

Tents, marquees and gazebos

Erecting marquees or other temporary demountable structures is a sensitive operation that requires a steady hand. Forgetting to anchor just one of the points can undermine the integrity of the entire structure and cause it to come tumbling down - injuring people or causing damage to property.

As an event organiser, venue owner or someone legally obligated to ensure the safety of a temporary structure, use the following hints and tips to make sure your temporary structure stands tall and secure.

Risk assessment

A suitable risk assessment to cover the erection, dismantling, use and anchoring of the marquee/gazebo should be compiled together with assessments of fire risk and means of escape in case of fire or hazard. These documents should be available from the supplier.

Anchoring

The person carrying out the erection should follow the manufacturers' advice, guidelines and recommendations for the anchoring of the marquee/gazebo.

The following list is not exhaustive and the manufacturers' recommendations may include additional items which should be followed:

- Obtain the minimum number of anchor points to securely hold the marquee/gazebo down and all anchor points to be used.
- If stakes are to be used, the length, type and number to be ascertained and provided.
- If ballast is to be used, the weight of the ballast and the method of securing it to the marquee/gazebo



Wind Speed

Wind is a potential hazard during erection, operation, and dismantling phases of an event.

- You should check with the manufacturer to ascertain the wind speed for the safe use of the marquee or gazebo.
- Refer to local weather forecast to determine the level of monitoring and management that will be required while the tent is in place.
- If the maximum safe wind speed is exceeded, the use of the marquee/gazebo should cease and the area cleared. The tent should be dismantled, when safe to do so.

Means of escape

If the marquee/gazebo is over 30m² an alternative means of escape will be required independently from the main entrance. Dependant on its size and number of occupant's more than one alternative emergency exit may be required.

All emergency exits to be indicated using appropriate signage to BS 5499. (See <http://www.firesafe.org.uk/bs-5499-safety-signs-including-fire-safety-signs/>)

Night time use

If the marquee/gazebo is to be used during the hours of darkness, suitable emergency lighting will be required to indicate exits and a safe route of travel inside the marquee/gazebo and externally to a safe place of refuge. The standards for lighting, emergency lighting, ingress/ egress remain the same for temporary and permanent structures.

Use

The proposed use of the marquee/gazebo must be considered and its fire risk ascertained and appropriate fire extinguishers considered.

Heating

The provision of heaters must take into account fire risks associated with all equipment, fabrics and combustible material.

Parking of vehicles

Parking of vehicles, and storage of flammable materials, must take into account fire risks to marquee/gazebo positions and escape routes.



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