



**Department of Permitting Services**  
 255 Rockville Pike, 2nd Floor  
 Rockville, Maryland 20850

**CODE INTERPRETATION/POLICY**

<b>Interpretation Name:</b> Heating of Temporary Tent Structures		
<b>Code/Year</b> NFPA 1 2018	<b>Section of Code</b> 11.5, 69.3.13.1	<b>Title of Code Section/Subsection</b> Heating Appliances, Installation of Patio Heaters
<p><b>Statement/Background of Issue</b></p> <p>Temporary tent structures are being utilized with greater frequency to comply with social distancing requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic by restaurants, mercantile establishments, and educational occupancies. The tent structures are a short-term solution intended to provide protection from the elements while allowing occupants to remain physically distant. During cold weather, guidance is needed as to how these structures are to be heated safely. This policy does not address all the requirements found in the Fire Code.</p>		
<p><b>Interpretation</b></p> <p>For temporary tent structures installed for less than 180-days, used for assembly, dining, education, childcare, health care, business, or mercantile use:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Open-flame and fuel-burning heating appliances are not permitted inside or under any over-hanging portion of the tent structure. Such appliances must be kept at least five (5) feet away from the tent structure and its exit points.</li> <li>2. Installations of appliances exterior to the tent that provide heated air into the tent enclosure are permitted.</li> <li>3. Listed or approved portable electric heaters are permitted provided they are operated in accordance with all listing restrictions and manufacturer's instructions and have adequate protection against ignition of adjacent combustibles and contact with persons occupying the tent. Electric heaters must be designed and located so that they cannot be easily overturned. Electrical power for heaters is not permitted to be supplied by generator. Extension cords may not be used. An electrical permit from the Department of Permitting Services is required.</li> <li>4. Other types of commercial heating appliances are permitted provided they are installed and operated in accordance with all listing restrictions and manufacturer's instructions and have adequate protection against ignition of adjacent combustibles and contact with persons occupying the tent.</li> </ol> <p>Heating appliances installed in tents or similar structures intended to be occupied for 180 days or more must be designed and installed as permanent installations. Permanent installations require approved permit(s) from the Department of Permitting Services, Division of Commercial Construction.</p>		
<b>Interpretation/Policy No</b> <b>CBC 05-2020</b>	<b>Effective Date</b> September 29, 2020	Rick Merck, PE, DFE <b>Division Chief, Commercial Building Construction</b>