

OUTDOOR DINING SAFETY

ALLIANZ RISK CONSULTING



As a result of the COVID pandemic, operations have added outdoor seating to their facilities.

Outdoor dining, conducted under a canopy or enclosed tent poses certain risks to patrons and staff.

- The tent location must be approved by the local authority, which could be the local building department or fire department official.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) offers the following:

Special consideration should be given to ensure the tent:

- Does not block fire department access
- Is not located too close to the building or lot lines
- Does not block the means of egress from other buildings

- Has at least a ten foot distance around the tent free of combustible materials
- Meets NFPA 701 flame propagation performance requirements. This test is performed on the fabric of the tent by a testing organization that will issue a certificate if the fabric has passed the test.

It is important to determine the number of occupants in the space to ensure that there are an appropriate number of exits providing adequate exit capacity.

Additional egress features to consider include:

- Are exits clearly marked?
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Smoking should never be allowed within the tent and “No Smoking” signs should be clearly posted.

With fall and winter approaching, many restaurants will look to improve patron comfort by adding propane fueled patio heaters.

- A clearly marked fire extinguisher should be kept on the patio at all times.
- Placing the patio heater too close to windows and air intakes poses a risk of carbon monoxide poisoning to occupants of the building.
- Do not place the patio heater in front of fire escapes or in an exit pathway. Additionally, do not block firefighting equipment, such as fire extinguishers, fire hydrants or fire department connections with the patio heater.
- Make certain that the patio heater is stable and placed on a level surface so it cannot be knocked over. Additional measures should be taken to ensure the unit is secured and not able to be tipped or moved.
- Never move the patio heater when the flame is lit. The
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