



September 16, 2020

Construction Industry, Designers, Contractors and Suppliers providing services in Sooke

Advisory #11 – Tents and Air-Supported Structures

The British Columbia Building Code 2018, (BCBC) which is adopted in Sooke, by the District of Sooke Building Bylaw, contains provisions that apply to the Tents and Air-Supported Structures. We are alerting you to the need for building owners, as well as their designers, builders and material suppliers on their behalf, to comply with the requirements of the 2018 BCBC.

This enclosed Advisory #11 includes a summary of the significant 2018 BCBC provisions that apply regarding Tents and Air-Supported Structures.

We hope that this advisory will help eliminate confusion regarding the Intent of what is required when applying the requirements for Tents and Air-Supported Structures will encourage conformance with the 2018 BCBC requirements. Please feel free to make copies of this advisory available to your customers as you see fit. Your assistance in achieving these goals will be greatly appreciated.

The BC Building, Plumbing and Fire Codes are available to read online at:

<https://www.bcpublications.ca/BCPublications/>

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Compliance with the Building Bylaw are addressed in this advisory.
The British Columbia Building Code 2018, (BCBC) which is adopted in Sooke, by the District of Sooke Building Bylaw.

Words in *italics* are defined in the 2018 BCBC.

Tents and Air-Supported Structures

A-3.1.6. Tents and Air-Supported Structures.

The requirements in this Subsection are intended to be limited to certain types of structure. For instance, the word "tent" as used in the Code is intended to refer to a temporary shelter which is used at an open air event such as a fair or an exhibition. A tent will normally be constructed of a fabric held up by poles and attached to the ground by ties. The requirements for tents, however, are not intended to be applied to fabric structures located on buildings.

The term "air-supported structure," as used in the Code, refers to an envelope which is held up by air pressure alone and which is erected on the ground or above a basement. The structure will usually require ballast or a positive ground anchorage system around the entire perimeter to secure it to the ground or basement. To reinforce this intent, the Code prohibits the location of an air-supported structure above the first storey of any building.

The Province of B.C. is now offering the BC Building, Plumbing and Fire Codes online at no charge at: <https://www.bcpublications.ca/BCPublications/>

3.1.6.1. Means of Egress

1) Tents and air-supported structures shall conform to **Sections 3.3. "Safety within Floor Areas" / Means of Egress / Access to Exits and 3.4. Exits.**

3.1.6.2. Restrictions

- 1) An air-supported structure shall not be located above the first storey on any building.
- 2) An air-supported structure shall not be used for Groups B, C, or Group F, Division 1 major occupancies or for classrooms.
- 3) An air-supported structure shall be designed as open floor space without interior walls, mezzanines, intermediate floors or similar construction.

3.1.6.3. Clearance to Other Structures

- 1) Except as permitted by Sentences (2), (3) and (4), every tent and air-supported structure shall conform to **Subsection 3.2.3. "Spatial Separation and Exposure Protection"**
- 2) Tents and air-supported structures
 - a) shall not be erected closer than 3 m to other structures on the same property except as permitted by Sentences (3) and (4), and
 - b) shall be sufficiently distant from one another to provide an area to be used as a means of emergency egress.
- 3) Tents and air-supported structures **not occupied by the public**
 - a) need not be separated from one another, and
 - b) are permitted to be erected less than 3m from other structures on the same property provided this spacing does not create a hazard to the public.



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4) Tents not more than 120m² in ground area, located on fair grounds or similar open spaces, need not be separated from one another provided this does not create a hazard to the public.

3.1.6.4. Clearance to Flammable Material

1) The ground enclosed by a tent or air-supported structure and not less than 3m of ground outside the structure shall be cleared of all flammable material or vegetation that will spread fire.

3.1.6.5. Flame Resistance

1) Every tent and air-supported structure and all tarpaulins and decorative materials used in connection with these structures shall conform to CAN/ULC-S109, “Flame Tests of Flame-Resistant Fabrics and Films.”

3.1.6.6. Emergency Air Supply

- 1) An air-supported structure used as a place of assembly for more than 200 persons shall have either**
- a) an automatic emergency engine-generator set capable of powering one blower continuously for 4 h, or**
 - b) a supplementary blower powered by an automatic internal combustion engine.**

3.1.6.7. Electrical Systems

- 1) The electrical system and equipment in a tent or air-supported structure, including electrical fuses and switches, shall be inaccessible to the public.**
- 2) Cables on the ground in areas used by the public in a tent or air-supported structure shall be placed in trenches or protected by covers to prevent damage from traffic.**

1.3.3.2. Application of Parts 3, 4, 5 and 6

1) Parts 3 “Fire Protection, Occupant Safety and Accessibility” / Barrier-Free Access, 4 “Structural Design”, 5 Environmental Separation”, and 6 “Heating, Ventilation and Air-Conditioning” of Division B apply to all buildings described in Article 1.1.1.1. and

- a) classified as post-disaster buildings,**
- b) used for major occupancies classified as**
 - i) Group A, assembly occupancies,**
 - ii) Group B, care, treatment or detention occupancies, or**
 - iii) Group F, Division 1, high-hazard industrial occupancies, or**
- c) exceeding 600m² in building area or exceeding 3 storeys in building height used for major occupancies classified as**
 - i) Group C, residential occupancies,**
 - ii) Group D, business and personal services occupancies,**
 - iii) Group E, mercantile occupancies, or**
 - iv) Group F, Divisions 2 and 3, medium- and low-hazard industrial occupancies.**