



Tucson Fire Department

Exterior Cooking Booth Information

It is the commitment of the Tucson Fire Department to help provide a safe environment for both booth operators and the general public. In order to achieve this, the following requirements shall be met when cooking devices are used at outdoor special events. Fire department personnel will inspect venues either before or during the event to assure compliance. If you have any questions or require further assistance please call (520) 791-4502.

Definitions

1. **Tent:** A structure, enclosure or shelter constructed of fabric or pliable material supported by any manner except by air or the contents that it protects. Tents having an area in excess of 400 square feet require a permit and approval from the fire code official.
2. **Canopy:** A structure, enclosure or shelter constructed of fabric or pliable material supported by any manner except by air or the contents that it protects, and is open without sidewalls or drops on 75 percent or more of the perimeter. Canopies having an area in excess of 900 square feet require a permit and approval from the fire code official.
3. **Cooking Booth:** A structure (tent, canopy, or other construction) where food is prepared by a heating or cooking process such as, but not limited to, grilling, frying, barbecuing, deep fat frying, baking, broiling, boiling, or steaming.
4. **Vendor Booth:** All booths, tents, and canopies except cooking booths. Vendor booths may be used for a variety of purposes.
5. **Non-Exposed Open Flame Cooking Device:** A cooking or warming device utilizing a flame where the flame producing fixture is an integrated component of the device and contained within the device by non-combustible barriers or shielding so that the flame is not readily visible or exposed to combustible material. This definition would include some types of steam tables and griddles with an integrated non-exposed open flame.
6. **Exposed Open Flame Cooking Device:** A cooking or warming device utilizing a flame where the flame is not shielded and/or is readily visible. This definition would include most types of BBQ devices.

Booth Construction and Location

1. All fabrics or membranes covering cooking booths shall be composed of flame-resistant material or be treated with a flame retardant. Documentation or proof of flame-resistance is required.
2. All cooking booths shall be provided with at least one exit. The exit shall have a minimum clear width of at least 3 feet and be a minimum of at least 6 foot 8 inches in height. This exit shall remain clear and free from obstructions at all times.

3. Cooking booths shall be separated from vendor booths by a minimum of 20 feet. Tents or canopies used for cooking shall be separated from tents or canopies used for any other purpose by a minimum of 20 feet.

Exception: Booths that serve beverages (or food that does not require a cooking process) are not required to have a 20-foot separation from cooking booths. Where cooking booths and beverage booths are arranged together without a separation there shall be a 20-foot separation between this arrangement and the other vendor booths.

4. Booths shall be constructed in a manner to provide necessary structural integrity. Booth construction shall be subject to approval by the fire code official.
5. If cooking appliances are utilized on a table the table shall be flame-resistant, or a flame-resistant covering shall be placed under the appliance.
6. Cooking devices shall be isolated from the public by at least 4 feet or by a physical barrier. Cooking areas shall not be accessible by the public.
7. Cooking equipment shall not be located near the cooking booth exit. This is to protect the booth's exit path in the case of an accidental fire at the cooking equipment.

Cooking Equipment

1. General Requirements

- Only electrically powered warming devices shall be used within vendor booths, or in tents, canopies, or membrane structures that are used for any other purpose besides cooking. These devices are limited to situations that do not pose a risk to occupants involved in other activities within the structure.
- Exposed open flame cooking devices shall not be used within booths, tents, or canopies that have combustible overhangs without an approved exhaust hood as required by the Tucson Mechanical Code.
- Exposed open flame cooking devices may be used within cooking booths that have a non-combustible overhang (ceiling) or no overhang at all.
- A Non-Exposed Open Flame Cooking Device may be used in a cooking booth or under a combustible overhang.
- Exposed or non-exposed open flame cooking devices, open flames, or flammable and combustible liquids shall not be permitted inside or within 20 feet of tents, canopies, or membrane structures that are not considered cooking booths.

2. LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gases)

- The maximum size of LPG tanks to be used within a cooking booth is 20 pounds.
- LPG tanks shall be supplied with a shut off valve.
- Tanks shall be closed when cooking equipment is not in use.
- Hoses shall be a type approved for use with LPG equipment.
- Tanks shall be protected from damage and secured in the upright position.
- All LPG equipment connections shall be tested for leaks prior to use. This may be done with a soap and water solution.

- All LPG gas cylinders not in use with cooking equipment shall be stored outside the cooking booth in a secure location and be protected against tampering.

3. Deep Fat Frying

- Although most fryers are considered non-exposed open flame cooking devices, because of the inherent dangers of heating and cooking with vegetable or animal oils and fats, fryers are regulated much like exposed open flame cooking devices. Fryers include cooking equipment made specifically for deep fat frying as well as cookware containing oil being heated by a separate heating device.
- Deep fat frying is defined as any cooking operation where the product floats or is submerged in hot oil during the cooking process.
- Deep fat fryers shall not be used within booths, tents, or canopies that have combustible overhangs without an approved exhaust hood as required by the Tucson Mechanical Code.
- It is recommended that when using a deep fat fryer outside a non-combustible (metal) overhang be used in case of rain.
- Where deep fat fryers are installed adjacent to exposed open flame cooking devices they shall be separated by 16 inches or a non-combustible baffle at least 8 inches in height.

4. Solid Fuel (Wood or Charcoal)

- Cooking devices that use wood or charcoal for fuel shall not be used within booths, tents, or canopies that have combustible overhangs without an approved exhaust hood as required by the Tucson Mechanical Code.
- Only commercially sold lighter fluid, electric starters, or kindling shall be used to ignite wood or charcoal fueled equipment. No gasoline or kerosene shall be used.
- Solid fueled cooking devices shall be kept away from combustible materials. The distance shall be dependent on the size of the cooking equipment and shall be approved by the fire code official.

5. Electric Cooking Equipment

- Electrically powered cooking equipment may be used in a cooking booth or under a combustible overhang with the exception of equipment used for deep fat frying.
- Electric cooking equipment would include microwave and electric ovens, electric steam tables, and electric cook top griddles.
- All extension cords shall be of the 3-wire grounded type.
- Extension cords shall be protected from foot traffic.
- Gasoline powered generators shall not be located within the cooking booth.
- If electrically powered cooking appliances are utilized on a table the table shall be flame-resistant, or a flame-resistant covering shall be placed under the appliance.

6. Steam Tables

- Most LPG fueled steam tables are considered non-exposed open flame cooking devices, but this is dependent on the location and exposure of the burner element.
- Electrically powered steam tables may be used in a cooking booth or under a combustible overhang.

7. Warming Trays

- Gel fuel (Sterno) and small wick burner type warming trays used under food trays for heating and warming foods are considered exposed open flame cooking devices and shall not be used within structures (booths, tents, or canopies) that have combustible overhangs.

- Electric warming trays are recommended for use within structures that have combustible overhangs.
- Gel fuel (Sterno) and small wick burner type warming trays may be used within cooking booths that have a non-combustible overhang (ceiling) or no overhang at all.

8. Fire Extinguishers

- For all cooking operations that do not use vegetable or animal fats and oils a minimum 2A :10BC rated fire extinguisher is required.
- For cooking operations that use solid fuel a water-based extinguisher, buckets of water, or water hose is recommended. The quantity of water or size of extinguisher shall be determined by the size of the cooking unit, and shall be approved by the fire code official.
- For cooking operations that involve the use of vegetable or animal fats and oils a Class K rated portable fire extinguisher shall be provided.
- All extinguishers shall be located in a conspicuous location and be readily accessible for immediate use. Extinguishers shall be unobstructed and shall not be obscured from view.
- Portable fire extinguishers shall be inspected annually and shall have a current inspection tag.

9. Electrical Setups

- All electric service shall be in compliance with the 2002 National Electrical Code and local modifications.
- All exterior power setups shall be GFCI protected.
- Only listed power strips with circuit breaker protection are allowed as multi-plug adapters.
- All extension cords shall be of the 3-wire grounded type.
- Extension cords shall be protected from foot traffic.

10. Housekeeping

- Trash containers shall be emptied regularly.
- Combustible materials shall not be allowed to accumulate so as to cause a fire hazard.
- All cooking surfaces shall be cleaned to prevent the accumulation of grease.

This information sheet provides the minimum requirements for exterior cooking booths. Additional fire and life safety requirements may be necessary depending on the particular situation. These requirements will be at the discretion of the fire code official. During fire department inspection vendors should be prepared to make any necessary changes in order to comply with these requirements.