



Special Event Guidelines

Special Event Related Permits

There are a number of different special event related permits that may be issued independent of a Citywide Special Event Permit or may be required in conjunction with a Citywide Special Event Permit. The proposed event venue, activities, components, attendance, and unique circumstances of the event are contributing factors to the final determination of the required permit types.

Following is a summary of the most common permits types you may be required to obtain if you are planning a special event or an activity associated with a special event:

Alcohol Use Permit

If you plan to have alcohol at your event, you must receive authorization from the San Diego Police Department and the State of California Department of Alcohol Beverage Control. San Diego Police Department authorization is typically granted through the Citywide Process. If the proposed event will take place on public park land; within a city-owned facility; or other city-managed property, you will also be required to provide a letter of authorization to serve alcohol from an authorized representative of the managing city department. Both the Police Department and managing city department may place restrictions on the way in which alcohol is managed at your proposed event.

In addition to authorization from the City of San Diego to provide alcohol at your event, it is your responsibility to obtain the appropriate license from the State of California Department of Alcohol Beverage Control.

Building Permit

If your event includes the introduction of portable structures, pre-fabricated structures or site-built structures such as bleachers, elevated platforms, temporary pedestrian bridges, tent



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structures, etc. you will be required to obtain a building permit from the City of San Diego Development Services Department.

Electrical Permit

The installation and distribution of all electrical power used to support your event should be completed by a State of California licensed electrician. An Electrical Permit is not required when all power is distributed from a generator. An Electrical Permit may be required when power is provided from an existing tap box, panel, or other source. The Fire Marshal may inspect power distribution safety at your event and may require onsite modifications.

Entertainment Permit

There are a number of police regulated activities that may require a specialized permit from the San Diego Police Department. These permit types include Adult Entertainment; After-Hours Entertainment Business; Entertainment Establishments; Games; and Promoters.

Firework/Pyrotechnic/Special Effect/Laser Permit

All activities associated with the use of pyrotechnics and open flames must be reviewed and approved by the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department in compliance with the International Fire Code as amended by the State of California and City of San Diego. Examples of activities in this category include outdoor fireworks, lasers, model rocket launches, open flame activities such as fire walking and special effects using pyrotechnical devices. As part of the permit requirements, onsite stand-by and inspection services may be required due to the size,



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complexity and/or unique safety issues regarding the activities associated with the proposed event.

You may also be required to obtain approval from the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Food Permits

If you intend to sell, serve, give away, or sample food or consumable products, including water or other beverages, at a public event, you must obtain a Temporary Food Facility Sponsor Permit. Additionally, each food vendor at your event must also have a Temporary Food Facility Vendor Permit. Different permits, policies and procedures depend on your classification and the number of days of your event. As part of the food handling requirements, you are required to include public safety features in your event plans such as hand-washing sinks. The County of San Diego Department of Environmental Health issues food permits.

Lake Use Permit

Organized events involving the use of property managed by the Public Utilities Department that will have groups of 50 or more people require a Lake Use Permit. Special rules and regulations unique to each site may apply (e.g. use of alcohol, dogs off-leash, use of inflatables, party jumps, live entertainment, park hours, event moratoriums, etc).

Neighborhood Block Party Permit

The Neighborhood Block Party Permit provides a simple way for residents to close a street for the express purpose of a neighborhood celebration or gathering. This permit application can



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only be used for block parties in residential, non-mixed use areas. The event organizer is responsible for all costs associated with approved safety equipment rental and/or barricades, and the provision of insurance naming the City of San Diego as an additionally insured.

Any neighborhood block party involving: major street closures; the sale of food or alcohol; impact to community services or entities (e.g. bus re-routing, or affecting schools, hospitals, or churches); or large crowds are required to be reviewed through the Citywide Process and must complete a Citywide Special Event Permit Application.

Park Use Permit

The Park and Recreation Department maintains four developed regional parks and more than 330 community, neighborhood, mini-parks and facilities. Organized events involving the use of public parks that will have groups of 50 or more people require a Park Use Permit or Special Event Park Use Permit. Special rules and regulations unique to each site may apply (e.g. use of alcohol, dogs off-leash, use of inflatables, party jumps, live entertainment, park hours, event moratoriums, etc). If your event requires review by other city departments, you may be required to obtain a Citywide Special Event Permit in addition to the Park Use Permit or Special Event Park Use Permit. If your proposed event includes the use of park land and it is determined that a Citywide Permit is required, your special event permit application is not complete without a Park Reservation Form issued by the Park and Recreation Department to use the requested venue.

Public Assembly Permit

All public assemblies of more than 49 people in buildings or areas that are not regularly classified for use as public assembly sites must be reviewed and approved by the San Diego



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Fire-Rescue Department in compliance with the International Fire Code as amended by the State of California and City of San Diego. Examples include barricaded streets and other defined venues, fenced beer gardens, concerts, tent events, trade shows, or use of a warehouse or other building not classified for public assembly for a special event venue. As part of the permit requirements, onsite stand-by and inspection services may be required due to the size, complexity and/or unique safety issues regarding the activities associated with the proposed event.

Temporary Use Permit

A Temporary Use Permit (TUP) applies to the use of private property and can allow certain uses, for limited time periods, in locations where the uses would not otherwise be allowed in the applicable zone. A Temporary Use Permit may be issued for the following uses:

- Retail sales related to seasonal activities, such as holidays
- Temporary public assembly and entertainment uses
- Temporary telecommunication facilities intended to provide service to citywide public events

Tent, Canopy and Membrane Structure Permit

All tent and membrane structures having an area in excess of 200 square feet and all canopies in excess of 400 square feet must be approved and reviewed by the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department in compliance with the International Fire Code as amended by the State of California and City of San Diego. In many instances it is necessary to issue a Tent, Canopy and Membrane Structure Permit in conjunction with a Public Assembly Permit in which case the



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review process is combined; however, the individual permit fees are applicable to each permit type.

As part of the permit requirements, onsite stand-by and inspection services may be required due to the size, complexity and/or unique safety issues regarding the activities associated with the proposed event.

Trade Show and Exposition Permit

The San Diego Fire-Rescue Department provides plan check services to review booth layout, pedestrian flow, aisle width, exiting plans and other crowd safety issues associated with the use of facilities for trade shows and expositions in compliance with the International Fire Code as amended by the State of California and City of San Diego.

As part of the permit requirements, onsite stand-by and inspection services may be required due to the size, complexity and/or unique safety issues regarding the activities associated with the proposed event.
