

COVID-19 Guidance: Tent Usage for Cold Weather

As the weather gets colder many bars and restaurants are considering how to best serve their customers. Many are considering the usage of an outdoor tent. We have communicated with the City of Springfield regarding the usage of tents during cold weather. The City has provided the following guidance.

Tents in and of themselves can have walls so long as they are flame resistant rated, IFC 3104.2, just as the remaining covering of the tent. Phase #3 Restore Illinois guidelines were specific that no walls were allowed.

Phase #4 allows indoor dining with distancing and other requirements. By placing walls on the tent, it takes a space considered outdoor dining and turns it into indoor dining for purposes of COVID -19 Requirements. For tents, we follow the requirements found in Chapter 31 of the International Fire Code.

Key Items:

- If walls are used a minimum of two means of egress are required. (3103.12.2)
- The required means of egress shall be marked with a lighted exit sign. (3103.12.6)
- Emergency Lighting is required. (3103.12.7)
- Fire Extinguishers are required. (3104.12)
- No smoking is allowed in or around tents and signs should be posted. (3104.6)
- No open flame is allowed in or within 20 feet of any tent structures for any purpose. (3104.7)

Heating:

- Heating of the tent must be in accordance with IFC 3104.15 and should also ensure that it is allowed by the tent provider.
- Several items will need to be reviewed by Building and Zoning. The various items for review will be handled on a case-by-case basis through Building and Zoning, and the permit process.
- **PLEASE consult with Building and Zoning before making any large purchases for heating sources to make sure it meets safety and code standards.**
- Approval shall be obtained from Building and Zoning, as well as Fire Safety prior to use.

From Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO):

- Tents with 2 sides down are considered outdoor dining; Tents with 3 or more sides down are considered indoor dining.