

# Canopy Safety Guide

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Most accidents at street festivals and markets involve wind-blown tents, canopies, and umbrellas. Numerous festival organizers have developed guidelines, rules, regulations, and best-practices to minimize or eliminate injury caused by high winds. Below are some of the guidelines from festivals and markets around the United States for using canopy weights.

## **Setting up & taking down canopy weights**

- Set-up and secure the canopy with weights at the same time. Set-up times often prove to be the most vulnerable to the wind. Stay focused and don't get distracted.
- Always attach canopy weights to the canopy.
- Secure weights in a way that do not create additional safety hazards.
  - Weights should not cause a tripping hazard.
  - Weights should be tethered with a line that is visible or use a weight designed to effectively capture the leg bracket. Avoid stretched out lines or cords.
  - Weights should have soft edges to prevent scrapes and cuts.
  - Weights should not hang over a person's head.
- Canopy weights should have at least 20-40 pounds per leg for a 10'X10X canopy and 50 pounds per leg for a 10'X20' canopy.
- Take-down the canopy and weights at the same time. Take-down times are equally vulnerable to the wind. Stay focused and don't get distracted at the end of the day.

## **Examples of Good Canopy Weights**

- Pre-Filled Cement or Duracast Canopy Weights – Pre-filled cement weights with pre-cut leg openings generally range for 5-10 pounds and are stackable. These convenient weights are easy to set-up and take down, and store. They are not messy and do not rust. Pre-filled canopy weights are available from a variety of retailers including USW.
- Cast Iron Weights – Cast iron weights convenient and offer the most density. They generally range for 10-20 pounds per piece. These weights are stackable and easy to set-up and take down. They are available from a variety of retailers including USW.

- 2.5 Gallon+ Cement-Filled Buckets - Filling an empty bucket (2.5 gallon works great) with cement and tying this to each corner of the tent with a rope or bungee. It is not sufficient to place the bucket on the feet of the canopy.
- PVC Cement-Filled Pipe - These homemade canopy eights are often capped and filled with cement can be hung on the inside of canopy poles as long as it is secured so that it does not collide with a person and is below the head.
- Sandbag Weights – Sandbag weights that specially made for securing canopies and weigh at least 20 pounds filled with sand. These sandbag weights are vertical and can be strapped the legs of the canopy. They are available from a variety of retailers including USW.
- 2+ Gallon Canopy Weight Buckets - Water-filled or sand-filled buckets are another alternative. These generally weigh between 17-25 pounds each depending on the fill. They are available from a wide variety of retailers.

#### **Examples of Bad Canopy Weights**

- One Galion Water Jugs – One Gallon Jugs are just not heavy enough for large gusts of wind. One gallon of water weighs only 8 pounds. One gallon of water on each corner would be the equivalent of a 3 year old child trying to hold down a 100 square foot parachute.
- Stakes – A strong wind will easily uproot stakes. They will also create serious tripping hazards since they are often barely visible.
- Tying - Tying tents, canopies or umbrellas to tables, coolers or vehicles provides tripping hazards and frequently does not provide adequate weight.
- Sandbags – Sandbags that cannot be placed upright and securely tied to the tent or canopy should not be used.
- Cinder Blocks – Cinder blocker are a tripping hazard and not heavy enough. Cinder blocks weigh 22 pounds each. They are also pretty ugly!!!

Any vendor who fails to properly anchor his or her canopy will not be allowed to sell at the Farmers Market on that market day, unless that vendor chooses to take down and stow their canopy and sell without it. Each canopy leg must have no less than 25# (pounds) anchoring each leg, and market umbrellas, 50#. In certain inclement weather conditions even properly secured canopies can be precarious. If canopies need to be taken down in the middle of market due to inclement weather, vendors should direct customers to move out of the way so they are not injured. Weights and canopy tie-downs should be safely secured -- “safely,” meaning that the method used to secure the canopy does not create its own safety hazards:

- Weights should not cause a tripping hazard
- Weights should be tethered with lines that are clearly visible
- Weights should have soft edges to avoid causing cuts and scrapes
- Weights should be securely attached · Weights should be on the ground (NOT above people's heads)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOBFEBVleHY>