

Canopy Safety

Reference Guide

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Canopies are used at events to protect event staff and their materials from sun and rain. However, improper setup and breakdown, as well as inclement weather can create safety hazards. Canopies and tents can become easily airborne with unexpected winds and cause injuries to passerby and damage to property.

You can minimize risks from canopies by safely setting them up beforehand, being mindful of their proximity to students, the public, and anchoring or attaching weights to canopy legs during events to secure them.

Recommended Safe Placement and Set-up of Canopies and Tents

- Location – Canopies and tents are best set up away from buildings, dry brush, or parked vehicles. This minimizes the potential of flammable items in the tent spreading to nearby structures and vegetation, or vice versa.
- Labels and certifications – Refer to a tent or canopy's affixed label(s) that show the size and the material type so users and event staff can verify that they are appropriate for their intended use.
- Approvals – Individual 10' x 10' standalone tents or canopies (i.e. EZ Up tents) do not require prior use approval from the UCI Fire and Life Safety division. However, if the tents and canopies have a cumulative area of 200 square feet (e.g. two 10' x 10' canopies right next to each other) or more, they require prior review and approval.
- Flammable or combustible materials - Do not use any flammable or combustible materials inside a tent, canopy, or temporary structure.

Recommended Canopy Weighting and Anchoring

- Weights and anchoring will vary depending on their size and construction. Use manufacturer-provided anchoring and weight standards to secure the tent or canopy.

- In absence of specific manufacturer's weighting equipment or guidelines, it is recommended to utilize 40 lbs per canopy leg for a 10' x 10' structure and 50+ lbs for weighting umbrellas. Additional weights may be necessary during high winds.

Recommended types of canopy weights

- Sandbag weights specifically made for securing canopies. These sandbag weights are vertically strapped to the legs of the canopy.
- Filled buckets, jugs, or other containers that have a handle through which straps or ropes can be secured. The containers may be filled with sand, water, or cement and anchored or secured with straps, ropes, or bungee cords.

Canopy weights to avoid:

- Avoid using tables, coolers, or vehicles as anchoring for canopies. These present tripping hazards and often do not provide adequate weight.
- Large sandbags that cannot be placed upright and securely tied to canopy legs.
- Concrete blocks that are hard, easy to trip over, or cause foot injuries.

Safety practices when using canopy weights:

- Wear closed-toe shoes when handling canopies and weights.
- If unable to lift the weight by yourself, ask for help. Use your legs to lift the weights and not your back.
- Where feasible, break down canopy weights into smaller 10 or 20-lb weights so they are easier to lift and transport.
- Use carts or wheeled platforms with appropriate weight capacities when transporting weights from the car to the set-up area.
- Ensure that your surroundings are clear of obstructions and pedestrians or patrons before set up or breakdown.

Contact **EH&S at (949) 824-6200** or safety@uci.edu for questions.