

What's the Right Tarp for Me?

A Tarps Buying Reference Guide

To choose the right tarp for your needs, you may consider:

- **Tarps by the weather elements and environmental factors you want coverage against:**
 - **Sun:** Some tarps are UV treated to resist the harmful effect of UV rays. Look for “UV resistant” or “UV treated” in the product description to ensure that you are getting the right tarp.
 - **Rain:** Polyethylene (poly) and vinyl tarps are naturally 100% waterproof. Treated canvas tarps are water resistant. However, if enough water accumulates on the canvas tarp, water will eventually seep through.
 - **Wind:** Not all tarps hold up well in windy conditions. Vinyl tarps and super heavy duty poly tarps and are the best candidates for coverage against wind. Make sure to use proper straps and securely tie down the tarps for a snug fit on your valuables.
 - **Cold:** Heavy duty or better grade poly tarps adapt well in winter conditions. Yet vinyl tarps are the best performers in very cold temperatures, built to withstand as low as -40 degrees Fahrenheit.
 - **Heat & Flames:** Flame resistant or flame retardant tarps are a must for protecting valuables located close to a flame or high heat. Flame retardant tarps are available in poly, vinyl, and canvas. Look for specially marked “flame retardant” or “flame resistant” tarps to ensure that you have the right tarp. Please note that while flame retardant tarps may not readily burn, it can be dangerous and potentially destructive to place goods close to a flame or high heat.

- **Tarps by material:**
 - **Poly Tarps (Polyethylene, Polypropylene)**
 - Poly tarps are seen and used everywhere, from construction to landscaping to camping to backyard applications and many more. Poly tarps are a good all-purpose tarp choice for everyday use. Poly tarps range from light duty to super heavy duty.
 - Look & feel
 - Heavy-duty plastic-like texture that gives off a shine
 - Pros:
 - Waterproof
 - Generally UV treated
 - Most economical tarp choice; less expensive than most other tarps
 - Flame Retardant treatment available
 - Cons:

- Can become brittle in very cold weather
 - Not as long-lasting as vinyl or canvas
 - Popular Uses
 - Camping tarps, camping covers
 - Construction covers
 - Temporary roof covers
 - Leaf covers
 - BBQ grill covers
 - Pool covers
- **Canvas Tarps**
 - Canvas has a long history in the clothing and nautical industry. Made from cotton or polyester, the canvas tarp is a tough and durable material that many come to trust to protect their valuables. Canvas is also used as the standard drop cloth for painters. Canvas tarps range from heavy duty to industrial strength grades.
 - Look & feel
 - Strong, rugged look. Coarse feel
 - Pros:
 - Naturally breathable, does not trap in water condensation or too much heat from the sun
 - Treated canvas tarps are water resistant
 - Long-lasting material if properly maintained
 - Very environmentally friendly
 - Natural, untreated canvas is absorbent, usable and provides a nonslip surface for painting or other applications
 - Flame Retardant treatment available
 - Cons:
 - Not water proof, standing water will seep through
 - Lower tear strength compared to vinyl tarps
 - May shrink slightly over time as it is made with natural cotton material
 - Even treated canvas can be prone to mildew and rot in wet or very damp areas
 - Treated canvas have an odor and may leave dye stains behind
 - Popular Uses:
 - Machinery and equipment covers
 - Supply and tools covers
 - Construction covers
 - Salvage covers
 - Breathable weather covers for anything that condensation build-up would be a problem
 - Floor covers (Tarp Supply also supplies Natural Canvas Dropclothes)
- **Vinyl Tarps**

- Vinyl tarps are the strongest, most durable tarps available. These tarps provide the utmost protection against tear, abrasion, and stress. Vinyl tarps are the very best industrial tarps and are trusted for professional and recreational use. Vinyl tarps range from heavy duty to industrial strength grades.
 - Look & feel:
 - A “rubber sheet” texture that gives off a slight shine
 - Pros:
 - Longest-lasting out of all the tarp materials
 - Waterproof
 - Mildew and rot resistant
 - Superior wind and tear resistance making vinyl tarps an ideal choice for trailer and truck covers.
 - Superior performance in cold temperatures down to -40 Fahrenheit
 - Generally UV treated
 - Flame Retardant treatment available
 - Cons:
 - More expensive relative to other tarps (with price reflecting quality)
 - Popular Uses:
 - Truck tarps
 - Construction covers
 - Machinery and equipment covers
- **Mesh Tarps**
 - Mesh tarps are screen-like materials made with nylon tarp threading. Mesh tarps are also known as shade tarps or privacy screen tarps. They are most frequently used to align fences at sporting facilities, such as tennis courts and golf courses. The percentages tagged with mesh tarps reflect how much light is blocked. For example: a 55% shade tarp blocks 55% of the total sunlight that would otherwise penetrate. Mesh tarps range from heavy duty to super heavy duty grades.
 - Look and feel:
 - Open weave; Screen-like material
 - Pros:
 - Allows airflow and breaks strong winds
 - Allows (some) sunlight to penetrate; Allows visibility
 - Vinyl coated mesh tarps are strong
 - Ideal for sunny, hot, and windy areas
 - Flame Retardant treatment available
 - Popular use:
 - Privacy screen covers for construction sites, private homes and public facilities
 - Truck bed covers
 - Wind break screens
 - Swimming pool covers