WINTER TENTING – CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

Did you ever notice that a 30-mile per hour wind in the summer feels like a refreshing breeze, but a 30-mile per hour wind in the winter feels like a sand blaster? Relying on a tent for winter use requires proper planning to provide a safe, comfortable environment.

Winter tenting results in different challenges than summer tenting. Following is a brief review of some of the factors to be considered. For your specific requirements, conducting a thorough site evaluation and event plan with an experienced tent rental professional is strongly recommended.

SNOW – Most tents are not designed to support excessive snow. Snow weighs between 3 and 20 pounds per cubic foot depending upon how much moisture is in the snow.

To maintain the structure and to avoid a collapse there are three possible approaches:

1. Secure a tent with an engineered snow load capacity that meets local requirements.
2. Provide heat and fuel sufficient to prevent snow accumulation.
3. Provide manpower to physically remove snow before it can accumulate.

Municipalities may require a specific snow load capacity based upon what is typical for their region. Check if your municipality has a prescribed snow load requirement. Also check what permits are required in your area.

HEATERS - Tent heaters offer an effective and reliable way to provide heat. The most commonly used tent heaters require propane for heat and electricity for a fan. Diesel fuel and electrical heaters are also available.
An adjustable thermostat can be placed in the tent to regulate temperature. Heaters and fuel must be "sized" to reflect three variables:
The size of the tent to be heated; the degrees of temperature increase required; and the duration for which heat is required. As you might expect, it's considerably more difficult to heat a space when outdoor temperatures are in the 20's than when they are in the 50's.

SAFETY – The safety of you and your guests is most important. Regardless of their construction, tents are by definition, temporary structures. Tents must be vacated in the event of snowfall or high winds. When severe weather threatens, it is important to have an evacuation plan in place.

TENT ATTENDANTS can be present for your event or for snow removal. Having a tent attendant on hand can be helpful in checking fuel levels, addressing lighting needs, trouble-shooting temperature issues, etc.

SITE PREPARATION - Installation areas and access roads must be free of ice and snow in order for the tent company to perform their work. Make sure you have an understanding of your responsibilities with regard to site preparation.

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BATTENING is the process of securing the bottom of tent sidewall in an effort to minimize drafts. It is necessary to maintain temperature inside the tent. Sidewall designs using slide-track (keder) connections are also an option that will minimize drafts and wind.

FLOORING – In cold weather, soil holds significantly more moisture than in warm weather. In a heated tent, moisture can condense on the inside of the vinyl, sometimes resulting in a rain forest effect. Flooring can also help with temperature regulation by keeping your guests comfortable.

LIGHTING – Winter brings shorter periods of daylight, and cloudier skies. Since tent fabrics block most external light, lighting is recommended even for daylightevents.