

Imperial College London

FIRE SERVICES
ROOM 174, SHERFIELD BUILDING

Code of Practices

Revision No: 1
Date: 13th February 2009

Marquees, Tents and Temporary Structures

Marquees, tents and temporary structures must be of proven fire resistant structure. All internal drapes and hangings must be of fire resistant material. Certificates of compliance will be required.

Any proposal to use combustible decorative materials must be agreed with the College Fire Office.

Long grass around marquee to be cut and removed

Organisers' Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the event organiser to ensure that the safety of the occupants is not compromised. Before people are admitted to the marquee, he/she must ensure that all relevant fire safety precautions have been taken and are being maintained.

Occupancy Numbers

Occupancy numbers to be agreed with the Fire Office and will depend on furniture, layout, proposed use etc.

Attendants

Attendants, in addition to the person in charge, are to be provided on the basis of one for every 250, or part of 250 persons in the structure. However, where most of the occupants are younger than 16, there is to be one attendant per 100 or part of 100 persons.

The attendants are to be easily identifiable by means of some form of conspicuous clothing or marking system, which is visible under all lighting conditions.

Attendants are to be fully aware of their responsibilities in the event of a fire. They are also responsible for ensuring that safe conditions are maintained at all times, including checking that exits remain unobstructed and that overcrowding does not occur.

A pre-arranged action plan in case of emergency is to be made, and all officials and staff made fully conversant with the action necessary to safeguard all persons on site.

Staff instruction should include:-

- how to contact security
- the evacuation procedures and assembly points, and
- the use of firefighting equipment.

Smoking

Smoking is not allowed anywhere in the structure

Seating

Seating for any event is to be arranged with adequate gangways to discharge to exits by the most direct route possible.

The numbers of seats in a row are not to exceed 7 where there is a gangway at only one end, or 14 where there is a gangway at both ends of the row. The above numbers may be increased up to 11 and 22 respectively when the normal seatway width of 305mm is increased by 25mm per single seat for one gangway, or pair of seats for two gangways.

Seats laid out in theatre style rows for more than 30 people must either be fixed in position or linked securely in rows of not less than 4 seats nor more than 12. All seats on a sloping floor must be fixed in position.

Where more than 250 temporary seats are to be used, they must be secured in the following manner:

- Seats to be linked together in lengths not less than 4, or more than 12.
- Rows of seats flanking gangways to be fixed to the floor. This may be achieved by the use of floor bars extending beyond the row to be fixed, to at least two adjacent rows, but not across gangways. Floor bars are to have a cambered top surface and be no more than 25mm in height.

Gangways are to be not less than 1.5m wide with no projection into the gangway allowed to diminish its width.

Spaces beneath seating must be kept free from combustible materials, especially the accumulation of combustible waste.

Exits

In marquees intended to accommodate more than 50 people, a minimum of two exits must be provided. The minimum size of any exit is to be 1.05metres.

The travel distance from any part of a tent is not to exceed 24metres.

The following numbers are for the guidance of organisers

51 – 160 people 2 x 1.05m exits,
161 – 240 people 2 x 1.50m exits
241 – 320 people 2 x 1.95m exits
321 – 480 people 3 x 1.50m exits
481 – 640 people 3 x 1.95m exits
641 – 720 people 4 x 1.50m exits
721 – 960 people 4 x 1.95m exits

Fire exits must be evenly spaced around the structure

Exits are to be clearly indicated by pictorial signs at least 125mm high.

Wall flaps to be of a quick release design, clearly defined easily and immediately operable from the inside

Guy ropes, tent pegs and stakes must not obstruct a route to a place of safety. Where they flank such a route, they are to be shielded to form a passageway or be hazard taped, padded and illuminated so that they can be clearly seen at all times. Furthermore, they are to be regularly inspected and maintained in good order.

Electrical installations and lighting

Electrical installations should be installed, tested and maintained in accordance with current standards. Work on such installations and appliances should only be carried out by competent persons

All parts of a marquee to which persons will have access during the hours of darkness, are to be provided with a normal electrical lighting system. The system is to provide adequate illumination to allow people to leave safely.

Where lighting is necessary, a system of emergency lighting is also to be provided. The system must be capable of operating independently of the central source of power.

In addition, exit signs, as required above, must be illuminated or be of the self-luminous type.

Heating and cooking appliances

Heating appliances using a naked flame or not fixed in position are not to be used when the marquee is occupied. If heaters are to be used, they are to be used to pre-heat the marquee, then switched off and removed before occupation.

Cookers, using gas or any other open flame source are not to be used in marquees.

Fire Extinguishers

Extinguishers should be provided on the basis of one 9 litre water type extinguisher per 200m² floor area with a minimum provision of two such extinguishers.

Separate extinguishers will be required for cooking or disco equipment

Extinguishers are to be grouped forming fire points, be clearly indicated and located in positions which will prevent unauthorised malicious operation.

Attendants are to be aware of their location and method of operation.

Warning of Fire

A means of giving warning in case of fire is to be provided. The use of a public address system procedure may be sufficient. The issue is to be agreed with the College Fire Officer.

Use of Portable Generators

Where generators are to be used, they are only to be fuelled by LPG, diesel, or fuel oil.

Under no circumstances should petrol driven generators be used!

Generators and any spare fuel, should preferably be contained within a fenced compound, and in any case, must not be accessible to unauthorised personnel.

Chief Fire Officer