



In addition to reading this Note please see the MUTA Code of Practice, available from <http://www.muta.org.uk>. This Code of Practice has been developed to provide best practice guidelines to marquee contractors, event organisers and health and safety professionals enforcement officers on the design, erection and dismantling of marquees and temporary structures.

The following general recommendations should be complied with whenever a tented structure is used.

New manufactured membranes and fabrics should be of inherently flame retarded fabric or durably flame retarded fabric when tested to British Standard 5438 Test 2A and 2B with a 10 second flame application. Existing materials and structures complying with the previous British Standard 3120 continue to be acceptable. Other sheet materials should have Class 1 surface spread of flame in accordance with British Standard 476 Part 7. Materials should be free of flaming molten droplet characteristics and should not readily support combustion.

NOTE Fabrics tested to the new British Standard 7157 are also considered acceptable.

The tent should be erected by a competent person and should not readily collapse when exposed to fire. Access to hydrants and other water supplies should not be obstructed or obscured. Tents should be spaced a minimum of 6 metres apart.

All grass and vegetation around the tent should be kept as short as possible.

Access routes at least 4 metres wide should be maintained for emergency vehicles to within 50 metres of any part of the tent. Vehicles (and trailers where appropriate) should not be parked within 6 metres of any tent.

There should be at least two suitable exits in any tent or marquee capable of accommodating more than 50 persons. The following table should be consulted when calculating the number of exits required. They are minimum exit widths that will allow those numbers of persons to pass through safely.

Number of Persons	Minimum Clear width of Exit
1 - 60	1050mm x 2
61 – 240	1650mm x 2
241 - 320	1950mm x 2

From any part of the tent, the travel distance to the nearest exit should not exceed 18 metres.

The maximum number of persons admitted to any tented structure should be based on the following principles:

- ✿ Sufficient exits of adequate width to cater for the maximum number of occupants.
- ✿ The maximum capacity of the marquee or tent is dependent on the floor area and the number and size of exits provided.
- ✿ The occupant load factor should not normally exceed the factors set out below: -

USE OF TENT	OCCUPANT LOAD FACTOR (sq metre per person)
Area for standing	0.3
Public assembly, dancing pop concert etc	0.5
Pub bar or lounge areas (tables and	0.3 to 0.5

stools)	
Conference room, dining room, restaurant	1.0 to 1.5

To obtain the estimated maximum occupancy, divide the relevant floor area by the load factor. For calculation purposes it should be assumed that one exit (the largest provided) would be unavailable for evacuation. The aggregates of the remaining exits should be capable of evacuating the maximum occupancy.

If floor coverings are used within the tent they should fall within the "LOW" category as defined in British Standard 5287 when tested in accordance with British Standard 4790 (the Hot Metal Nut Method for testing flammability of textile floor coverings).

If smoking is permitted under current legislation then a sufficient number of receptacles filled with sand should be provided for use as ashtrays.

If cooking is to take place in any tented structure then: -

- ✿ It should be under supervision at all times.
- ✿ Members of the Public should not be present.
- ✿ Suitable fire fighting equipment should be immediately available.

Non-combustible containers should be provided for the disposal of waste materials.

Flammable liquids, LPG cylinders and rubbish should not be present in any tent.

A qualified electrical engineer should install any lighting or other electrical apparatus. Where necessary, adequate arrangements should be made to provide emergency lighting in the event of failure of the primary lighting.

Stewards should be present in the tent according to the following ratios. For audiences mainly over 16 a useful guide is: -

- ✿ A minimum of 1 steward for every 100 members of the audience without seating; or
- ✿ A minimum of 1 steward for every 250 members of the audience where permanent fixed seating is provided.
- ✿ If most of the audience are under 16, more stewards will be required. A risk assessment will determine the appropriate number of stewards.

The above figures do not take into account stewards needed for car parking and traffic marshalling duties. It is likely that additional stewards will be needed if the venue is not designed for public assembly. It should also be remembered that stewards would be needed for each entrance or exit. Stewards should be readily identifiable by means of some conspicuous clothing or marking system that is visible under all lighting conditions.

Facilities should be provided for calling the Fire Service.

The safety of patrons is the responsibility of the designated premises supervisor or other responsible person. This means that he/she should be in charge of and present in the tent during the whole time that the tent is open to the patrons.

Before any patron is admitted to the tent, the Licensee or delegated person should ensure that the following safety checks are carried out: -

- i. All exits should be unlocked and readily available.
- ii. Escape routes should be free from all obstructions.
- iii. All fire exit signs should be clearly visible at the maximum viewing distances.
- iv. The tent should be free from any obvious fire risks.
- v. Where provided, the emergency lighting should be working correctly.
- vi. That the means for giving warning of fire is available and working correctly.
- vii. That the fire fighting equipment is correctly sited and available.
- viii. That the attendants know their responsibilities with regard to fire safety procedures.

The designated premises supervisor or other responsible person should ensure that the agreed occupancy figure is not exceeded.

AND FINALLY

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires employers and other responsible persons to make a '**suitable and sufficient**' assessment of the risks from fire, and how they affect the safety of their employees and other persons who may be on or in the vicinity of the premises. As a result, the above recommendations are very likely to be requirements should they be considered necessary in order to protect the safety of relevant persons. Further guidance is contained within the following publications which can be downloaded from www.gov.uk

[Fire safety risk assessment: open-air events and venues](#)

[Fire safety risk assessment: large places of assembly](#)

[Fire safety risk assessment: small and medium places of assembly](#)