

**Policy on Camping and Use of Tents on Campus**  
**Policy Number 50006.1**

**Type of Policy:** Administrative

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**Purpose:** To set forth the State University of New York (SUNY) Campus policy on camping and the use of tents/canopies on campus.

**Scope:** SUNY Cobleskill is committed to maintaining a clean, aesthetically pleasing, healthy, hygienic and safe work, educational, and living environment in order to effectively carry out its educational mission. SUNY Cobleskill is authorized to control its buildings and grounds consistent with the SUNY policies for use of facilities, which prohibit the use of College property or buildings for purposes unrelated to the regular programs and activities of the University.

**Definitions:**

*Camping:*

- In indoor or outdoor locations, the establishment of, evidence of an attempt to establish, or maintenance of temporary or permanent living quarters at any location on College property other than living quarters in residence halls and living quarters in apartments, or other College-managed housing – this includes the establishment of any indoor and/or outdoor encampment erected in connection with any lawful assembly of individuals pursuant to SUNY Cobleskill policies;
- Sleeping overnight in, on, or under any parked vehicle; or
- Establishing or maintaining indoors or outdoors, or in or under, any structure not designated for human occupancy, at any time during the day or night, a temporary or permanent place for cooking, storing of personal belongings, or sleeping by setting up any bedding, sleeping bag, mattress, tent, hammock or other sleeping equipment, or by

setting up any cooking equipment that has not been approved by the Office of Environmental Health and Safety.

*Campus or Campuses* is any College-owned, leased, licensed or operated space, facility, property, grounds or building.

*Canopy* is a structure, enclosure or shelter constructed of fabric or pliable materials supported by any manner, except by air or the contents it protects, and is open without side walls or drops on 75 percent or more of the perimeter.

*Permit* is a written document prepared by the Vice President for Student Development or designee, issued to Campus Personnel to allow the set up and use of a tent or canopy for a specified amount of time. Permits may be revoked if permit conditions are not followed.

*Tent-* any and all structures, enclosure or shelter constructed of any material, including but not limited to fabric or pliable materials supported by any manner.

*Third Party or Parties* is any person, organization, group or entity not affiliated with the College including, but not limited to, the general public, contractors, vendors, guests and visitors to the College, those using College facilities or property under a College revocable permit, and volunteers not enrolled as such on College systems.

*College* is SUNY Cobleskill.

**Policy:**

- A. Camping is prohibited on the College Campus.
- B. Exceptions
  - 1. Actions that constitute “camping” as defined above may be allowed with prior, written permission in the following limited circumstances:
    - a. With the advance written approval of the Vice President for Student Development or designee following the appropriate campus procedures below.
    - b. As approved as part of a revocable permit for Campus use pursuant to SUNY Policy No. 5603 (Use of Facilities by Non-Commercial Organizations).
    - c. In extraordinary circumstances, such as times of natural disaster, when approved in writing in advance by the President of the College or their designee.
- C. Enforcement and Compliance
  - 1. The University Police Department is responsible for addressing non-compliance with this policy by all persons and may address violations of this policy that constitute criminal trespass or any other violation of law.
  - 2. Students may be referred to the Student Conduct Office for alleged violation of this Policy.
- D. This Policy shall be effective immediately upon approval.

## Additional Procedure for Tents and Canopies Larger Than 400 Square Feet

- A. *Tents or canopies covering an area in excess of 400 square feet must also comply with this additional procedural section.*
- B. *Permit requirement:* a permit is required for tents and canopies >400 square feet. Such structures shall not be erected prior to obtaining a permit.
- C. *Construction documents:* a detailed site and floor plan for tents and canopies with an occupancy load of 50 or more shall be provided with each application for approval. The floor plan shall include details of means of egress facilities, seating capacity, arrangement of the seating and location and type of heating and electrical equipment.
- D. *Inspections:* Tents and canopies shall be inspected prior to occupancy and use. Tents in use for 30 days or more shall be re-inspected bi-weekly.
- E. *Location:* Tents and canopies must not be located within 50 feet of: lot lines, buildings, other tents and canopies, parked vehicles or other internal combustion engines. For the purposes of required distances, support ropes and guy wires shall be considered as part of the tent or canopy.
- F. *Fire Break:* On all sides of any tent or canopy, there must be an unobstructed passageway or fire road not less than 12 feet wide free from guy wires, ropes and other obstructions to allow for fire department access unless approved by Vice President for Student Development or designee.
- G. *Anchorage required:* Tents and canopies shall be adequately roped, braced and anchored to withstand the elements of weather and prevent against collapsing. Documentation of structural stability shall be furnished to the Vice President for Student Development or designee on request. If tent stakes or pins will be driven into the ground for stability, NYS law requires that you contact Dig Safely NY (811) prior to insertion of tent stakes or pins. Sandbags, Water barrels, and cement is also an option, but it must be appropriately anchored for wind and weather elements.
- H. *Seating arrangements:* All seating arrangements shall be in accordance with Chapter 10 (means of egress) of the Fire Code of New York State.
- I. *Means of egress:* Exits shall be spaced at approximately equal intervals around the  
  
less from an exit. The number of exits varies depending on the number of occupants.

### Related Documents:

#### Regulations:

- [8 NYCRR Part 535](#)
- [Fire Code of New York State, 2020](#)

#### SUNY Policies:

- [3653 - Rules for the Maintenance of Public Order](#)
- [5607 - Commercial Use Policy](#)
- [5603 - Use of Facilities by Non-Commercial Organizations](#)

**Policy History:**

Revision Date	Author/Owner	Description of Action
August 31, 2024	Dr. Anne Hopkins Gross	Adoption of policy