TENT / CANOPY TENT STRUCTURES

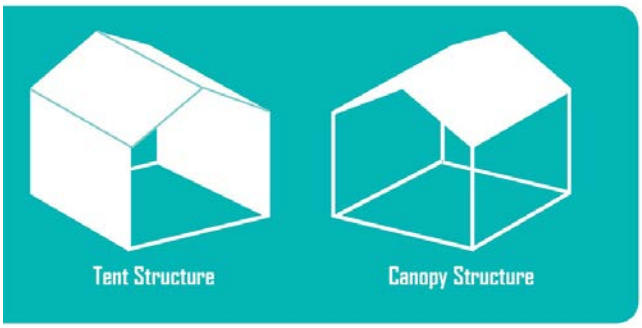
within Residential Low (RL) Zoning
MUNICIPAL CODE SECTIONS 15.405.100, 300 & 400

This handout provides basic information about residential tent and canopy structures on single-family lots in the Residential Low (RL) zoning designations; it answers the most common questions about city requirements and allowances. Please contact the Planning Division with any questions or concerns you may have.

What is the difference between a tent structure and a canopy tent structure?

A **tent** structure is an enclosure or shelter with 25% or more of sidewalls or drops on its perimeter.

A **canopy tent** structure is an enclosure or shelter with less than 25% of sidewalls or drops on its perimeter.



Can I have a tent or canopy in my front yard?

One canopy tent structure is allowed in the front yard, if it maintains at least a 20' setback from the property line. Tent structures are not allowed in the front yard.

How many tents or canopies can I have on my property?

A maximum of three (3) tent structures and/or canopies are allowed.

What are the setbacks for tents and canopies?

Minimum 20' front yard setback, 3' side yard(s) setback.

Can I place a tent/canopy structure on my vacant lot?

No, tent/canopy structures shall not be a stand-alone structure on a parcel of property.

What is the height limit for tents and canopies?

The maximum height for residential tent or canopy structures is fifteen (15) feet.

Do tent and canopy structures count toward my building lot coverage?

Yes, residential tent and canopy structures are calculated toward the building lot coverage for that property. The RL zones have a 50% building lot coverage maximum.

Do I need to have a paved surface under the tent or canopy structure?

Yes, if used for vehicle parking. Areas leading to and underneath a residential tent or canopy structure must have an improved surface as defined by SMC 15.455.700(B).

Do I need a permit for my tent/canopy?

It depends. Please contact the Building Division and Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority for more information.

Can I use a blue tarp for my tent or canopy structure?

No, residential tent or canopy structures must be white or other subdued color. Blue structures are specifically prohibited. In addition, all tent and canopy structures shall be constructed of approved fire retardant materials.

Can someone live in a tent structure?

No, residential tent structures, including canopies may only be used for the storage of motor vehicles, recreation vehicles, or boats.

This document is intended to provide guidance in applying certain Zoning Code regulations and is for informational use only. It shall not be used as a substitute for the Zoning Code or for other city codes.

Where can I get additional information?

- Municipal Code Section 15.405.100 and Section 15.405.300 through Section 15.405.400.
- Visit us online at **www.seatacwa.gov**
- Call the permit center at 206.973.4750

City of SeaTac - Department of Community and Economic Development - Planning Division
4800 South 188th Street | SeaTac, WA 98188-8605 | Phone: 206.973.4750