



Northville Township Fire Department

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Outdoor Igloo Guidelines

Referenced Standards:

- 2015 International Fire Code as adopted by Chapter 79-2
- 2015 Michigan Building Code
- Chapter 72 of the Township Ordinances
- NFPA 101, Life Safety Code

Commentary:

In recent years the use of igloos at restaurants and other establishments has grown to offer outdoor seating in a comfortable environment across the globe. These “igloos” are normally geodesic domes constructed of metal pieces with a polycarbonate “glass” covering the igloo. Other options include metal geodesic domes with a fabric, plastic or textile covering. Since these igloos are used to shield occupants from the outside temperature and conditions, there is normally a small, electric space heater located in the igloo.

These guidelines were prepared utilizing a consensus of the International Fire Code (IFC), the Code of Ordinances for the Charter Township of Northville and current best practices. The intent of this document is to provide additional information and guidance regarding specific issues and code interpretations and does not offer blanket approval or violation of any safety standard.

General Guidelines:

The majority of outdoor igloos do not meet the requirements of the International Building Code (IBC) or the International Fire Code (IFC) in regards to the requirement for a permit based on their structure size. Most igloos are smaller than 400 square feet, the minimum requirement for the IFC. While the structure itself may not require a permit, a [Temporary Use Permit \(TUP\)](#) is required to verify all of the following information:

- Access.** Emergency vehicles must be able to access this area at all times. The access, location and parking must be evaluated to allow for emergency access.
- Location.** The application must include the following:
 - Specific location of the igloos
 - Square footage of each igloo
 - Measurement of the walking paths and clear space around the igloos
 - Measurement of the adjacent walkways, etc.
 - Identify any fencing or barriers proposed
 - Identify exits
 - Protection from vehicles including fencing or bollards when installed in a parking lot. When installed in grass areas, existing features, curbs, or landscape may be acceptable.
- Structural stability**
 - You are responsible for the structural stability of the igloo or structure. This includes review of the specification sheet, clearing snow, etc. when necessary and prohibiting use during severe weather and/or wind events.
 - The applicant is responsible for providing for the safety of the attendees, guests or occupants. Plans for evacuation and sheltering during inclement weather are the responsibility of the event

applicant. If the department determines that inclement weather may put attendees in danger or create a hazardous condition, the department reserves the right to cancel the Temporary Use.

- Fire watch.**
 - A fire watch program is a temporary measure intended to ensure the continuous and systematic surveillance of a building or portion thereof by one or more qualified individuals for the purposes of identifying and controlling fire hazards, detecting early signs of unwanted fire, raising an alarm of fire and notifying the fire department.
 - Click here for [Fire Watch Guidelines](#)
- Heaters.**
 - All heaters must be listed with tip-over protection.
 - Only electric heaters are permitted. No fuel burning appliances.
 - Heaters are permitted to operate when the building is staffed, they cannot be left on overnight.
 - No open flame.
- Electrical wiring.**
 - Only approved electrical wiring is permitted.
 - Extension cords are not permitted to power the space heater.
 - Cords cannot run through walls, floor or ceiling. Cords cannot be run under carpet and if use must be protected by an appropriate device to protect the cord and to prevent a trip hazard.
- Fire extinguishers.**
 - Portable fire extinguishers must be readily available for incipient firefighting as an additional safeguard. These do not have to be located within the individual igloo, but within a visible and obvious location accessible to all staff and patrons.
- Lighting.**
 - Lighting shall be listed and properly connected to a power source. Back-up power is required. This may be provided from a building generator, UPS or battery backup.
 - Lighting must light the path of egress.
- Exits.**
 - Clear egress must be provided from the igloo and to the primary exit for the area.
- Open Flame.**
 - Open flame is prohibited within the igloo or in the immediate vicinity. This includes table candles, birthday candles and/or any flaming food preparation.
 - Smoking is prohibited. No Smoking signs must be provided.
- ADA.** It is critical to understand the importance of ADA regulations when planning your specific use. Sidewalks and handicapped parking cannot be interfered with. If the submitted plan impacts the existing handicapped parking spaces, accommodations must be made and at least the same number of handicapped parking spaces must be provided with proper signage.

If you have any questions, please contact us directly at (248) 348-5807 or at thughes@twp.northville.mi.us.

Respectfully,



Thomas M. Hughes, Jr.
Fire Marshal