Tents and Heater Provisions During the Pandemic – Using Outdoor Spaces When Public Health Rules Limit Indoor Assembly Uses

Tents pose a life safety risk due to flammability and collapse considerations. Larger tents are regulated by the Fire and Building Codes. Sources of heat can also pose risks, whether the heat is provided by propane/Liquified Petroleum Gas (LPG), diesel, or electricity. This document presents a summary of code requirements as well as current exceptions allowed during the COVID emergency operational mode we are experiencing.

TENTS

An SFD permit is required for a temporary tent, canopy, or air-supported structure more than 400 square feet if that structure has walls. Tents of less than 400 square feet do not require an SFD permit. In addition, roof-only canopies of less than 700 square feet do not require an SFD permit if both of these conditions are met: (1) individual maximum size of 700 square feet; (2) total area of multiple tents placed side by side less than 12 feet apart is 700 square feet or less.

No-Fee Permit During the COVID Emergency SFD is issuing a no-fee temporary tent permit (permit code 3201-CV) to responsible parties who are moving some or all of their service or business outside due to public health rules limiting indoor use. A typical example would be outdoor dining or school classrooms. The no-fee permit includes conditions you must follow regarding tent materials and installation to comply with safety requirements in the fire code. The permit is good for 90 days. If your tent will be used for longer than 90 days, after receiving your no-fee SFD temporary tent permit, please contact the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections and determine if you wish to request their permit or administrative review to receive code compliance assurance. This step is recommended but not required during the period of emergency operations in Seattle. Awnings also require permits from SDCI and are not handled by SFD. Even after the SFD temporary permit has expired (90 days) you will still be required to meet fire code conditions if your tent remains in use. If you are renting your tent from a tent company, please notify the company if you are eligible for the no-fee permit and check the invoice to ensure they are not inadvertently charging you for any SFD permit fee. Eligibility: you are moving some of your business or service outdoors due to public health limits on indoor use. If you were previously issued a temporary tent or LPG permit and are eligible for the no-fee permit, we will refund you the payment in full, please contact us at permits@seattle.gov.

Make Sure Your Tent Can Be Approved by the Fire Marshal If you are purchasing a tent greater than 400 sq feet, please ensure that it meets flame retardant standards in the fire code. You will be required to accept responsibility and liability for the proper installation of the tent per industry standards and/or manufacturer's installation instructions. Temporary tents should not be occupied during periods of snow or ice accumulation unless designed for full structural loading per the Seattle Building Code. Smaller tents should be removed during snow and ice accumulation and wind events. Tents rented through a reputable tent rental company will meet fire code standards and the tent company will assume liability for proper installation.

How Close to a Building Can a Tent be Installed? For example, Tents Covering Sidewalk Dining Tables SFD generally requires a set-back between tents and buildings of a minimum of 10 feet, primarily to allow access for emergency medical vehicles. However, during the COVID emergency, SFD is able to issue permits that allow tents to abut buildings with zero feet of clearance.

What are the Full Permit Conditions for a Temporary Tent? Please see the last page.

OUTDOOR HEATING AND LIGHTING
Temporary SFD Permits for Tents & Outdoor Heaters – Permitting Information and Exceptions Provided During the Pandemic

Propane (LPG) and Diesel-Fueled Heaters Require a Permit and Fuel Propane Tanks are Not Allowed Inside Tents. This means “mushroom” heaters are allowed 10 feet away from tents, but are prohibited inside tents. “Salamander” style heaters which blow air in under a tent from the outside are permitted and are commonly available from tent rental companies. The fuel tank must be a minimum 10 feet away from the tent and exits and you must have 3A 40BC fire extinguishers.

OUTDOOR HEATING AND LIGHTING (Cont’d)

If you rent an LPG or diesel heater from a tent rental company, that company will usually have the required SFD propane/diesel heater permit, and you will not need an additional permit. They should also provide required fire extinguishers. If you are purchasing your own LPG or diesel heaters, you will need an SFD permit.

No-Fee Propane and Diesel Heater Permits During the COVID Emergency SFD is issuing no-fee temporary Propane/LPG heating permit (permit code 8207-CV) and diesel permits (permit code 1102-CV) to responsible parties who are moving some or all of their service or business outside due to public health rules limiting indoor use. A typical example would be outdoor dining or school classrooms. The no-fee permit includes conditions you must follow regarding safely locating, storing, and using the propane or diesel. The permit is valid until October 2021 or until the City ends COVID emergency operations, whichever comes first. If you are applying for a heater permit that is not associated with a tent, you will also be asked to provide a sketch or diagram of the proposed location showing exits, awnings, and tables where the heater will be deployed. If you were previously issued a temporary tent, propane/LPG or diesel permit and are eligible for the no-fee permit, we will refund you the payment in full, please contact us at permits@seattle.gov.

Electric Heaters and Lighting are allowed outside as well as inside tents and do not require a separate permit from SFD. However, electric heaters are not allowed to be powered by extension cords and must be plugged directly into an approved receptacle or outlet. Extension cords if used for lighting can only be used on a temporary basis and must not be installed for permanent use (longer than 90 days). They must not be connected into each other and should never be attached to permanent fixtures or pass through holes in walls. Any significant electrical outlet must remain covered. This applies to junction boxes, circuit breaker panels, and any type of outlet box. Electrical cords must be protected from wear and damage and to avoid trip hazards.

For more information, please contact the Special Events Unit, SFD_FMO_SpecialEvents@seattle.gov. Thank you for your commitment to public safety. We wish you a safe and successful 2020.

PERMIT CONDITIONS: SFD TEMPORARY TENT PERMITS

Note: These conditions are for temporary tent permits issued during COVID emergency operations and are subject to change once COVID emergency operations are no longer in effect.

1. Minimum number and width of exits/egress ways shall be as listed on the chart below. Maximum travel distance to an exit shall be 100 ft. when inside the tent. (‘15 SFC Section 3103.12)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupant Load</th>
<th>Minimum number of means of egress</th>
<th>Minimum width of each means of egress (inches)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 to 199</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 to 499</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 to 999</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000 to 1,999</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,000 to 2,999</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 3,000</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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2. Each exit shall be provided with a lighted ‘EXIT’ sign with letters at least 5 inches in height. (15 SFC Section 3103.12.6)

PERMIT CONDITIONS: SFD TEMPORARY TENT PERMITS (cont’d)

4. Provide one fire extinguisher rated a minimum of 2A for each 2,000 square feet of tent area. The location of each extinguisher shall be marked by signs, which are clearly visible. The maximum travel distance to any fire extinguisher within the tent shall be 50 ft. (15 SFC Section 3104.12) Any vehicles in the tent shall have their fuel tanks emptied and the battery cables disconnected. (15 SFC Section 3104.18)

5. Post “NO SMOKING” signs, which are readily visible throughout the tent/canopy, and enforce this policy. (15 SFC Section 3104.6)

6. The grounds, both inside and outside, shall be kept free and clear of combustible waste. Any waste shall be removed and stored in an approved manner. (15 SFC Sections 3104.21 & 3104.22)

7. There shall be no open flame devices or demonstrations allowed in the tent without prior approval by the Fire Prevention Division. (15 SFC Section 3104.7)

8. The sidewalls drop and top of the tent shall be of flame retardant material. (15 SFC Section 3104.2)

9. Any unforeseen conditions that would present a fire hazard, or would contribute to rapid spread of a fire, or would delay or interfere with a rapid exit from the tent, which are not covered by this permit, shall be immediately abated or corrected. (15 SFC Section 105.3)

10. Only electric powered heating devices are allowed inside the tent. All other heating devices (e.g. propane, diesel and kerosene fueled) must be outside the tent and require a separate permit issued by the Seattle Fire Department. (15 SFC Sections 3104.7, 3104.15, 3104.16, 3104.17, 105.3 & 105.6)

11. Electric heaters and other electric appliances shall be listed and approved by UL, FM or other approved testing agencies. (15 SFC Section 605.7) Cords for electric heaters shall be plugged into approved receptacles only.

12. Wiring shall be clearly marked to avoid becoming a tripping hazard (15 SFC Section 105.3)

13. To be valid, this permit including attachments must be posted near the occupancy/activities. (15 SFC Section 105.3.5)

14. Loose seats, folding chairs or similar seating, greater in number than 200, shall be bonded together in-groups of three or more. (15 SFC Section 1029.14)

15. A document hereafter referred to as a “Letter of Structural Stability (LOSS)” shall be provided upon application for this permit (15 SFC Section 3103.9)

16. NOTE: Temporary tents shall not be occupied during periods of snow or ice accumulation unless designed for full structural loading per the Seattle Building Code. (15 SFC Section 105.3)

Note: These conditions are for temporary tent permits issued during COVID emergency operations and are subject to change once COVID emergency operations are no longer in effect.