



TEMPORARY TENTS – ONTARIO BUILDING CODE

Before you start:

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 Township of Zorra. The Owner is responsible for ensuring compliance with all current Township by-laws, the Ontario Building Code, and other applicable regulations. Although every attempt has been made to provide accurate information, it is subject to change without notice as the Ontario Building Code is a living, evolutionary document that changes regularly to match new technology, safety needs, and environmental goals.

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Temporary Tent Definition

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

Building Permit Required for Tents

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 Act and is exempt from compliance with the Code provided that the tent or group of tents are,

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

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

Total aggregate area of all tents on site exceed 60 m2 (645 ft2), then a permit is required.

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

Is the proposed tent(s) larger than 60m2 (645.6 ft2) in aggregate ground area?

Examples:

ABC Tent Rental wishes to install three (3) 10 ft x 10 ft 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 10 ft (3.1 m) away from any other structure and property lines.

The area of all three tents is 300 ft2 = 27.87 m2 therefore, a permit is not required for installing these tents.

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 ft2 = 65.03 m2 therefore, a permit is required for installing these tents

Ontario Building Code Requirements

		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	Designed by Competent Person	✓	x
5	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 or NFPA 701	✓	✓
8	Access required for the purpose of firefighting.	✓	✓
9	Electrical equipment inaccessible to public	✓	✓
10	Cables on the ground placed in trenches or protected	✓	✓
11	Minimum 30m travel distance to exit	x	✓
12	Minimum width between stake lines shall be the width necessary for means of egress, but not less than 3m.	x	✓
13	Exits signs	x	✓

Note: The ground enclosed by a tent and for not less than 3m outside of such structure shall be cleared of all flammable or combustible material or vegetation that will carry fire.

Sanitary Facilities

3.14.1.8 (1)

The following code provisions applies to tents with a ground area >225m2

- (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.

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.	

Fire Safety Requirement

3.14.1.4, 3.14.1.5, 3.14.1.6, 3.14.1.9

- Tents shall not be erected closer than 3m to property lines;
- Tents shall not be erected closer than 3m to other structures or tents unless:
 - Tents are not occupied by the public, fairgrounds, or similar open spaces where such closer spacing does not create a hazard to the public.
- The ground enclosed by a tent and for not less than 3m outside of such structure shall be cleared of all flammable or combustible material or vegetation that will carry fire,
- Storage of hay, straw, shavings, or similar combustible materials is not permitted,
- If animals are present, hay/straw is only used for their feeding and care,
- Sawdust/shavings (if used) are kept damp,
- Every tent, and tarpaulins, decorative materials, fabrics and films using in connection with tents, shall be certified to **CAN/ULC-S109**, “Standard Method for Flame Tests of Flame-Resistant Fabrics and Films,” or **NFPA 701**, “Standard Method of Fire Tests for Flame Propagation of Textiles and Films”.
- Access shall be provided to all tents for the purpose of firefighting.

Permit Application

All permit applications shall be submitted through the Township of Zorra online permitting software at *cloudpermit.com*. For more information on how to apply for a building permit see <https://www.zorra.ca/our-services/building-and-drainage/apply-for-a-building-permit/>.

Every temporary tent permit application shall include the following:

- A letter of use detailing: - proposed events and specifying the number of tents, and the maximum number of persons that will be occupying each tent at one time.
- Indicate the time in days that the tent will be erected on site.
- Tent manufacturers specifications bearing professional engineers stamp to verify compliance with the O.B.C subsections 3.14.1.7, if applicable,
- Documentation demonstrating the fabric (material) complies with **CAN/ULC-S109-M** or **NFPA-701**, verifying compliance with O.B.C subsections 3.14.1.6.
- A fully dimensioned floor plan layout showing the following:
 - The seating arrangement and aisle widths, if applicable
 - Identify the use off all floor areas within the tent,
 - Indicate the location and size of exits on the perimeter of the tents
 - Indicate if the tent is/might be enclosed with any sidewalls.
- A fully dimensioned site plan showing the following:
 - The proposed tents location relative to property lines and all other structures,
 - The location of washroom facilities and demonstrate compliance with table 3.7.4.3.E (page 3),
 - The location of cooking equipment, if applicable.

For more information regarding applicable building code requirements for temporary tents, feel free to reach out to the Township of Zorra Building Department Monday through Friday between 8:00am to 5:00pm at:

Township of Zorra
163 Brock Street
Thamesford
Phone: 519-485-2490