

Guidelines for Developing an Emergency Evacuation Plan for a Tented Event

The rented tent will be erected to accurate standards and will provide temporary accommodations for your event. Tents can provide protection from moderate weather, but are not designed for use as a shelter in severe weather or in other emergency situations because such conditions could exceed their ability to protect occupants. In addition, tents may need to be evacuated for other types of emergency situations.

It is your responsibility to ensure your guests' safety. The rental company recommends that you develop an emergency evacuation plan so that you are prepared to act decisively in the event of an emergency. The following are some guidelines to aid in the development of an emergency evacuation plan.

Prior to the Event

Point Person(s)

Designate someone who will be on site for the duration of the event to be in charge of the emergency evacuation plan. This point person(s) will assist in developing the plan and may be responsible during the event for monitoring the weather (unless a separate person is designated to do so), determining whether a situation calls for evacuation, and if so, acting decisively and authoritatively to instruct guests to evacuate. Some examples of a point person might be:

- **For a wedding:** A family member, member of the wedding party, etc.
- **For a corporate event:** An event planner, company representative, etc.
- **For a public event:** A show manager, representative of the venue, the fire chief, etc.

This document, Emergency Evacuation Planning for Tented Events, developed by the American Rental Association and ARA Insurance Services, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of the American Rental Association (collectively, the "ARA"), are intended to provide general guidance to assist you with emergency evacuation planning when using tents and related rental equipment. The ARA does not purport to include in these Guidelines all possible scenarios which may require evacuation or all possible safety measures and procedures that might in a given emergency situation. You should use your own independent judgment and discretion in successfully implementing these Guidelines to best fit the unique needs of your event and your particular use of the tent and other rental equipment.

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Emergency Conditions

Work with the designated point person(s) to determine what emergency conditions will trigger an evacuation of the tent structure. The following are some examples of situations which may require evacuation:

Hazardous Situation	Why You Need to Evacuate
Damaging winds	A tent cannot protect occupants from flying debris. High winds may cause the tent to collapse or become airborne.
Fire or explosion	A tent cannot protect occupants from excessive heat, flames, or flying objects.
Lightning	Lightning poses a risk of electrocution, electric shock, or fire.
Hail or sleet	Excessive weight may cause the tent to collapse and injure occupants.
Excessive rainfall/Flooding	Saturation of the ground with water may compromise securement, causing the tent to collapse and injure occupants. Rain may pool on the tent, causing supporting lines to sag or tent to collapse.
Snow/Ice accumulation	Excessive weight from snow and/or ice accumulation may cause the tent to collapse.
Gas Leak	Atmospheric conditions may not be suitable for occupants.
Earth movement (e.g., tremor, landslide)	Unstable ground conditions may make the location unsuitable for tent placement and could compromise the tent's securement.

This is not an all-inclusive list. In developing emergency evacuation plans, rental customers should consider any emergency conditions that might arise during their event.

Evacuation Location

Work with your point person(s) to predetermine where guests will go and how they will get there if the tent must be evacuated:

- Identify a nearby permanent building large enough to accommodate your guests. Make sure it will be open and accessible during your event and make a note of the address in case you have to call for emergency assistance.
- Whatever your designated evacuation locale, it is critical to have a plan in place to get the guests to it. If there is no building nearby, consider using vehicles, an open area upwind from the tent, or locations recommended by the National Weather Service or Emergency Alert System. Of utmost importance is that the tent should never be used as a shelter in an emergency situation.
- Determine how guests will get to the evacuation location (e.g., the route to take, travel by foot or car, etc.). Consider preparing a sketch of the event site.

Communication

Plan how you will communicate with your guests in an emergency. Depending upon the size of the event, consider backup methods of communication for situations in which there is no electrical power, cell phone reception, etc.

Prior to and During the Event

Wind & Weather Monitoring

The point person(s) should create a wind and weather monitoring plan in order to continually assess the environmental safety of the event. This plan may include such devices as anemometers and weather tracking apps. Apps are best if updated often, include lightning data, and allow you to set risk parameters, such as a 30-mile monitoring radius with automatic alerts. You can also hire a weather intelligence company that monitors weather and sends alerts so you can focus on the event.

Beginning at least two hours before the start of the event, the point person(s) should begin monitoring a source of weather information. If any of the weather emergency conditions listed previously are predicted, the event may need to be postponed or canceled. It is better to plan for guests to be safe during a weather emergency than to evacuate last minute.

Tent Structure & Contents

After the tent has been installed, monitor the tent structure for various changes. These would include stakes or augers pulling out of the ground; tent weights moving; loose poles, ropes, or straps, etc. If you notice any of these occurring, **contact the rental company immediately**. Additionally, make sure to monitor the interior of the tent. Guests should be able to walk freely without trip hazards. Trash should be contained and removed regularly. Combustible products such as pyrotechnics should not be kept within the tent, and exit routes should be free from obstruction at all times.

During the Event

Announcement

Based on weather forecasts and other circumstances, you may wish to make an announcement to participants regarding the identification of the point person(s), location of exits, and the emergency evacuation location.

Evacuation

Continue to monitor the weather and be alert for other emergency situations during the event. Implement your evacuation plan for any of the following conditions:

- A severe weather alert is posted by the National Weather Service.
- Dark clouds are approaching.
- Lightning strikes within one mile (less than a five-second count between lightning and thunder).
- Hail or sleet falls.
- Wind speed equal to or exceeding _____ mph. A wind that briefly exceeds the wind speed and then stops still requires evacuation as the tent may have shifted or been damaged.
- Twigs/limbs break from trees or large trees sway.
- Any of the tent anchoring devices fail or the tent begins to move (e.g., tent poles wobble, ropes snap, tent top rips or tears, etc.).
- Rain falls so hard it runs off tent walls in sheets.
- Water is running through the tent or surrounding area.
- Snow or ice is accumulating.
- An explosion, excessive heat, smoke, or fire is in the vicinity of the event.
- There is ground movement of any kind.
- Other conditions exist as previously determined in developing your emergency plan.

Call for Help

After instructing guests to evacuate, you may need to call for police, fire, or medical help as the situation warrants. Before the event, make sure you are familiar with the layout of the event site so you can communicate clearly with emergency responders.

After an Evacuation

Even if the tent appears intact, it may not be safe to return. If stakes or augers have pulled out of the ground, tent weights have moved, or there are loose poles, ropes or straps, contact the rental company so that the tent may be re-secured and inspected before resuming the event.

Customer/Authorized Representative: _____ Date: _____
(Print & sign)

Reservation/Rental Contract Number: _____

Checklist for Developing an Emergency Evacuation Plan for a Tented Event

This checklist can help in developing your emergency evacuation plan.

Prior to the Event

Designated Point Person(s)

Name _____ Cell Number _____

Name _____ Cell Number _____

Emergency Evacuation Location

Name _____

Phone # _____

Location/address _____

Route to evacuation location _____

Confirmed the shelter will be open and available: Yes No

Backup Method of Communication

PA Cellphone Walkie-talkie Bullhorn Other _____

During the Event

An initial announcement of emergency evacuation location will be made. Yes No

If yes, by whom: _____

Tent emergency exits have been identified

Weather Monitoring

Weather alert radio Radio TV Cellphone app

Person responsible for the wind and weather monitoring plan:

Name _____ Phone _____

Predetermined Evacuation Triggers

During the event, implement your evacuation plan for any of the following conditions:

- A severe weather alert is posted by the National Weather Service for the area.
- Dark clouds are approaching.
- Lightning strikes within one mile (less than a five-second count between lightning and thunder).
- Hail or sleet falls.
- Wind speed equal to or exceeding _____ mph. A wind that briefly exceeds the wind speed and then stops still requires evacuation as the tent may have shifted or been damaged.
- Twigs/limbs break from trees or large trees sway.
- Any of the tent anchoring devices fail or the tent begins to move (e.g., tent poles wobble, ropes snap, tent top rips or tears, etc.).
- Rain falls so hard it runs off tent walls in sheets.
- Water is running through the tent or surrounding area.
- Snow or ice is accumulating.
- An explosion, excessive heat, smoke, or fire is in the vicinity of the event.
- There is ground movement of any kind.
- Other conditions exist as previously determined in developing your emergency plan.
- _____
- _____

Emergency Phone Numbers

Pre-program these numbers into your cellphone:

Fire Dept. 911 or _____	Police Dept. 911 or _____
Rental store _____	Venue _____
Event/wedding planner _____	Rental customer _____