



Heating Options for Tents & Canopies



With cold weather quickly approaching, we want to aid your business by outlining a few fire code compliant options for heating your tents and canopies.

The International Fire Code as adopted by Washington State has numerous requirements for heating and heat producing appliances inside of tents, canopies, or other temporary membrane structures. Heating devices inside these structures can introduce significant fire, burn injury, and carbon monoxide poisoning hazards.

This document is intended to provide guidance to businesses who have erected tents for public use.

Heating and HVAC Systems installed under an approved Building Permit – HVAC systems that are reviewed, inspected, and approved by the Building Department under the appropriate permit are allowed.

OPEN FLAME HEATING NOT ALLOWED

- Portable outdoor gas-fired appliances are prohibited inside tents and membrane structures.
- Open flame devices and similar arrangements are not allowed inside of or within 20 feet of tents and membrane structures.

For information purposes, the following are examples of common heating devices that are not allowed within a tent or temporary membrane structure:



PORTABLE SPACE HEATERS

- Portable electric space heaters are allowed inside tents.
- Portable heaters must have UL or other NRTL listing, over-temperature protection and must have clearances as required by the manufacturer.
- Can be electric or propane but should be set up outside the tent. Warm air is ducted into the tent from the heating unit.
- Should not be operated within 3 feet of any persons or combustible material including the tent or sidewall fabric.
- Heaters setting on the ground must have a tip-over switch, suspended heaters must be securely installed.
- Plugged directly into an approved outlet; however, a heavy duty extension cord can be used (one cord per heating unit).
- The power supply shall utilize a single listed outdoor extension cord rated for the amperage and include GFCI protection or be provided with temporary power supply approved by the Building Official.

Portable or Suspended Electric Heater Examples:



Ducted Tent Heaters:

- Electric, propane, or natural gas direct or indirect ducted tent heaters specifically designed for heating tents and other enclosed spaces are allowed where installed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Heaters must have an Underwriters Laboratories (UL) or other Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratories (NRTL) listing.

Ducted Tent Heater Examples:



FLAME RESISTANT TREATMENT/STANDARDS

It is required that tents and membrane structures be flame retardant. "Flame retardant" does not mean the material will not burn. Flame retardant treatments are not intended to protect against ignition from large open-flame devices (like a furnace or open-flame heater).

For additional assistance or information, please contact our Fire Marshal's Office at (360) 363-8525 or mfinspectors@marysvillewa.gov