

## Scenario RE: Rental Equipment/Temporary Structure

**Event Type:** Wedding

**Incident:** Tent failure

### **Narrative**

On Saturday, June 6, 2009, a wedding was held in Windermere, FL on Lake Down. A major rental company installed a Legend pole tent on Friday, June 5, 2009. The tent was 100'x270'. The center poles were 31' and the side poles were 10'. There were 1000 guests in attendance seated at round tables. There were a total of 8 people per table. There was a 2500 sq. ft. dance floor, 8 piece live band, 50 ft. serving station, and a 10x20 elevated stage. Lighting, HVAC and portable restrooms were provided as well. The Legend pole tent is designed to withstand high winds --- 70 mph sustained winds.

The evening of June 5, 2009, Windermere, FL received approximately 3 inches of rain. Prior to the rain event, Windermere, FL was experiencing near drought conditions. The tent rental company had properly installed and staked the tent. The tent operator was first class. They even had weather monitoring devices and staff members assigned during each scheduled tent rental. The location where the wedding was being held was known for afternoon thunderstorms. On Saturday afternoon, June 6, 2009, the staff member responsible for monitoring the weather was home sick. A storm was rolling in, but it was not a cause for concern. The tent was rated for 70 mph sustained winds. The fast approaching storm hit the tents and proceeded to lift the tent off the ground. The center pole lifted out of the socket and decapitated the grandfather of the bride. The outer edge of the tent crushed a young boy, killing him and the grandfather on scene.

### **Problem statements**

- What most likely caused the tent to fail?
- Did the environmental conditions on June 5, contribute to the outcome? How so?
- How often should the tent be inspected? Why?
- Are there standards for tent installation? Who writes them and how can you find them?
- Who should perform the inspection?
- Could they have prevented this from happening? How?
- Even though the tent was rated at 70 mph, should they have continued the event in the tent during the storm?
- What kind of arrangements should have been made for storm related situations?
- Should the rental company contact the tent manufacturer to discuss this situation? Why?
- What kind of policies and procedures should be in place for the next event? Who should write them and why?
- Who was ultimately responsible for the deaths? Why?