

TENT & PROPANE POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

Approved by: *EVP, Finance and Administration*
Responsible Office: *Events Management*

Effective Date: August 7, 2026
Date Last Revised: March, 2024

Statement

Smith's campus, spanning 147 acres, and its landscapes and resources play a significant role in the life of our students, faculty, staff, alums and the broader Northampton community. Smith's open spaces are often used to host outdoor events. This policy has been established to ensure respectful and equitable use of the college's outdoor areas as a gathering space for the enjoyment of the Smith community. The policy also addresses health and safety requirements for tent and propane usage, including complying with necessary permitting requirements from the City of Northampton, Northampton Board of Health, Northampton Fire Department, Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities, and DIG SAFE.

Scope/Responsibilities

This policy applies to all students, student organizations, faculty, staff, alums, guests, external clients, vendors, and visitors. Responsibilities related to this policy are shown below:

- For enforcement of policy: Events Management Director, Campus Safety Chief, Office of Environmental Health and Safety, Facilities Director
- For oversight of policy: Executive Vice President for Finance & Administration
- For procedures implementing policy: Events Management Director, Campus Safety Chief, Office of Environmental Health and Safety, Facilities Director

Definitions

These definitions apply to terms as they are used in this policy.

Term	Definition
Fire-rated	Tent materials compliant with fire resistance rating requirements dictated by the Northampton Fire Department and any associated Commonwealth of MA regulations.
Tent	Tent means a collapsible shelter of fabric or plastic (such as nylon or canvas) stretched and sustained by poles and used for shelter, camping outdoors, or as temporary housing.

Policy

Policy statement

Smith's campus, spanning 147 acres, is private property and the use of any tent, regardless of size, on any Smith-owned property is only permitted with prior approval for an authorized event.

Approval for the use of a tent must be requested at least 2 weeks in advance of any event and must comply with Northampton Board of Health, City of Northampton Building Department, and Northampton Fire Department regulations and requirements.

The use of any tent or other non-permanent structure for overnight use on Smith's campus, unless approved in support of an authorized event, is strictly prohibited.

The use of any tent or other non-permanent structure by the external community, unless approved by the Events Management office in support of an authorized event, is strictly prohibited.

Use of Smith's natural landscape and trees to support any type of tent or non-permanent structure is strictly prohibited.

The person or entity reserving a space is responsible for compliance with this policy and will be responsible for any restoration costs, replacement costs, losses, or any other damages of any kind caused by any violations of this policy, and may also be subject to discipline under other Smith policies and procedures.

Procedures

Procedures for requesting approval for use of tents:

For Smith community members, at least two weeks in advance of the event date, requests for use of any tents on Smith's campus must be submitted through [25Live](#).

Procedures for requesting Smith College-owned tents:

1. At least two weeks in advance of the event date where a tent will be needed, requests must be submitted through [25Live](#).
2. For external clients, as part of any contracted event where a tent is requested, Smith's Events Management Office must be notified at least two weeks in advance of the event date.

External clients:

1. All external caterers are required to follow all Smith College, state and local policies, rules and guidelines when using tents, grills and/or propane tanks on the Smith College campus.
2. The Northampton Fire Department requires that external caterers notify them directly every time a tent will be used for cooking, preparing food, and/or serving or seating guests.

Tent requests and fees:

1. Tented events are subject to approval by the Events Management Office. Requests must be submitted at least two weeks in advance. Please submit tent requests to the [Events Management Office](#).
2. Approved tents placed on Smith College Lawn areas are subject to fees regarding lawn damage. Damage will be assessed by the Smith College Grounds Department and billed accordingly back to the client.
3. Departments and external clients are responsible for all fees associated with tent rentals including mandatory permits and inspections.

DIG SAFE notice:**Notice must be given at least two weeks prior to any tent being set up.**

Dig Safe must be called by EMO staff (1-888-344-7233) to ensure that a Dig Safe number is assigned to the tent/location before any stakes or pins may be driven into the ground. A Dig Safe inspection is a free service. A Dig Safe inspection is not required when water barrels, blocks, or other ballast is used to secure the tent.

Tent permits and inspections:

1. Obtaining permits and inspections for all tents that have total coverage of 120 square feet (single or connected) or more is required.
2. All state and local regulations apply to the use, safety, and the construction of these tents.
3. All tents that have total coverage of 120 square feet (single or connected) or more are subject to inspection must be fire-rated. The office of Environmental Health and Safety is responsible for scheduling inspections and approved permits for requested tents.

Outside cook tents:

Smith requires adherence to the following standards set by the Northampton Board of Health, Northampton Fire Department, and City of Northampton for tents where outside cooking will occur:

1. A fire-rated tent compliant with NFPA 701 is required for all cooking outside. Smith tents under our inventory cannot be used as cook tents under any circumstances, and must be rented by an external vendor.
2. Only those cooking will be allowed under cook tents.
3. All cook tents must be at least 10 feet away from all other structures (i.e. other tents with

seating, buildings, sheds, etc.).

4. All cook tents must have a barrier blocking others (not cooking) from entering the cook area.
5. The Northampton Fire Department must inspect all cooking tents.
 - a . A minimum of a 10 Pound ABC fire extinguisher is required for all cook tents except when cooking with a deep fryer, where a K- Class Fire Extinguisher is also required.
6. All equipment utilizing propane (e.g. gas grills, outdoor heaters, etc.) may be subject to inspection by the Northampton Plumbing Inspector.
7. Permits are required for events that have propane on site when combined tank size(s) totals over 42 pounds.

Policy Violations

Violations of college policies are adjudicated according to procedures outlined in the Student Handbook, the Code of Faculty Governance, and the Employee Handbook, with disciplinary consequences imposed by the adjudicating authority up to and including dismissal. Some offenses are punishable under state and federal laws.

Policy Review Cycle

This policy will be reviewed at least bi-annually or as needed to reflect changes in laws, regulations or major changes in college operations.

Related Information

Related Policies and Guidelines:

[Time, Place and Manner Policy](#)

[Lawn and Outdoor Guidelines](#)

[MacLeish Overnight Camping Requirements](#)