



TEMPORARY TENT & STAGE PERMITS

THESE REQUIREMENTS APPLY TO BUILDING PERMITS SUBMITTED ON OR AFTER JANUARY 1, 2026

BUILDING DIVISION REQUIREMENTS

The City of Sunnyvale requires permits for large temporary stage and tent installations (not exceeding 180 days). Below outlines the requirements to be met for a permit. Structures for special events must conform to the California construction codes for electrical wiring, structural integrity, emergency egress, and access compliance.

Temporary Tents/membrane structures between **400 and 2000** square feet require a fire prevention permit only. For fire prevention permit information, contact fireprevention@sunnyvale.ca.gov.

Temporary tents/membrane structures greater than **2000** square feet require a building permit.

Special event permits require a plot plan showing the locations of all tents, stages, generators, and electrical cords.

Approval from Planning and Fire Prevention is required before the issuance of a building permit.

For public-occupancy temporary structures:

- The applicable occupant load determination in CBC 1004.5 or 1004.6 shall be applied over the assembly area within a radius equal to 1.5 times the height of the temporary non-building structure.
- Design for flood loads per CBC 1612 is not required. However, controlled occupancy procedures in accordance with CBC 3103.8 shall be implemented.

Tents

- Tents require an exiting plan. The plan shall show the use of the tent, the occupant load, and the location of wall openings that will be used to access and egress the tent. (See Chapter 10 of the CBC for exiting requirements). Exit access travel distance shall be 100 feet or less (CBC 3103.4).
- Provide information related to the structural strength of the structure (manufacturer's erection manual, anchorage to ground, etc.). Structures larger than 2000 square feet require engineered calculations for the anchorage of the tent.

Stage

- Stages more than 30" above grade require a permit. The plans shall indicate the size and height of the stage.
- Show on the site plan the accessibility to the stage or platform with at least a ramp for accessibility requirements. Provide sufficient documents to show the compliance of ramp per CBC Sections 11B-405 and 11B-505. Stairs should comply with CBC Sections 1011, 1014, 1015, 11B-504, and 11B-505.
- Regardless of the height of the stage, accessibility requirements apply.

PERMIT PROCESS

Planning Division Review

1. Prior to submittal for a building permit, contact the Planning Division (planning@sunnyvale.ca.gov) to determine if a Planning permit is required.

Building/Fire Permit Review

2. A Fire permit from Fire Prevention is required for tents not exceeding 1999 square feet.
3. Building and Fire permits shall be submitted online through the [E-OneStop Online Service](#) permitting system.
4. We accept over-the-counter plan check appointments in the morning, 8:00 am to 12:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Submit the permit application on-line and email us at pcappointment@sunnyvale.ca.gov with the following information for the next available appointment:
 - Permit number
 - Project type, square footage and address
 - Applicant name and phone number
 - Attendee name and phone number

Building Permit Application Requirements

- A completed Building and Fire Permit Application. ([Permit Application](#))
- Site plan of the event area showing tents, stages, generators, and electrical cords.
- Manufacturer's cut sheet for the stage.
- Details for the ramp and/or stairs providing access to the stage.
- Structural calculations as needed.
- An owner, contractor, or authorized agent can pull a building permit. Contact the Building Division at building@sunnyvale.ca.gov for the authorized agent approval form.

Inspections

Building and fire inspections are required after the tent, stage, and/or electrical are installed. The manufacturer's installation guidelines shall be available for the building inspector at the job site during the inspection.

ELECTRICAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Electrical equipment and wiring in portable structures shall have mechanical protection. CEC 525.6
2. Service equipment shall not be accessible to unqualified personnel and shall be mounted on solid backing in a weather proof construction. CEC 525.10(A) & (B)
3. Where multiple power systems are provided (service panels, generators, transformer, etc) to tents that are less than 12' apart the equipment shall be bonded together at the structure. Wire size shall be per CEC Table 250.122 but no smaller than 6 AWG. CEC 525.11
4. Flexible Cords and cables (CEC 525.20):
 - a. Listed for extra-hard usage, listed for wet locations and sunlight resistant.
 - b. Continuous without splices or taps between boxes/fittings.
 - c. Must be guarded in public traffic pathways by nonconductive matting that does not produce a tripping hazard.
5. Wiring & lighting in tents shall be securely attached and protected from damage. CEC 525.21
6. Portable distribution boxes (CEC 525.22):
 - a. No live parts exposed.
 - b. Weatherproof and mounted at least 6" above ground.
7. GFI required for non-locking receptacles used outdoors by public. GFI outlets shall be readily accessible and for equipment accessible to the public. CEC 525.23
8. Bonding is required for metal raceways, metal enclosures of electrical equipment and metal frames of portable structures and tents. CEC 525.30
9. All generators shall be grounded at the generator or the first disconnecting means supplied by the generator. CEC 525.31