

Advisory Bulletin

February 2012

Subject: Tents and canopies for outdoor special events

Special functions such as weddings, performances, sporting events, charity runs races and walks, street, music and cultural festivals, parades, block parties and other special events are subject to applicable safety regulations, bylaw rules and licensing requirements. These are intended to help keep citizens safe and ensure special functions are run responsibly and respectful of neighbours.

The focus of this advisory bulletin is on the applicable safety regulations, which apply regardless of whether the event takes place on private or public land.

For more information on bylaw rules and licensing requirements, which generally only apply to special functions that take place on private property, visit calgary.ca and search [Party tents and other special functions](#).

For more information on the management of special events that take place on City land, visit calgary.ca and search [planning a new special event](#).

SAFETY REGULATIONS

Tents, canopies, stages and other festival-type structures must conform to Alberta Building Code and Alberta Fire Code to ensure public safety, health, fire and structural safety, accessibility and performance requirements are met. The Electrical Code and the Plumbing & Gas Code also contain regulations and requirements for tents where there are cooking appliances, electricity, propane or other fuel sources involved.

Building Permits

A Building Permit is required for an individual or group of tents which covers more than 60 sq.m. (645 sq.ft.) of ground. A tent that covers less than 60 sq.m of ground but is within 3 m (9.8') of another structure, or contains commercial cooking equipment requires a building permit.

For residential uses, building permits are NOT required, as per the Alberta Safety Codes Act – Permit Regulation. The City will review residential tents on a complaints basis for any unsafe conditions.

Tent and canopy materials must be made of flame resistant material that conforms to CAN/ULC-S109.

Electrical Permits

An Electrical permit is required for fairs & concessions as per Bylaw 55M89 when:

- Temporary wiring (lighting & 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.

Gas Permits

- A Gas permit is required when a propane container has a capacity of greater than 454 litres (400 lbs.) water capacity or when containers are manifold together and the aggregate capacity exceeds 454 litres water capacity. For example, when a horizontal tank or “pigs” are connected together the capacity would be exceeded.
- All gas installations shall comply with the current edition of the Natural Gas and Propane Installation Code (B149.1-10) as well as the Propane Storage and Handling Code (B149.2-10).
- All appliances, accessories, and equipment, must be used and installed according to the manufacturer’s instructions and B149.2-10.
- 100 lb propane tanks shall be 3 m (9.8 ft) away from appliances (source of ignition).

CALGARY FIRE DEPARTMENT REQUIREMENTS

Canopy: A structure, enclosure or shelter constructed of fabric or pliable material supported by any manner other than air or the contents it protects and is open without sidewalls or drops on at least three sides of the structure.

Tent: A structure, enclosure or shelter constructed of fabric or pliable material supported by any manner except air or the contents it protects with sidewalls or drops on more than one side.

Cooking appliances may be used in a **tent** with the following provisions:

1. No “open flame” cooking appliances or barbeques are permitted in tents.
2. Any cooking that may produce grease laden vapours is not permitted to be located inside a tent, unless the requirements of NFPA 96 (Ventilation Control & Fire Protection of Commercial Cooking Operations) are met.
3. Cooking appliances must be placed on a stable base to limit the risk of the appliance tipping.
4. A 1 m clearance surrounding the cooking appliance shall be maintained for movement of public and staff.

Cooking appliances may be used under a **canopy** with the following provisions:

1. No barbeques are permitted under a canopy.
2. A maximum of two (2) cooking appliances that may produce grease laden vapours are permitted per canopy space measuring 3 x 3 meters.
3. There shall be a vertical clearance of 1 m from the cooking appliance to the ceiling.
4. Canopies used for cooking shall be a min. of 3 m from any other tent, building or non-cooking canopy (i.e., cooking canopies can be immediately adjacent to each other).

PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES WITH JURISDICTION

- Alberta Gaming & Liquor Commission (when [Special events licences](#)⁺⁺ are required)
- Alberta Health Services (when operating a temporary food establishment in conjunction with the event; see [Special events – organizer package](#) and [Special events temporary food establishment – vendor package](#))

⁺⁺Links to material referenced above can be found at by searching calgary.ca for *Party tents and other special functions*.

For more information, visit calgary.ca and search [Building regulations for tents and other temporary structures](#).

Advisory bulletins have no legal status and cannot be used as an official interpretation of the various bylaws, codes and regulations currently in effect. The City of Calgary accepts no responsibility to persons relying solely on this information.