



SHROPSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

LICENSING ACT 2003

TEMPORARY EVENT NOTICES

Under the new Licensing Act 2003, anyone planning to hold a 'temporary' event, for which provision is made within the Act, must apply for a Temporary Event Notice at least 10 working days before the event is due to be held. The Act does not require any consultation with the Fire and Rescue Service, and we are therefore generally not able to provide any advice or guidance to the licensing authority, on the premises to be used.

Many of these events are held in tents, marquees and agricultural buildings, which may pose a higher than normal danger from fire due to:

- their construction, which does not conform to regular building standards;
- non-standard doorways and exit routes;
- possible trip and obstruction hazards from the guy ropes and temporary utilities and services e.g. electric cables, water pipes etc;
- temporary site locations with a lack of adequate lighting, access and egress routes.

Anyone intending to hold such an event has a duty of care to those attending, as well as any staff that may be employed to work as stewards, bar staff, waiters etc. Appendix B52 is intended to provide basic guidance on the fire precautions for marquees and tents, together with a framework on which to base the fire risk assessment.

SHROPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

EVENT FIRE SAFETY ADVICE SHEET

1. INTRODUCTION

This Fact Sheet is intended as guidance where tents, marquees or agricultural buildings are used for providing Public Entertainment (e.g. dances), shows, circuses, fairs, garden parties, sports meetings, and similar events.

It is intended as a guide to assist promoters of such events to carry out a fire safety risk assessment, to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the fire precautions at the event are satisfactory and present no danger to persons within the structure or adjacent property.

2. SITING AND LAYOUT

The site should be in an uncongested area with easy access and should allow ample open space for all occupants of the tent(s) to get well clear in the event of a fire and for fire appliances to get near enough to attack the fire.

In order to provide adequate access for fire appliances, lanes between guy ropes and 'peggings' should have a clear width of not less than 4 metres and there should be an overhead clearance of not less than 4.5 metres above the ground.

Adequate space should be allowed between individual tents in order to prevent the spread of fire from one tent to another.

As a guide, a minimum of 6 metres should be provided. In the case of very large tents, (e.g. a "Big Top") this distance should be doubled to 12 metres.

Car parks should be sited clear of tentage and parking in tent lanes prohibited. Tent lanes should be kept clear at all times.

Where animals are accommodated, provision should be made for an alternative site out of danger where they can be maintained in captivity.

3. FLAME RETARDANT TREATMENTS

Most tents for hire are flame retardant. However, the tent supplier should be asked for a certificate or letter stating that they are so treated.

Lightweight linings enable a fire to spread rapidly and these should always be treated.

Decorative lightweight fabrics on display stands should also be treated to make them flame retardant.

In any event, no reliance whatsoever should be placed on the retardance claimed by the erector when assessing the means of escape requirements, which should be treated on the basis of a highly combustible structure with minimum evacuation times (usually 2 minutes).

4. SEATING

The stability of stands and seating is important. Chairs should be battened together in lengths of not less than four, or more than twelve.

Where seating is provided for more than 250 persons, the blocks of seats should be secured to the ground.

There should be an unobstructed width of at least 304mm (1ft) between the back of each seat and the front of the seat immediately behind.

No seat should be more than 3 metres from a gangway. Gangways should not be wider than the exits to which they lead.

5. EXITS/OCCUPANCY

Any exit should be of a width capable of permitting evacuation of the tent in the minimum time (usually 2 minutes). At least one alternative exit, situated remote from the main exit, should be provided in all cases, and it should be ensured that the available exits are suitable and sufficient to allow the safe egress of the maximum number of persons likely to be resorting to the premises at any one time.

All gangways and exits from tents should be kept well clear of obstruction.

All exits should be clearly indicated by means of signs conforming to the ***Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996***.

Door flaps, when closed, should hang loose and open outwards by parting at the centre of the doorway. Flaps should not trail on the ground.

Where windy conditions make it necessary to keep door flaps closed or loosely tied when the public are present, an attendant should be posted permanently on duty at each exit to open the flaps in an emergency. Alternatively, a frame and door set of adequate size may be provided which can be opened immediately.

The line of exit between the tent and the peg line should be fenced to a height of 1 metre (3ft 3ins).

6. SMOKING

Smoking should be prohibited in:-

- a) tents used as stores;
- b) storage areas;
- c) tents housing animals.

Elsewhere, it is strongly advisable that smoking is discouraged, but in any event an adequate number of metal receptacles (e.g. large trays of sand, pendant bins etc.) should be provided and well indicated.

Where timber flooring is laid in and around tentage, a sill should be provided to prevent discarded smoking materials falling between the flooring and the tent walls.

7. LIGHT, POWER AND HEATING

Adequate lighting should be provided inside the tent and outside on the principal escape routes when the premises are liable to be used by the public during the hours of darkness. The lighting should remain in operation until the public have left the site.

Light should be by electricity and provision should be made for an emergency power source to be available.

All electrical wiring and apparatus should comply with the ***“Requirements for Safety”*** laid down by the I.E.E. ***“Regulations for Electrical Equipment of Buildings (Temporary Installations)”*** and so far as possible be carried clear of canvas and positioned where it cannot be tampered with or vandalised.

Generators should be a safe distance from tents.

Cooking appliances and flues should be positioned well clear of tent walls and roofs.

Where liquefied petroleum gas is to be used, the cylinders should stand outside the tent and should be handled and charged only by a competent person who is fully conversant with the supplier's instructions.

Precautions should be taken to prevent vandalism of the cylinders and valves. All pipe work should be fitted by means of constrictive clips, and where practicable, a fixed pipe work system should be provided.

Flammable liquids and all bulk storage of combustible materials should be sited away from areas to which the public have access.

8. HOUSEKEEPING

Spaces beneath stands should be kept clear of paper and rubbish. These spaces should not be used as stores for combustible materials.

Metal bins should be provided for rubbish, especially where refreshments are served.

Arrangements should be made for rubbish collection in areas remote from tentage.

The incineration of rubbish should not commence until all tentage has been taken down, but where tents are erected for a long period arrangements should be made for the removal of rubbish from the site.

Any hay, straw or similar materials kept inside tentage should be in metal bins and the main store kept remote from the tents. Straw, sawdust and similar loose organic materials should not be used as floor covering beneath stands for seats.

Straw bales should not be used as seats or barriers inside the tents.

All grass on the site should be cut as short as possible and the cuttings cleared. If the site is erected during a spell of dry weather, the ground should be wetted before erecting tents.

9. FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT

Portable fire fighting equipment, as considered appropriate to the risk, should be provided throughout the site. The most appropriate pieces of equipment for general use are water extinguishers and buckets of water. Buckets of sand are also useful for dealing with small fires in spilled liquids. However, consideration should be given to areas of special risk, (i.e. electrical fires). Periodic regular checks should be made to ensure that the extinguishers are charged and the buckets are filled.

Where a piped water supply is laid on at the site and taps are fitted, a length of small bore (garden) hose, suitably adapted to fit the tap and provided with a nozzle, may provide a useful means of fighting small fires.

Any natural sources of water (i.e. streams, ponds etc.) which can be used should be clearly identified with a notice bearing the letters "EWS" in black on a yellow background, for Fire and Rescue Service use.

Fire fighting equipment is best grouped at "fire points" situated on main access lanes. These fire points should be conspicuous and supplied with notices detailing concisely how the equipment is to be used. In large tents, fire equipment should be placed inside the tents adjacent to the exits.

10 FIRE PLAN

All staff and officials should be made conversant with the action to be taken to ensure the safety of all the persons on the site. A pre-arranged plan is essential and those participating should be instructed on the following:

- how to call the Fire and Rescue Service;
- the locations and availability of the nearest telephone;
- how to evacuate the tents in an orderly manner in the shortest possible time;
- location of assembly point;
- how to attack a fire with the equipment provided whilst awaiting the arrival of the Fire Service.

Regular patrols should be carried out by a specifically delegated person both during and after events.

11. SPECIAL FIRE HAZARDS

If it is proposed to hold events which pose a special fire hazard in, or adjacent to, tents or marquees (i.e. firework displays or variety acts involving flame), further and more specific advice on the fire precautions relating to these special types of risk can be obtained from the Fire and Rescue Service.

Advice is freely available from the Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service, Fire Safety Department, St. Michael's Street, Shrewsbury, SY1 2HJ:

Tel: (01743) 260260

Fax: 01743 260269

E-Mail: firesafety@shropshirefire.gov.uk