Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs
Bureau of Fire Services

Fire Marshal Bulletin – 1

Camping Tentage Flammability and Camper Fire Safety

Since October 1, 1975, all camping tentage must comply with Section 7b of Public act 207 of 1941, the Fire Prevention Code.

Sec. 7b:

1. The following items shall meet the appropriate requirements for resistance to fire prescribed in the standard methods of fire tests for flame-resistant textiles, films, National Fire Protection Association No. 701-1969:
    a. A tent which may be occupied or furnished for public assembly by 50 or more people.
    b. A tent in which animals are stabled for public exhibition or sale.
    c. A tent located within a building used by the public.
    d. All tarpaulins and decorative materials used in connection with any of the above.
2. A safety net, tent, or tent camper used for recreational camping is exempt from this section.
3. After October 1, 1975, all camping tentage of new manufacture sold in this state shall comply with the provisions for resistance to fire as prescribed in the specification for flame resistant materials used in camping tentage, Canvas Products Association International-84 1974 (C.P.A.I), or such other nationally recognized standard that is acceptable to the Bureau of Fire Services (BFS).

Camping Tentage: Any portable temporary shelter or structure designed to protect persons from the elements or to form an enclosure or screen, all or a portion of the covering of which is made of fabric or other pliable materials. This includes, but is not limited to, the following: camping tents, play tents, recreational vehicle awnings, dining flies and canopies, fabric screen houses, add-a-rooms, ice fishing tents, back-pack tents, and camping tent trailers.

Tents having less than a 50-person capacity, which were purchased prior to October 1, 1975, are exempt and not required to be of flame resistant materials. However, new tents and tentage sold after October 1, 1975, must comply with the Act and bear a

conspicuous label clearly indicating that the fabric has been treated to meet the requirements of C.P.A. I-84 1974, or such other nationally recognized standard such as industrial fabrics association international CPAI-84, 1995.

Used campers being offered for sale by a dealer or private citizen need not comply with the Act. For the purposes of this law, a used camper means one which has been legally registered in the State of Michigan and the registration will be legally transferred to another owner by a lawful transaction.

Even though the material used in camping tentage has a degree of resistance to fire, precaution still needs to be exercised when using sources of heat in the vicinity of the material. The following tips are offered so that you may enjoy a fire safe experience when using camping tentage.

1. Watch for grease spatters when cooking. Keep the area around the stove clean, as well as free of combustible materials.
2. Make sure that heaters are in top working condition. If they are not working properly, have them repaired. Never bypass their automatic controls. Always keep the vents clear and make sure there is plenty of fresh air for combustion.
3. Never use any other than the recommended fuel for catalytic heaters. Leaded and unleaded motor fuels will produce deadly carbon monoxide gas.
4. White gas lanterns, which are properly adjusted and in good repair, work great. Remember to repair, fill and light the lantern outside of the camper.
5. Make every effort to keep your camper orderly and uncluttered. Know where everything is, especially highly combustible materials. Read the labels.
6. If there are bottle gas (propane) appliances, check the fittings for tightness. They can loosen from the vibration of traveling. If you run out of gas, shut off all the appliances before a fresh tank is reconnected.
7. Never store flammable gases or flammable liquids in the camper. Locate them outside and away from sources of ignition, especially the outside vents to your gas appliances.
8. Keep a U.L. listed 2A-10BC fire extinguisher readily available in your camper in case of fire.
9. Keep heat producing devices a safe distance from camping tentage. Carefully read manufacturer's instructions for recommendations on safe usage of heat producing devices.