

# City of Charlottesville

## Fire Department

Office of the Fire Marshal  
203 Ridge Street  
Charlottesville VA 22902  
Telephone: 434-970-3325  
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### Tent and other Membrane Structure Guidelines

- Any tent over 900 square feet is required to have a building permit.
- Any tent over 200 square feet is required to have a fire safety inspection, except those used exclusively for recreational camping purposes.
- Any canopy over 700 square feet is required to have a fire safety inspection.
- Tents and canopies shall not be located within 20 feet of lot lines, buildings, other tents, parked cars or other combustion engines. For the purposes of measuring, the guy wires and ropes are part of the tent.
- Anchoring of the tent shall be adequate to withstand the elements of weather and prevent against collapse.
- Temporary tents are those that shall not be erected for more than 180 days in a 12 month period.
- Combustible materials (hay, straw, shavings or similar materials) shall not be stored in the tent or within 20 feet of the structure.
- Open flame, or other devices emitting flame, fire, heat, or any flammable or combustible liquid shall not be permitted inside or within 20 feet of the structure unless approved by the Fire Marshal's Office.
- Approved portable fire extinguishers shall be placed in accordance with Section 906 of the *Statewide Fire Prevention Code*.
- Smoking is prohibited, and "NO SMOKING" signs must be clearly posted.
- Emergency lighting must be provided.
- Exits and Means of Egress:
  - Exit signs are required at each exit doorway and must be illuminated (exception of less than 50 people occupancy).
  - Aisles to the exits are a minimum of 44 inches and must be maintained.

Occupant Load	Minimum number of Means of Egress	Minimum width of each Means of Egress (inches)
10 to 199	2	72
199 to 499	3	72
500 to 999	4	96
1000 to 1999	5	120
2000 to 2999	6	120
over 3000	7	120