



Transitioning to Winter: Info on Tents/Heating for Temporary Outdoor Dining Areas

Introduction

Extending the outdoor dining season into the fall and winter months is essential for businesses to remain viable as statewide physical distancing mandates limit indoor dining capacity.

This information is intended to provide updated guidance to City of Manassas restaurants and bars to continue operating outdoor dining cafés safely and responsibly during the 2020–2021 winter season.

An Important Note on All Heaters

In addition to adhering to the Virginia Statewide Fire Code outlined in this document, all heating elements must follow the manufacturer's guidance for installation and appropriate use of the heater.

While this information is intended to provide detailed guidance on viable heating elements for outdoor seating, there are numerous makes and models of heaters on the market.

For this reason, it is highly recommended that interested parties gain a comprehensive understanding of a specific heating element's use limitations prior to purchase.

These may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Appropriate use type:** All outdoor café heaters must be for commercial use and must be marked as "UL Listed" or "UL Classified". Heaters for residential use are not appropriate for outdoor cafés.
- **Clearance:** From people, animals, and combustibles. In addition to the 5 foot clearance for LP-Gas heaters and 3 foot clearance for electrical heaters, as indicated in the Fire Code, specific types of heaters may require more clearance per the manufacturer's recommended safety guidelines, which may not be able to be accommodated in outdoor café spaces.
- **Length of use:** Per the manufacturer's recommended safety guidelines, specific types of heaters do not recommend use for an extended period of time, which may not be appropriate for outdoor cafés.

LP-Gas (Propane) Heaters

GENERAL GUIDANCE

- Must be approved for Commercial Use (UL approved).
- Must be in compliance with the manufacturer's guidance.
- Placement of LP-Gas Heaters must be the greater of 5 feet to buildings, combustibles, exits or discharges or the manufacturer's guidance.



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PROHIBITED USES

- LP- Gas Heaters are prohibited inside/below tents, canopies, and membrane structures.
- LP-Gas Heaters are prohibited inside any occupancy where connected to a fuel gas container.
- LP-Gas Heaters are prohibited on exterior balconies.
- LP-Gas Heaters are not allowed to be stored or used on a rooftop. Please note, some at grade areas with underground parking are the rooftop of the parking garage and would prohibit the use of propane heaters.

PERMIT PROCESS

A Fire Prevention Code Permit is required for the storage and/or use of LP-Gas. An application for a LP-Gas or Hazardous Material shall be completed and submitted to the Fire Prevention Office. Contact the Fire Marshals' Office at 703-257-8233 for an application. The cost of the permit is \$100.00.

Processing an application for a LP-Gas permit can take up to seven business days provided the application is complete and all requirements are met. An on-site inspection must be satisfactorily completed in order for a permit to be issued.

Please note: LP-Gas shall not be stored or used until the inspection is conducted and the permit is issued.

Portable Electric Heaters

GENERAL GUIDANCE

- Must be approved for Commercial Use (UL approved).
- Must be in compliance with the manufacturer's guidance.
- Portable electric space heaters shall be plugged directly into the wall or an approved receptacle.
- Portable electric space heaters shall not be plugged into extension cords.
- Portable electric space heaters shall not be operated within 3 feet of any combustible materials.

PROHIBITED USES

Any use of portable electric heaters that deviates from the manufacturer's guidance.



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Tents

GENERAL GUIDANCE

- Under current guidance, with approval from the City, tents may be temporarily permitted over existing outdoor cafés that have been approved by use permit, site plan, or have an existing Certificate of Occupancy.
- Under current guidance, with approval from the City, tents may be temporarily permitted over Temporary Outdoor Seating Areas.
- Tents that exceed 900 square feet or 50 people occupancy load require a building permit and fire prevention permit.
- Tents that exceed 900 square feet or 50 people require a Fire Rating (FR).
- Tents with more than one wall are considered enclosed structures and must abide by the Governor's Executive Orders regarding dining in indoor or enclosed space, to include physical distancing of seating/patrons and face covering requirements while not actively eating and drinking.
- Please note that temporary tent requests may not be approved in all instances, due to site-specific conditions and potential impacts on the health, safety, and general welfare of the public.