Clark-Cowlitz
FIRE RESCUE

911 N 65th Avenue
Ridgefield, WA 98642

**phone:** 360.887.4609 **fax:** 360.887.0862 **web:** www.clarkfr.org

# Propane Heater

# And

# Temporary Tent

# Guidelines (Covid-19)

Clark-Cowlitz Fire Rescue has adopted the International Fire Code (IFC) 2015 Edition. Chapter 31 of the IFC covers the requirements for tents and membrane structures. The use of propane heaters is spelled out in Section 3107.4 which states "Open flame or other devices emitting flame, fire or heat or any flammable or combustible liquids, gas, charcoal or other cooking device or any other unapproved devices shall not be permitted inside or located within 20 feet of the tent, canopy or membrane structures while open to the public unless approved by the fire code official."

This regulation may be modified by Section 104.8 of the IFC Section 104.8 states, "Whenever there are practical difficulties involved in carrying out provisions of this code, the fire code official shall have the authority to grant modifications for individual cases, provided the fire code official shall first find that special individual reason makes the strict letter of this code impractical and the modification is in compliance with the intent and purpose of this code and that such modification does not lessen health, life and fire safety requirements. The details of action granting modifications shall be recorded and entered in the files of the department of fire prevention."

Due to the impacts of COVID-19 on establishments serving food and beverages, the use of tents for outside services has increased. Notably, these tents are being used at a time of year where the climate and ambient temperature normally would preclude routine use. An identified need in the community is to allow the use of these tents to provide service and to do so reasonably requires that the tents be heated. As Section 3107.4 does not allow the use of open flame heating devices within tents, the code shall be temporarily modified pursuant to Section 104.8, which allows for modifications that do not lessen health, life and fire safety requirements.

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Clark-Cowlitz Fire Rescue Fire Marshal's Office has temporarily modified Section 3107.4 as permitted by Section 104.8 when each of the following requirements has been met:*

- Heaters shall have clearance to combustibles per their listing. Typically between 24-36 inches
- The floor area shall be non-combustible
- There shall be no flammable decorations within the tent
- There shall be only two side panels of a tent. The other two sides must remain open for ventilation purposes. A tent may have three side panels when there exists adequate ventilation from another opening to create cross ventilation. This follows the governor's requirement for outdoor seating as well.
- A fire extinguisher shall be placed at each exit. The fire extinguisher shall have a minimum classification rating of 2A:10BC (the numbers must be 2/10 or larger). This rating can be found on the fire extinguisher label.
- Heating devices shall be approved by a national accepted certifying agency such as Underwriters Laboratories.
- Owner of the establishment to provide the Fire Marshal with a certificate by an approved testing laboratory stating that the tent material meets the flame propagation of NFPA 7901. Typically, there will be a label on the tent signifying this.
- As usual, there is no smoking within the tent.

*Of the many types of propane heaters only a listed patio type heater approved by the Fire Marshal is acceptable. No salamander or infrared heaters are permitted. Remote propane ducted heaters and electric heaters are also acceptable.

NOTE: This temporary modification to Section 3107.4 will expire on May 1, 2021. Clark-Cowlitz Fire Rescue Fire Marshal's Office reserves the right to modify or revoke this exception at any time.