installations of gas heaters used to heat a tent.
(Note: Construction heaters will not be allowed for use in tents of public occupancy).