

Special Events

A guideline for permit approval of outdoor special events (temporary tents, large stages & bleachers)



Definition

Tent refers to a temporary shelter used at open air events, such as fairs, festivals and exhibitions. A tent is normally constructed of fabric, held up by poles, and attached by ties and pegs.

Conditions

In general, a special events and temporary use application for a development and/or building permit is required for special events with tents 83.7 m² (901 sq. ft) or larger, large concert stages over 0.61 m (2'-0") high and all bleachers used in conjunction with an event open to the public, whether on private or public property.

A building permit is not required for small tents less than 83.7 m² (901 sq. ft), however a development permit may be required.

Note: Other outdoor and indoor events require special events and temporary use approvals but are not referenced in this brochure.

Approval process

The approval process for development and/or building permits for special events begins at the Zoning & Permits office, Unit 31 - 30 Fort Street. Once an application is received, it will be circulated for review and approval to various City divisions and departments. Applications will be reviewed for compliance with codes, standards and bylaws.

Once approved, applicants will be provided with instructions on how to request inspections, and an occupancy permit, where required.

When food is being served, it is the responsibility of the applicant to contact Manitoba Health to submit a temporary food service establishment application form.

Manitoba Building Code requirements

Tents, large concert stages and bleachers are regulated by the Manitoba Building Code. It may be necessary for the applicant to retain the services of an architect (Part 3) or an engineer (Part 4), skilled in the appropriate section of the code to assume responsibility for compliance with the code.

Fire protection information

1. Interior layout plan that shows:

- tent dimensions
- location and width of exits
- number of occupants
- seating plan showing the location of aisles and aisle dimensions
- fire extinguisher locations

2. Fabric approval

Every tent and all tarpaulins and decorative materials used in connection with such structures shall conform to ULC - S109, "Standard for Flame Tests of Flame-Resistant Fabrics and Films."

The applicant will be required to submit proof that this requirement is met. Normally the tent supplier will have a certification from an independent testing laboratory that the fabric meets ULC - S109 or the equivalent NFPA Standard 701.

3. Emergency lighting and exit signs

Emergency lighting: If the occupant load of the tent exceeds 60 people and illumination of the tent is provided from an electrical circuit, the tent layout must indicate provision for emergency lighting.

Exit signs: Where the number of occupants exceeds 60 people or where lighting levels are below that which would provide easy identification of the exits, exit signs must be provided and this must be indicated on the plan.

4. Required inspection and certifications

Letter of Intent: Where an architect is required, the architect must submit a letter of intent with the permit application. The letter of intent shall state that they will inspect the tent, stage or bleachers prior to occupancy and certify in writing to the building inspector that the tent is safe to be occupied.

Certification Letter: The certification letter referred to shall state:

This letter certifies that I have inspected the tent, stage, bleachers, etc. for the purposes of confirming Part 3 conformance with plans, specifications, and installation instructions. To the best of my knowledge the tent, stage, bleachers, etc. has been installed in accordance with all applicable codes and standards and is safe to be occupied. I will carry out periodic inspections that I judge reasonable to ensure that the tent, stage, bleachers, etc. is maintained in conformance with applicable codes and standards until it is dismantled.

Structural design information

1. Tent supplier's structural drawings of the tent and the specifications

The permit application must include a structural drawing from the tent supplier indicating pole sizes, tie down locations, etc. Note: Tents less than 83.7 m² (901 sq. ft) do not require a building permit, however if the cumulative area of multiple tents, which are located less than 3 m (10'-0") from each other, is 83.7 m² (901 sq. ft.) or more, a permit is required.

If the area of the tent is 83.7 m² (901 sq. ft) or more, the drawings and specifications must be under the seal of an engineer. Tents shall not be erected less than 3 m (10'-0") to other structures unless permitted by code.

2. Structural drawings for stages over 2 ft., trailer stages and bleachers (for major events, such as concerts)

The application for a permit must include all structural drawings and Required Professional Designer's Certificate for the erection of stages and bleachers and shall be submitted under the seal of an engineer.

3. Required inspection and certifications

Letter of Intent: Where an engineer is required, the engineer must submit a letter of intent with the permit application. The letter of intent shall state that they will inspect the tent, stage and bleachers prior to occupancy.

Certification Letter: The inspection certification letter must be provided to the permit applicant who shall keep it on file for 30 days in case of a City audit.

See Wording for Professional Certification Letters Final Occupancy on the [commercial permit resources](#) webpage.

To the best of my knowledge the tent, stage, bleachers, etc. has been installed in accordance with all applicable codes and standards and is safe to be occupied. I will carry out periodic inspections that I judge reasonable to ensure that the tent, stage, bleachers, etc. is maintained in conformance with applicable codes and standards until it is dismantled.

Other considerations

Additional approvals that may be required

If the outdoor beer gardens are to be located on City property, such as a parking lot, park, etc., the Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Authority of Manitoba permit and evidence of the following event insurance must be sent to the Risk Management Division, Corporate Finance Department for review and approval two weeks prior to the event. \$5,000,000 general liability per occurrence including:

- cross liability clause
- liquor liability
- City of Winnipeg as an additional insured
- 15 days prior written notice of cancellation
- specific date(s), location and event description indicated on the Certificate

If the tent, stage or bleachers are to be located in a City park, contact: Booking Office, Parks and Open Space, Public Works Department

If access to the site is from a regional street, contact: Transportation Division, Public Works Department

If the tent, stage or bleachers are to be located within 107 m (350 ft.) of a waterway, contact: Waterways Section, Planning, Property & Development Department

If the tent, stage or bleachers are to be located on an existing or abandoned landfill site, contact: Water and Waste Department

If the tent, stage or bleachers are to be located in the downtown area, and will be in place for more than 14 days, contact: Urban Planning & Design, Planning, Property & Development Department



Planning, Property & Development
Urbanisme, biens et aménagement

Zoning & Permits Branch

Unit 31 - 30 Fort Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 4X7 | winnipeg.ca/ppd

Permits Direct Line

204-986-5140 | ppd-permit@winnipeg.ca

Updated: December 2024

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of information contained in this publication. However, in the event of a discrepancy between this publication and the governing City of Winnipeg By-law, the bylaw will take precedence.