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Meaningful Placemaking for Outdoor Spaces:
Best Practices for Design and Specification of Fabric Shade Structures

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Topic Area: Project Planning and Design

Program Knowledge Area: Introductory

Professional Development Hours (PDH): 1

Learning Unit (LU/HSW): 1

Eligible CEU Credit: AIA, LA CES

Summary: Today more than ever, outdoor space in commercial applications has high value. It feels good to sit, meet, eat, gather, and do business outdoors. But without a protection overhead, outdoor space is often not used and unusable. Tensile fabric structures elevate the

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value of outdoor space to a high degree. They can be purely functional or wildly imaginative. This course discusses the value of tensile fabric structures and the variety of applications for this exciting form of architecture. The factors that make up tensile fabric structures are discussed, including framing, fabric, connections, and foundations. The process of bringing a fabric structure from idea to implementation is thoroughly discussed, and case studies are inserted throughout to show these innovative structures in action.

HSW Justification: This course is about the design and specification of tensile fabric shade structures that can protect the health and wellbeing of outdoor occupants of these spaces. These structures create and/or help enhance meaningful outdoor space with protection from harmful UV rays while at the same time exposing the occupants to healthy natural light and views.

Potential Learning Objectives and Expanded Outline: By the time the learners have completed this educational unit, they will be able to:

- Discuss the protective benefits of shaded outdoor spaces from UV rays for people, product, and places.
- Describe the factors to integrate fabric structures into the built environment for safe and inviting spaces.
- Define considerations in the specification of fabric shade structures and how shade structures are tested and rated for safety and longevity.
- Identify the process for the successful design and implementation in various projects for producing a quality structure through a seamless process.
- List several case studies where shade structures added aesthetics and functionality to a variety of market segments and applications.



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