

10 Important Party Tent Facts and Checklist

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The big day is coming and you know you'll need some type of party tent for your event. There seems to be hundreds of tent rental companies and tons of information. It's rather daunting to sift through all the information – so I've compiled a few facts and a handy checklist guide to help you navigate through this.

Tent Rental Facts

1. Ask for an estimate prior to a site visit, but expect the price to change after the site visit, depending on the condition of the site.
2. You'll likely be asked to pay a 50% deposit upon securing the tent rental. Note that deposits are often non-refundable.
3. The rental company will conduct a site survey to be sure the site is suitable for an event. Find out the schedule for the site survey.
4. Once you choose a tent style (marquee, pole, century, saddlespan, TopTent, etc.), choose your exact location to hold your event. Remember that pole tents will need extra room for roping and staking.
5. You must locate and mark all possible underground utilities (water, electric, sprinkler, telephone/communication, cable, sewage, septic, etc.). If you're renting a particular ground, ask the groundskeeper or event manager.
6. Be sure there are no overhead obstructions – such as trees, power lines, or other structures in the area where you desire to have the tent installed.
7. Let the rental company know exactly the type of surface the tent will be installed upon, such as grass, asphalt, concrete, clay, stone, etc. Not all tents are staked into the ground. In the case of some hard surfaces such as asphalt or concrete, and if staking is expected, then be sure you understand who will be “filling in the holes” once the tent is removed.
8. Remember, once the installation is in progress, it will cost extra to move the tent (in most cases it will have to be taken down and then re-installed). So be sure you know exactly where and how you want the tent set up.
9. Some tent rental companies cover very expansive territories; so don't be afraid to call out-of-state companies. It all depends on exactly what you want for your event and which company carries what you want and need.
10. Most tent rental companies offer a lot more than just tents. They often will rent out risers, staging, offer lighting and production services, fog machines, decorations, liners, etc. Ask.

Your Tent Rental Checklist:

- How many people do you expect at your event? (How many people do you want under the tent?)
- Will they be sitting at tables? Or will you need just chairs? Or will they be standing?
- What else will you need in the tent?
- Will you need a dance floor? If so, ask for recommended sizes (depends on the size of your party)
- Who will be supplying the interior decorations? Will you rent from the tent rental company?
- Where will you want the tent to be located?
- What kind of ground will the tent be installed upon? Grass? Asphalt? Other?
- How much square footage is needed for the grounds?
- Where are all the utilities located?
 - Gas lines
 - Power lines
 - Cable
 - Telephone/communications
 - Sprinkler systems
 - Electrical
 - Sewage
 - Water
- What style of tent are you interested in?
 - Marquee
 - Century
 - Pole tent
 - Canopy top
 - Saddlespan
 - TopTent
 - Yurt
 - Other

Will you need...

- Window side walls, clear side walls or solid side walls on your tent
- Liners for the tent interior
- Pole wraps
- Special lighting such as cookie cutters, colored gels, chandeliers, globe string lights or perimeter twinkle lighting
- Temporary electrical
- Air conditioning
- Heating
- Band stage or band area

- Carpeting or other flooring
- Tent decorator
- Chairs, tables, linens, flatware, chair covers, china, serving trays, heating pans, etc.

Don't forget to...

- Find out how many days before the event your tent can be installed or set up.
- When the take down day (called a strike) and what is expected of you before the strike.
- Ask about transportation costs if applicable.
- Confirm inspection date and time of the tent after installation.
- Ask about a damages or lost equipment fee structure.
- Get emergency contact information should something go amiss.
- Find out what permits you'll need to get before having the tent setup on location.
- Ask if there's a cancellation fee and what is it.
- Find out exactly how you can safely decorate the tent inside and out. Some do not allow hanging items from the tent material or its framing for safety reasons.
- Get a contract from the rental company and read your contract carefully.

It's especially helpful to have as much information on hand before you contact a tent rental company. Another helpful idea is to survey the site for yourself, take a few photos from different angles, and send them to potential tent rental companies. They'll be able to give you a better estimate and offer recommendations for the style of tents for your event.

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