



Temporary Tents Building Permit & Approvals Guide

This guide has been developed for convenience purposes only.

The Owner is responsible for ensuring compliance with all current City by-laws and other applicable regulations. Although every attempt has been made to provide accurate information at the time of printing, it is subject to change without notice and is provided as a **guide only**.

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Temporary Tents within the City of Orillia

This guide provides specific information related to building permit application requirements for temporary tents and has been developed to assist property owners to allow the temporary use of a tent or a group of tents for special events within the City of Orillia.

This guide should not be relied on in place of professional expertise. If you are unfamiliar with building construction procedures, the assistance of a qualified building contractor or architect can save you both time and money.

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Definition of a Temporary Tent

The word “tent” as used in the Ontario Building Code is intended to refer to a temporary shelter which is used at an open-air event such as a fair or an exhibition. A tent will normally be constructed of a fabric held up by poles and attached to the ground by ties.

The requirement for a tent permit is not intended to be applied to fabric structures located on buildings.

Note: Permanent fabric structures are not addressed in this guide and have their own set of requirements under the Ontario Building Code.

When a Building Permit is Required

Ontario Building Code, 1.3.1.1. (5), Division C:

A tent or group of tents is exempt from the requirement to obtain a permit under Section 8 of the *Building Code Act* and is exempt from compliance with the Building Code provided that the tent or group of tents are,

- (a) not more than 60m² in aggregate ground area,
- (b) not attached to a building, and
- (c) constructed more than 3m from other structures.

* The aggregate ground area refers to the sum of the total area of all tents on site.

For example, if the total ground area of all tents on site exceeds 60m^2 (645ft^2), then a permit is required.

A permit for a tent is required if you answer “yes” to any of the following statements:

- ✓ Is the proposed tent(s) larger than 60m^2 (645.6ft^2) in aggregate ground area?
- ✓ Will it be attached to a building?
- ✓ Will it be constructed less than 3m (9ft-10in) from another structure or property line?

Examples:

- A. ABC Tent Rental wishes to install three (3) 10ft x 10ft tents for a baseball tournament that is to take place in a park.
 - No other tents will be installed on that day and the tents are located at least 10ft (3.1m) away from any other structure and property lines.
 - The area of all three tents is $300\text{ft}^2 = 27.87\text{m}^2$
 - A permit is *not required* for installing these tents.

- B. The following week there is another tournament, and the organizers of the event would like to have one more tent.
 - ABC Tent Rental will be supplying the same three tents that were used last week, and XYZ Tent Rental will be supplying one (1) 20 ft x 20 ft tent.
 - The area of all four tents is $700\text{ft}^2 = 65.03\text{m}^2$
 - A permit is required for installing these tents.

Ontario Building Code Requirements for Tents

Table 1: Summary of Building Code Requirements

Description		Area of Proposed Tent	
		60m ² to 225m ²	> 225m ²
1	Building Permit Required	✓	✓
2	Professional Engineer Design	x	✓
3	Professional Engineer Field Review	x	✓
4	Minimum 3.0m from property lines & other structures/tents	✓	✓
6	Minimum 3.0m clearance of vegetation and combustibles	✓	✓
7	Tent fabric & films certified to CAN/ULC-S109/NFPA 701	✓	✓
8	Access required for the purpose of firefighting.	✓	✓
9	Driveway for fire truck access within 30m of tent	✓	✓
10	Electrical equipment inaccessible to public	✓	✓
11	Cables on the ground placed in trenches or protected	✓	✓
12	Minimum 30m travel distance to exit	✓	✓
13	Minimum width between stake lines shall be the width necessary for means of egress, but not less than 3m.	✓	✓
14	Exits signs & emergency lighting	✓	✓

Note:

1. Any tent with sidewalls must be designed by a qualified and registered designer (BCIN).
2. A tent <225m² in area and will no sidewalls or bleachers is exempt from any designer requirements of the Ontario Building Code.
3. No cooking that produces grease/oily vapours is allowed in tents without an approved ventilation system.

Means of Egress, Exits and Emergency Lighting

Ontario Building Code, 3.14.1.3. (1), Division C:

- (1) Except as provided in Sentences (2) and (3), tents shall conform to Section 3.3 and 3.4.
- (2) A tent need not conform to Article 3.4.6.11 except where swing type doors are provided.
- (3) Where the area between adjacent tents or a tent and the property line is used as a means of egress, the minimum width between stake lines shall be the width necessary for means of egress, but not less than 3m.

Means of Egress

- Sufficient and unobstructed exits and aisles to accommodate the tents maximum occupant load.
- The travel distance to an exit from any point must not exceed 30m
- The headroom clearance for doorways shall be not less than 2030mm (6' - 8") as per 3.4.3.6.(3) Div. B, OBC.
- Means of egress must be illuminated with light having an intensity of at least one (1) foot-candle while the structure is occupied.
- Power for means of egress lighting must be supplied from a separate circuit or source.

Exit Signs

- Emergency exit signage is required if occupancy is greater than 150 people.
- Required emergency exits must be designated and identified with proper signage.

Emergency Lighting

- Emergency lights are required if the occupancy is greater than 60 people and which is used after sunset; or unless it is shown to be unnecessary.
- Where artificial lighting is proposed within a tent, or if natural lighting levels inside a tent will be insufficient to allow the exits to be easily identified, minimum lighting levels, emergency lighting, and exit signs conforming to Subsections 3.2.7. and 3.4.5. of the Ontario Building Code may be required.

Separation of Exits

Ontario Building Code, 3.4.1.2. (1), Division C:

- (1) Except as permitted by Sentence (2), if more than one *exit* is required from a *floor area*, each *exit* shall be separate from every other *exit* leading from that *floor area*.
- (2) If more than two *exits* are provided from a *floor area*, *exits* are permitted to converge in conformance with Sentence 3.4.3.1.(2), provided the cumulative capacity of the converging *exits* does not contribute more than 50% of the total required *exit* width for the *floor area*.

Sanitary Facilities

Ontario Building Code, 3.14.1.8. (1), Division B

- (1) Except as provided in Sentence (3), the minimum number of water closets for tents shall be determined in accordance with Table 3.7.4.3.E.
- (2) Article 3.7.4.17. applies to sanitary facilities in Sentence (1).
- (3) Sanitary privies, chemical closets or other means for the disposal of human waste may be provided in lieu of toilet fixtures.

The number of privies shall comply to Table 3.7.4.3.E of the Ontario Building Code:

Table 3.7.4.3.E

(Privies required) for Each Sex	
Number of Persons	Minimum number of Water Closets
1 to 50	2
51 to 70	3
71 to 90	4
91 to 110	5
111 to 140	6
141 to 180	7
181 to 220	8
220 to 260	9
For groups of 260 or more, provide 10+1 for each additional increment of 40 persons of each sex.	

Requirements for Large Tents > 225m²

Qualified Designer and Field Review Requirements

A Qualified and Registered Designer shall be required where the tent or a group of tents:

1. Exceed 225m² (2,420ft²) in ground area;
2. Exceed 225m² (2,420ft²) in aggregate area and are closer than 3m apart;
3. Contain bleachers; or
4. Enclosed with sidewalls.

Note: An application for a tent or a group of tents that are not in compliance with the above conditions will require a Professional Engineer to perform a field review.

The support structure, frame and anchorage shall be designed, sealed, and reviewed by a professional engineer, who is registered and licensed to practice in the province of Ontario.

The Professional Engineer shall provide details and calculations for anchorage, wind, snow (if applicable), rain load and, confirm the structural capacity of the site to support imposed loads as follows:

- Wind, snow, and rain load calculations/details
- Foundation/anchorage calculations/details
- Mechanical ventilation details (If applicable)

Examples:

- A. ABC Tent Rental intends to install a 40ft x 80ft tent (with or without sidewalls).
 - A Professional Engineer to perform a field review as per 3.13.1.2.(2)(a)(b), Div. B, OBC.
- B. ABC Tent Rental intends to install a 30ft x 30ft tent less than 3 m (9ft 10 in) away from a 30ft x 60 ft.
 - They will require a Professional Engineer to perform a field review as per 3.13.1.2.(2)(c), Div. B, OBC.
- C. ABC Tent Rental intends to install a 30ft x 30ft tent without any sidewalls. Their customer will then be placing bleachers inside the tent.
They will require a Professional Engineer to perform a field review as per 3.13.1.2.(2)(d), Div. B, OBC

Fire Safety Requirements

A Fire Safety Inspection of the tent(s) shall be conducted by the [Fire Department](#) prior to the start of the event.

The Ontario Fire Code contains minimum fire and life safety requirements specific to Assembly Occupancies and tents for special events:

- Portable fire extinguishers with a minimum 2A rating are required to be placed at or near each exit. One or more portable fire extinguishers to be provided. The minimum size acceptable is a 2.2 kilogram (5 LB), A-B,C multipurpose dry chemical extinguisher
- The number of required portable fire extinguishers shall be determined by the Fire Department
- Exit signs (running man type) may be required if the tent is enclosed.
- No Smoking signs shall be posted in the tent and adhered to.
- All exits and means of egress in an open side and an enclosed tent are required to always remain clear of any obstructions on both the interior and the exterior.
- Aisle widths are required to be minimum 1100mm. (Consider table placement)
- Open flames of any kind are not permitted in the tent. Unless conformance with OFC-2.9.3.2. Consult with the Chief Fire Prevention Officer.
- Smoking is not permitted in the tent and signage must be displayed to indicate designated smoking areas
- Fire access routes required to be maintained. Do not block driveway access for fire department
- The travel distance to an exit from any point must not exceed 30m.
- Property owner is required to know the emergency procedures and their individual responsibilities as it relates to fire and life safety.
- Escape routes are to be clearly identified, kept clear of obstructions at all times and staff rehearsed on procedures, their roles and responsibilities if an emergency situation should occur
- A Fire Watch System must be in effect during events and/or functions. A Fire Watch System means a person is employed to watch for fire and is familiar with the Approved Fire Safety Plan, condition of exits, maintaining clear exit paths or egress for corridors and aisles and ensuring regulations are complied with.
- For Occupant Loads > 1,000 people a fire alarm system must be installed
- Instances where the Fire Department determined the capacity (occupant load) in conjunction with the Alcohol & Gaming Commission of Ontario, and/or the Building Division, *the occupant load that is the most restrictive will determine the capacity for the event and be the occupant load identified on the sign(s) posted.*

Periodic inspection(s) may occur during the event to ensure conformance with the Ontario Fire Code.

Electrical Safety Requirements

In Ontario electrical safety compliance inspections are conducted by the Electrical Safety Authority.

Your electrical contractor should be familiar with the electrical permitting and inspection process.

Any electrical systems shall be inaccessible to the public. Cables on ground in a tent shall be placed in trenches or protected to prevent damage.

An electrical permit is required for fairs and concessions when:

- Temporary wiring (lighting and power) is attached to the steel structure.
- Power is supplied to the structure from a permanent power- source,
- A generator is supplied that is required to be grounded
- The steel structure is required to be bonded to ground.

The ESA will conduct a visual inspection to see if the existing wiring and electrical service are safe. In addition to ensuring that electrical installations meet the requirements of the Ontario Electrical Safety Code, the inspector will check to see whether these installations are satisfactory.

For more information contact the Electrical Safety Authority directly at:

1-877-ESA-SAFE (372-7233) OR www.esasafe.com



After the Permit has been Issued

1. Once the permit is obtained for your tent; the erection of the tent may take place.
2. **Prior to use or Occupancy**, an inspection is required. You will need to book the inspection:

TO SCHEDULE AN INSPECTION

Please allow 2 business days for scheduling inspections

A permit number must accompany all requests via telephone and/or email

Inspection Phone Line: (705) 329-7258

OR

email: building@orillia.ca

3. A Building Inspector will attend the site and verify the size, location and anchorage of the tent or group of tents and issue a Tent Occupancy Permit if satisfactory.
4. Upon completion of your event, the tent is to be removed and confirmed by the Building Division.