



Photo courtesy of Randall L. Schieber

# 2026 PARK PERMIT PLANNING GUIDE

## Introduction

Welcome to the City of Columbus online Park Permit Application and Permit System. The purpose of the Park Permit Planning Guide is to provide you with information, policies, and procedures required to successfully navigate the City of Columbus Park Permit process. The applicant is responsible for all aspects of planning and executing the event.

Park permit applications may be used for up to four (4) different dates for community giveaways or activities, which may be a series of dates that meet the criteria listed below.

After reviewing the following information, the applicant may begin the Park Permit application. City of Columbus staff will assist with questions and approvals throughout the process. The information provided in this document directly corresponds with the requirements of the application.

## Park Permit Overview

A Park Permit is issued for a recreational event located wholly or partially on park property. Park permits may be requested for birthday parties, reunions, graduation parties, community give backs, etc. Park Permit applications can be completed from 14-365 days in advance of the requested activity date. Any application submitted less than 14 days before the activity date may incur expediting fees.

A Park Permit should be requested if your event meets any of the following criteria:

- The anticipated number of attendees is less than 99 people;
- Up to four 10x10 tents/canopies or the equivalent of up to 400 sq ft;
- Bounce amusements or inflatables;
- Amplified sound;
- Food preparation and/or pre-paid food truck;
- Animal attractions or displays.

The following are exceptions:

- Wedding and/or shelter rentals (contact CRPD Rental Services Section 614-645-3337 or [columbusrecparks.com/facilities/rentals/event-venues/](http://columbusrecparks.com/facilities/rentals/event-venues/));
- Health & Wellness License for fitness related activities (contact CRPD Rental Services Section 614-645-3337);
- Sporting event at designated sport parks (contact CRPD Sports Section 614-645-3337 or [columbusrecparks.com](http://columbusrecparks.com/));
- Activity taking place inside a community center or being produced exclusively by center staff (contact the Community Center).

The following items are **not permitted** with a park permit:

- Alcohol, tobacco and/or cannabis sales/consumption;
- Food and/or merchandise sales;
- Confetti, glitter or similar materials;
- Smoke machines, bubble machines, fog machines or other similar devices;
- Staples, tacks or other damaging materials (on trees or signage);
- Pinatas may not be tied to any natural feature in the parks (trees, bushes, signage, etc.);
- Fireworks, Japanese lanterns or similar items;
- Dunk tanks;
- Stages or other temporary structures;
- Moneymaking ventures, games of chance, raffles etc.

## Additional Rules & Conditions

It is the permit holder's responsibility to supervise all guests, including children and minors. Permit holder cannot sublet the park under any circumstances. Any groups who abuse the park or violate the rules and



conditions will be asked to leave and charges for damages will be assessed. If any group or individual is asked to leave the premises, they must do so promptly.

Driving and parking on grass, trails or alongside the roadways are prohibited. All vehicles must be in designated parking spaces.

It is the permit holder's responsibility to clean up the utilized area after their event.

Permit holder's and/or their guests are not allowed to operate their own maintenance or lawn care equipment at City facilities.

### **Applying**

When first applying for a park permit, you will need to create an account and verify your email. Once that has been completed you may start the park permit application. The application is considered complete when all details and supplemental documents are included and the application has been submitted. Listing information as "TBD" or uploading blank or not applicable documents as a placeholder cannot be processed.

### **City Fees and Costs**

The billing contact will be billed the permit fee based on the date the park permit application has been submitted. Additional fees are applied to park permit applications submitted inside of 14 days. Permit and expediting fees are non-refundable and non-transferable. Permitting fees can be found in our [fee schedule](#).

### **Cancellations**

All cancellations must be made in writing to the CRPD Office of Special Events. This can be done by commenting in your application or by emailing our office at [specialevents@columbus.gov](mailto:specialevents@columbus.gov). Application fees are non-refundable and non-transferable. The City reserves the right to cancel or relocate an event due to poor weather and/or turf conditions prior to, or on the day of the event that may cause excessive damage to City property. Refunds will not be granted for inclement weather or City emergencies.

### **Contact Information**

The Permit Holder is the individual holding the permit to conduct an activity within the requested park and is responsible for following all park rules.

The Billing Information Contact is the person who is responsible for all financial obligations regarding obtaining the permit and any subsequent park damage fees.

The Onsite Coordinator is the person who will be the point of contact on the day of the event. This person should be available during set up through tear down of the event.

### **Event Information**

Applicants will need to provide a general overview of their requested park activity. The activity type is the primary purpose of the activity.

### **Event Location and Dates**

The Office of Special Events accepts park permit applications up to one year in advance. Rain dates are not permissible in the event of inclement weather. Your permit is for the time and specific location stated on your application. If you need additional time for decorating, set up or deliveries, you must schedule for this time when completing your application.

Total attendance is the total attendance anticipated for the entire duration of the event. Applicants will need to share the full scope of the activity timeline, including set up through tear down.

Park hours depend on the location. Activities held in a regional or neighborhood park will not incur park rental fees. Applicants will only pay a permit application fee.

Rentable facilities located within the park should go through Columbus Recreation and Parks Facility Rentals. Please visit the [CRPD Facility Rentals](#) page online for applicable facilities, fees and rental instructions.

## **Event Details**

Applicants will need to share the scope of the activity by answering a series of “Yes or No” questions. Additional details will be required for any “Yes” responses. The applicant may change any “Yes or No” response up to the submission of the application. Every question must be answered in order to submit the application.

## **Tents and Canopies**

You may have up to four 10x10 tents/canopies or the equivalent with the park permit. Tents/Canopies over 400 sq ft are not permitted under this permit, including multiple tents adding up to or exceeding 400 sq ft.

Tents should be anchored by water ballasts (barrels), concrete ballasts or stakes capable of anchoring tents during high winds. Tent stakes may NOT be driven into any asphalt, brick concrete or any other hard surfaces on City property.

Installation and removal of tents/canopies must occur during the time permitted. Tent locations and sizes must be indicated on the site plan.

## **Electric**

Limited electricity is available within some parks. Permission to access park electricity is contingent upon the approval of the proposed electrical connections and available amperage. The City of Columbus does not guarantee that outlets within a park are active.

Generators up to 4000 watts may be permitted. Generators usually run on gasoline, diesel or propane and include a couple of electrical outlets Columbus Fire requires a fire extinguisher to be located near each generator used. All generators must be indicated on the site plan.

## **Amplified Sound**

Amplified sound for a park permit shall include personal Bluetooth speakers, live acoustic music or a DJ with one or two small (ex. 10-12”) speakers. Amplified sound locations must be marked on the site plan.

The issuance of a Park Permit shall include permission to have amplified sound provided the applicant completes the section of the application pertaining to amplified sound at the time of applying. Applicants receiving the Park Permit are exempt from applying for a Community Noise Permit.

Music must be always kept at a reasonable volume. CRPD may restrict hours or placement of the source of amplification within the event space in an effort to minimize inconvenience to persons residing on properties adjoining the permitted activity footprint.

## **Food and Beverages**

Food sales are prohibited under the Park Permit. All food preparation and giveaway locations must be indicated on the site plan. Please provide a list of foods being prepared/given away onsite. Glass containers are prohibited.

Grease, ash, or wastewater should not be dumped anywhere on City property. When cooking with charcoal, a metal can with the capacity to hold hot ash must be used for disposal. CRPD does not permit any cooking in grass areas without appropriate ground cover protection mats/underlayment.

Food trucks must be pre-paid and post signage that they are available to the park permitted activity participants only. Food trucks must be parked legally within a parking spot and may not be driven onto grass or trail surfaces within the park.

Alcohol, Tobacco and Cannabis sales and consumption are prohibited on park property. Alcohol is an exception for certain parks and only with a Special Event Permit.

## Vendors/Resources

Merchandise sales are prohibited under a Park Permit.

Resource and product giveaways may be permitted if noted on the application with a list of all vendors. All vendor and/or exhibitor locations must be indicated on the site plan.

## Tables and Seating

The City does not loan or rent out tables, chairs or bleachers. There are multiple companies in the region where these items can be rented.

## Bounce Amusements

Inflatable amusements such as bounce houses, slides etc. are not permitted unless the permit holder obtains liability insurance, naming the City of Columbus as the additional insured in the amount of \$1,000,000. This insurance can usually be obtained from the bounce house rental company. Insurance will need to be provided before a permit can be issued. A sample of this insurance can be found [here](#).

Bounce houses should be anchored for safety. Stakes may NOT be driven into any asphalt, brick concrete or any other hard surfaces on City property. Installation and removal of bounce houses must occur during the time permitted. Bounce house locations and sizes must be indicated on the site plan.

Mechanical amusement rides and dunk tanks are not permitted on City Park property.

## Animals

The operation of petting zoos in the City requires licensure from the United States Department of Agriculture or [Columbus Public Health](#) and inspections performed by the Columbus Public Health Department. Vendors need to obtain a permit from Columbus Public Health by completing an [application](#) a minimum of two weeks prior to the activity. It is helpful if the permit holder advises the vendor of the need for animal permits.

Petting zoos that do not comply with all applicable laws and regulations are not allowed to operate on any City property used in conjunction with an event. Petting zoos must adhere to all federal and state regulations regarding the importing of animals into the United States and Ohio. Operators of petting zoos must provide hand-washing stations with water, soap and disposable towels. Operators must also post signs stating that visitors are not permitted to feed the animals.

A Circus, Menagerie or Carnival is not permitted under the Park Permit.

## Signs and Banners

Signage and banners may not be posted in, or attached to any structures, trees or facilities located on park property. No staples, tacks or other damaging materials can be used in the park (on trees, bushes or signage). Pinatas may not be tied to any natural feature in the park.

## Medical/Emergency Plan

The most basic medical plan for any activity with a low medical risk assessment is that the permit holder or a designee be assigned to call 9-1-1.

Every permit holder should consider the possibilities of natural disasters and unplanned emergencies. A basic emergency response plan should be adopted. You must describe or upload a Safety Plan. You are welcome to use the [Event Safety Form](#) as a template.

## Restrooms

Restroom access is required for all permitted park activities. The applicant is responsible for having a plan for adequate restroom facilities. Certain parks have restrooms available seasonally. Those parks without available restrooms will need a restroom plan. When making your restroom plan, please consider the age of your attendees, mobility of attendees and distance from your activities.

## **Waste Management**

The permit holder is responsible for removing all trash related to their permitted activity, including ground litter, food waste and debris. All permanent park or sidewalk trash receptacles must be emptied and replaced with new can liners. Trash may be placed into a park dumpster if available. If a park dumpster is not available, the permit holder is responsible for hauling away all trash generated by their permitted park use.

All event signage, related supplies and equipment must be removed, and hard surfaces must be clean of stains from spills. Charcoal must be removed properly via a metal container with the capacity to hold hot ash.

## **Parking**

The City of Columbus does not allow driving or parking on park green spaces or trails. The permit holder is required to provide details on parking locations for all attendees. When planning your event parking plan please keep in mind duration of event, number of attendees and that the park space will be open to the public, which may impact available parking.

## **Site Plan**

Detailed site plans are required with your application submission. While site plans are not required to be professionally drawn, they must be legible, to scale, or labeled with dimensions of each item.

A detailed site plan must include the following:

- Tent(s)
- Restroom(s)
- Cooking Area
- Amplified sound location
- Generator(s)
- Bounce house(s)/inflatable(s) location
- Parking areas
- Directional compass (north should be indicated)
- Site plan key (identifies the items and their sizes)

## **Contacts**

### **Columbus Recreation and Parks**

Office of Special Events: Special Events, Block Parties, Filming and Park Permits.

1111 E. Broad St., Suite 103, Columbus Ohio 43205

614-645-3800

[specialevents@columbus.gov](mailto:specialevents@columbus.gov)

Rental Services Section: Facility rentals in city parks, health & wellness licenses, wedding sites.

1111 E. Broad St., Suite 103, Columbus Ohio 43205

614-645-3337

[parkrentals@columbus.gov](mailto:parkrentals@columbus.gov)

Sports Section: Athletic fields and sports facility rentals.

1111 E. Broad St., Suite 103, Columbus Ohio 43205

614-645-3366

[CRPDSports@columbus.gov](mailto:CRPDSports@columbus.gov)