

Building Permits for Temporary Structures Policy

Category: *Finance/Capital Outlay*

Policy Number: 5902

Policy Manager: *Facilities and Capital Outlay*

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline procedures for the application of and approval for a building permit for any tents, canopies, stages, bleachers, or other temporary structures to be placed on university property. This policy is designed to ensure the safety of all occupants in addition to making sure all structures are properly placed and constructed in a manner that will not conflict with other university structures, activities or utilities. This policy applies to all departments and all facilities that are owned, leased, or operated by the university. This policy requires compliance with the current editions of the Construction Professional Services Manual (CPSM), Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code (VSFPC), Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (VUSBC), and the notices issued by the Department of Engineering and Buildings (DEB Notices).

TARGET AUDIENCE

This policy applies to the following groups: undergraduate, graduate, faculty, staff, and other.

AUTHORITY

The Director of Capital Outlay is the final approving authority for all building permit requests.

DEFINITIONS

Amusement Device: A device or structure, open to the public, by which person are conveyed in an unusual manner for diversion. Six categories of Amusement Devices are specifically referenced in the Virginia Amusement Device Regulations:

1. Gravity Rides
2. Concession Go-karts
3. Inflatable Amusement Device
4. Artificial Climbing Walls
5. Bumper Boats
6. Bungee Jumping
7. Zip Lines

Camping: The act of using any part of the campus for living accommodation purposes, such as establishment of temporary or permanent living quarters, sleeping outdoors overnight, making preparations for overnight sleeping (including the laying down of bedding), storing personal belongings, using any tent, shelter, or similar structure regardless of size for sleeping, sleeping in, on or under parked vehicles, or setting up temporary or permanent sleeping areas outdoors or in structures not designated for human occupancy. Camping does not include: the use of university real property that has been wholly or partially designated as sleeping areas, a tailgating activity in conjunction with a university event, or the use of temporary hammocks used in recreation or studying activities outside during non-overnight hours.

Camping Tent: Any collapsible tent or structure, typically having as its basic components a flexible material supported by a framework, designed, intended, or used as temporary shelter while camping or on recreational outdoor outings. Camping Tents may include tents known as “pup tents,” “dome tents,” “cabin tents,” “hiker tents,” and “backpacking tents.” A Camping Tent does not include a tent with all sides entirely open and where there is an unobstructed view into such tent from the outside at all angles.

Excavation: Any operation in which earth, rock, or other material in the ground is moved, removed, or otherwise displaced by means of any tools, equipment, or explosives and includes, without limitation, grading, trenching, digging, ditching, dredging, drilling, auguring, tunneling, scraping, cable or pipe plowing and driving, wrecking, razing, rendering, moving, or removing any structure or mass of material. “Excavate” or “excavation” shall not include installation of a sign that consists of metal, plastic, or wooden poles placed in the ground by hand or by foot without the use of tools or equipment.

Platform: A raised area used for worship, the presentation of music, plays or other entertainment; the head table for special guests; the raised area for lecturers and speakers; boxing and wrestling rings; theater-in-the-round stages; and similar purposes wherein there are no overhead hanging curtains, drops, scenery or stage effects other than lighting and sound. A temporary platform is one installed for not more than 30 days.

Stage: A space within a building utilized for entertainment or presentations, which may include overhead hanging curtains, drops, scenery or stage effects other than lighting and sound.

Temporary Structure: Those structures erected for a period of less than 180 days (e.g. tents, platforms, and amusement devices)

Tent: Any structure, enclosure or shelter with or without sidewalls or drops which is constructed of canvas or pliable material supported in any manner except by air or the contest it protects.

User: Staff person or Department responsible for permitted tent, platform or device.

Vendor: Individual or Contractor responsible for supplying and erecting permitted tent, platform or device.

POLICY STATEMENT

Whenever work is to be performed on state owned or leased property or facilities, the Contractor shall be required to have Worker's Compensations, Employer's Liability, Commercial General Liability, Automobile Liability, and in certain types of programs, Professional Liability/Errors and Omissions insurance coverage. The Commonwealth of Virginia must be named as an additional insured when requiring a Contractor to obtain Commercial General Liability coverage. Prior to the commencement of work to be performed, at a minimum, the contractor must certify to the agency that it possesses the appropriate insurance coverage, and documentation concerning the contractor's insurance shall be included in the procurement files. It is the responsibility of end user to obtain the most recent copy of the license and insurance documentation. It is the responsibility of the purchasing official to validate the insurance coverage. These documents must be placed and maintained in the procurement file.

Failure to follow this policy could result in serious injury to users, vendors, and/or damage to existing utilities or property. The applicant is responsible for any and all costs associated with failure to follow this policy.

Any request for an exception to this policy must be submitted in writing to and approved by the Vice President for Finance. A written response will be provided to the requestor. If an exception to the policy is granted, in no way does this absolve the request from meeting the requirements set forth in the VSFPC, VUSBC, and CPSM.

General Camping and Tent Usage Provisions

1. Constructing, occupying, or sleeping in tents on university-owned or operated properties is prohibited unless approved in advance by the University.
2. Camping and Camping Tents are prohibited.
3. Even if approved, the actual construction of tents or other structures must comply with requirements to avoid disrupting or obstructing university functions, including impeding pedestrian or vehicular traffic, blocking ingress/egress, creating unsanitary conditions, limitations on amplified sound, or other specified disruptive activity. Any tents or other structures must also comply with safety requirements imposed by federal, state, and local law. If the actual use of the tents or other structures is in violation of any of these requirements, the approval will be revoked.
4. Tent approval requests should specify the time, location, and duration for which the approval is sought.

5. Tents constructed at or around specific athletic events where a permit or space has already been provided by the University for use at that event do not require pre-approval under this policy. However, all other requirements concerning the use of tents still applies.

Building Permit for Temporary Structure

It is required that an application form be completed and submitted to the Director of Capital Outlay's Office at least 30 days prior to the assembly of a tent, canopy, stage, bleacher, or any other temporary structure. Once reviewed and approved, a Permit/Temporary Certificate of Use for a Temporary Facility/Tent/Stage will be issued. A copy of the permit will be provided to the applicant and must be posted in open view near the structure.

Many utilities systems are buried on Virginia State University's (VSU) campus. If any excavation, as defined below, is taking place, an approved excavation permit is required before excavation is started. The applicant will be required to adhere to VSU's Excavation Policy 5903. The tents, canopies, stages, bleachers, or any other temporary structure shall not be assembled until the underground utilities are marked.

1. The applicant will be required to adhere to the current edition of the Virginia Amusement Device Regulations (VADR) when constructing and/or operating any device covered under VADR.
2. The State Fire Marshall and Safety Officer must be contacted at least two (2) days prior to the assembly date to schedule an inspection of the temporary structure. Any hazard identified during the inspection must be fixed immediately or the tent or temporary structure must be removed and the permit shall be revoked.
3. Temporary structure permits are normally issued to allow the tent to be erected the day before the event and taken down the day after the event.
4. All cost associated with the application, including utility markings, inspections, and any other fees will be paid by the sponsoring organization. The person responsible for authorizing payment for these costs will have to sign the application.

Tent Permit Requirements

A permit is required by the Commonwealth of Virginia for any tent that is larger than 30 ft. x 30 ft. or in excess of 900 square feet or will have 50 occupants or more. Information required for submission of the tent permit is as follows:

1. Site Plan. Indicate property lines, roads, sidewalks, grades greater than 5%, distance to adjacent buildings or structures, and handicapped accessible route to the public way.

2. Location. Show the location of the tent on the Site Plan and indicate the distances to the nearest buildings on the Permit Application. Tents proposed to be located closer to existing buildings than allowed by code will require special evaluation and may require special conditions if allowed to be erected. Erection of a tent in proximity to a building shall be done in a manner which will not decrease the safety of the building occupants while providing required safety for the occupants of the tent.
3. Floor Plan. Indicate means of egress, aisles, exits, furnishings, and equipment. Provide a description of the function or activity to take place. Indicate the proposed Maximum Occupant Load.
4. Other Construction. Indicate the method of tie-down/anchorage for tents including the proposed wind and live loads. (See Special Conditions below.) Indicate means of egress lighting and power for tents that are proposed to be used at night. Indicate the method of ventilation when tent sidewalls are closed, or when tents are proposed to be air conditioned.
5. Certificate of Flame Resistance. Provide Certificate of Flame Resistance conforming to NFP A 701 to include tent serial numbers and descriptions (size, color, etc.) so that the tent certificates and tents can be clearly matched up on a one- to- one correspondence. Open flames, space heaters, or food cooking/heating devices (except with approved electrical appliances and approved power supply) are NOT permitted under or within 20 feet of a tent.
6. Inspection. The State Fire Marshall and Safety Officer shall inspect the installation for compliance with the approved documents.
7. Special Conditions. Tents that are proposed to be occupied during wind speeds that exceed 35 MPH require a tie-down/anchorage design signed and sealed by a Virginia licensed architect or engineer.

Stage/ Platform / Bleachers Requirements

Information required for submission of the stage, platform and bleachers permit is as follows:

1. Site Plan. Outside installations: indicate property lines, roads, sidewalks, grades greater than 5%, distances to adjacent buildings or structures, and handicapped accessible route to the public way. Inside installations: indicate the buildings and room location and name.
2. Floor Plan. Indicate means of egress, aisles, exits, guards, handrails, furnishings,

and equipment. Provide a description of the function or activity to take place. Indicate the proposed Maximum Occupant Load.

3. Other Construction. Indicate the means of egress lighting and power for structures that are proposed to be used at night. Indicate the method of tie-down/anchorage for structures including the proposed wind loads and live loads. Provide details of anchorage and calculations to show proper anchorage against overturning.
4. Closed v. Open Engineered Systems. Provide manufacturer data for stage, platform, and bleachers along with a certificate of insurance from the equipment rental/erection company. If the structures are fabricated on site and/or erected by other than the equipment rental company, provide construction/erection documents signed by a Virginia licensed architect or engineer.
5. Inspection. Responsible User or the Agency Representative shall inspect the installation for compliance with the approved construction/erection documents.
6. Exceptions:
 - i. Platform (Dance Floors). Dance floors that are no more than 4 inches above the grade plane at any point do not require a permit (a 2 x 4 on edge with a plywood floor is nominally 4 inches; therefore, does not require a permit).
 - ii. Stage (Performance Sets). Performance sets that are owned and erected (not rented locally) by contract performance groups (e.g. Private Bands and Theater Groups), that are exclusively for the use of the contract performance group and from which the public are excluded, are considered equipment of the performing group; therefore, such stages/equipment do not require a permit from the Bureau of Capital Outlay Management (BCOM).
 - iii. Seasonal/Multiple Function Stage Permit. If a temporary structure is to be repeatedly erected at the same location and for the same type of function AND if the tent is located the proper distances away from existing buildings, the agency may submit an application for a Seasonal Permit to erect the structure for several specified dates. The conditions of the Seasonal Permit require that identical structure be erected, furnished, equipped, used for the identical purpose in the identical location and that the tent to be erected the day before the event and taken down the day after the event. Any variation from a seasonal permit requires a separate permit.

RELATED PROCEDURES

N/A

RELATED MATERIALS/REFERENCES

- ADA Standards for Accessible Design
- Commonwealth of Virginia - Construction & Professional Services Manual
- DEB Notice 030311 - Building Permit Policy for Construction of State-Owned Buildings and Structures
- Virginia Amusement Device Regulations (Current Edition)
- Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code (Current Edition)
- Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (Current Edition)
- VSU Excavation Policy No. 5903

APPROVED BY:



November 12, 2024

Makola M. Abdullah, PhD
President

Date

REVISION HISTORY

This policy supersedes the following archived policies:

November 10, 2016

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