



Fire & Building Safety

University of California, Merced
5200 N. Lake Rd.
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Fire & Building Safety Guideline

SUBJECT: Vendor Fair Fire Safety Requirements for Small Tents/Canopies

PURPOSE: *Guidelines are established to facilitate compliance with applicable codes, standards, and regulations. Information contained herein applies to typical circumstances and may not address all situations.*

Guideline No. 005

Rev. Date _____

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Reference:

2022 California Building Code (CBC), 2022 California Fire Code (CFC), 2022 California Electric Code (CEC), California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 19

Scope:

The Fire and Building Safety (FABS) team is responsible for enforcing certain code requirements pertaining to potentially hazardous activities, equipment, and structures commonly associated with utilizing canopies/small tents. This guideline has been developed to provide clarification and support for organizations, staff, faculty, and members of the public who will be erecting a small tent/canopy on University of California, Merced property.

Definitions (CFC Chapter 2 – Definitions):

1. **Membrane structure** – An air-inflated, air supported, cable or frame-covered structure as defined by the CBC and CFC, Chapter 31 and not otherwise defined as a tent. See Fire & Building Safety Guideline 002 – Temporary Tents and Membrane Structures.
2. **Tent** – A structure, enclosure, umbrella structure or shelter, with or without sidewalls, or drops, constructed of fabric or pliable material supported by any manner except air or the contents it protects.
 - a. **[California Code of Regulations, Title 19, Division 1, §310 (a) through (c) Definitions.]**
 - i. (a) *Tent. A shelter, structure or enclosure made of fabric or similar pliable material.*
 - ii. (b) *Large tent. A tent designed for use by 10 or more people.*
 - iii. (c) *Small tent. A tent designed for use by less than 10 people.*
3. **Canopy** – A structure or architectural projection of rigid construction over which a covering is attached that provides weather protection, identity or decoration and may be structurally

independent or supported by attachment to a building on one end and by not less than one stanchion on the outer end.

4. **Flame Resistance Standards** – (a) All tent fabrics, and all interior decorative fabrics or materials shall be flame resistant in accordance with appropriate standards set forth in California Code of Regulations. Title 19, Division 1, Chapter 8. Tent tops and sidewalls shall be made either from fabric which has been flame resistant treated with an approved exterior chemical process by an approved application concern, or from inherently flame-resistant fabric approved and list by the State Fire Marshal. (b) Sawdust, shavings, or combustible materials used on the floor or ground shall be made flame resistant or when approved by the enforcing authority shall be kept adequately damp when tent is occupied. (c) (Repealed) (d) Certificates of Flame Resistance or other documentation affirming the requirements of subsection (a) of this section shall be made available upon request of the enforcement authority. **CCR Title 19, Division 1, Chapter 2, Article 3 §315**
5. **Relocatable Power Tap (RPT)** – A relocatable electrical enclosure that provides one or more receptacle outlets and that is provided with an attached power supply cord and attachment plug for connection to a permanently installed receptacle outlet (also called a “multiplug adaptor”. Power strips are also considered relocatable power taps.
6. **Umbrella Structure** – A structure, enclosure, or shelter with or without sidewalls, or drops, constructed of fabric or pliable material supported by a central pole or poles.
7. **Underwriters Laboratory** - UL

Code Sections:

1. Hazard Abatement: Operations or conditions deemed unsafe or hazardous by the fire code official shall be abated. Equipment, appliances, materials, and systems that are modified or damaged and constitute an electrical shock or fire hazard shall not be used. **CFC 601.2**
2. Provide a minimum 2-A:10-B:C rated fire extinguisher **displaying a current service tag** (see example below) within 75’ of travel distance for your canopy. **CFC Section 906.1**



3. Fire extinguisher to be mounted so that the top of the fire extinguisher is no higher than 48" (inches) above the floor but in no case shall the clearance between the bottom of the fire extinguisher and the floor be less than 15" (inches). **CCR, Title 19, Division 1, §567.6 & CBC 11B-308**
4. All membrane structures, tents, canopies, umbrellas are required to be flame retardant. Small canopies are required to have a Canvas Products Association International (CPAI-84) tag. See example below of CPAI tag. **CCR Title 19, Division 1, Chapter 2, Article 4 §332 (a)(2)**



5. Multiplug adapters such as cube taps and unfused plug strips, or any other appliance not meeting the requirements of the California Electrical Code are not allowed. Relocatable power taps shall be listed in accordance with UL 498A. **CFC 603.5.1**
6. Relocatable power tap cords shall not extend through walls, ceilings, floors, under doors, or floor coverings, or be subject to environment or physical damage. **CFC 603.5.3**
7. Relocatable power taps shall be listed in accordance with UL 1363. **CFC 603.5.1**
8. Electrical wiring or devices that have been modified or damaged and constitute an electrical shock or fire hazard cannot be used. **CFC 602.2.1**
9. Extensions cords **CFC 603.6:**
 - a. Extension cords marked for indoor use shall not be used outdoors.
 - b. Shall be listed and labeled in accordance with UL 817.
 - c. Shall not be affixed to structures, extend through walls, ceilings, or floors, or under doors or floor coverings, nor shall such cords be subject to environmental damage or physical impact.
10. Extension cords shall be maintained in good condition without splices, deterioration, or damage. **CFC 603.6.3**
11. Extension cords shall be plugged directly into an approved receptacle, relocatable power tap or current tap and, except for approved multi-plug extension cords shall serve only one portable appliance. **CFC 603.6.1**
12. The ampacity of the extension cords shall not be less than the rated capacity of the portable appliance supplied by the cord. **CFC 603.6.2**
13. Extension cords shall be grounded where serving grounded portable appliances. **CFC 603.6.3.4**
14. Electrical equipment and wiring shall be listed and labeled for outdoor use. **CFC 3106.6.1**
15. Tents and membrane structures having an area in excess of 400 square feet shall not be erected, operated or maintained for any purpose without first obtaining a permit and approved form the Building & Fire code official.
 - a. Exceptions:
 - i. Tents used exclusively for recreational camping purposes.
 - ii. Tents open on all sides that comply with all of the following:
 1. Individual tents having a maximum size of 700 square feet.
 2. The aggregate area of multiple tents placed side by side without a fire break clearance of 12 feet, not exceeding 700 square feet total.
 3. A minimum clearance of 12 feet to all structures and other tents.
16. Tents/canopies or membrane structures and their appurtenances shall be designed and installed to withstand elements of weather and prevent collapsing. **CFC 3103.9** Provide a means to secure the tent/canopy to prevent the tent/canopy from being blown during high winds. Manufacturer recommendations shall be followed for the tent/canopy. If you are unable to locate the manufacturer's recommendation 40 pounds is the typical manufacturer weight recommendation for a 10 x 10, 50 pounds for umbrellas.

17. Generators shall be installed not less than 10 feet from combustibles and shall be isolated from the public by physical guard, fence or enclosure installed not less than 3 feet away from the internal combustion power source. **CFC 3106.6.2**
18. A listed portable fire extinguisher complying with a minimum rating of a 2-A-:20-B:C shall be provided not more than 50 feet from the portable generator. **CFC 1204.10**
19. 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 locating within 20 feet of the tent or membrane structures while open to the public unless approved by the fire code official. **CFC 3107.4**
20. UC Merced is a non-smoking campus. Smoking is not permitted in any tent and in any adjacent areas where hay or other highly flammable materials are kept. "No Smoking" signs shall be conspicuously posted in all tents open to the public and wherever otherwise specified by the enforcing authority. **CCR, Title 19, Division 1, §316 Smoking Prohibited**
21. All flammable vegetation within 50 feet of any tent shall be removed. **CCR, Title 19, Division 1, Article 3 §326**
22. Combustible refuse shall be kept in noncombustible containers with tight-fitting or self-closing lids. Combustible refuse shall be removed from the event site at regular intervals to prevent an unsafe accumulation within the event site. **CFC 3106.4.7**
23. Decorative lighting used for holiday lighting and similar purposes, in accordance with 590.3(B), shall be listed and shall be labeled on the product. **CEC 590.5**
24. Examples of Non-approved electrical cords:

