

Special Event Permit

The following provides key information about requirements for a Special Event Permit – in order to insure appropriate review and compliance, applicants should follow these important steps.

What triggers the need for a permit?

A Special Event Permit is required when one or more of the following applies:

- More than 50 individuals gather for event activity
- A road or lane closure, whether a full- or a rolling-closure
- Use of any public right-of-way or City-owned park for event activity
- Use of public parking spaces for uses other than parking a vehicle
- Curbside food truck operation in a non-designated location

Get Prepared Prior to Submission

1. Have a date in mind, and a second choice
2. A traffic control plan, if you want to close a road
3. Certificate of Liability Insurance from an authorized representative of your insurance company (residential neighborhood block parties are exempt)
4. Proof of non-profit status, if applicable

Application Review Steps

At any point in the application submission, if you have questions about the application, don't hesitate to contact the Special Events Office directly. 253-573-2523.

1. Register as an Accela user to open an application at tacomapermits.org, or log-in to an existing account.
2. Choose Special Event Permit from the list of options.
3. Fill in all required fields with as much detail as possible.
4. You may choose to provide proof of insurance at a later date.
5. You may suspend the application submission at any time and return later to complete it.
6. Pay for the non-refundable application processing fee prior to submission. (Recommended for credit card payment.)
7. Your application will be evaluated by appropriate City departments for approvals, including traffic, fire, and police, and by some external agencies.
8. Individuals from these departments may contact you directly for more information, additional permits, etc.
9. A public notice will be mailed if a road closure is involved.
10. When all of the necessary requirements are met and approvals are final, the permit document will be emailed to the applicant which will complete the permit process.

Requirements for Applicant

Each event is unique, and requirements may be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The following list contains descriptions of general requirements and when they may apply.

Traffic, pedestrians and road closures

- For road closures, except residential neighborhood block parties:
 - Apply no later than sixty (60) days prior to the event date.
 - The applicant is responsible for obtaining or creating their own traffic control plan.
 - Traffic Engineering will review and make comments or revisions and send back to the applicant – and approves a final version.
 - The applicant is responsible for renting all traffic control devices and using them as specified in the approved traffic control plan.
 - The Special Events Office will draft and mail a public notice to the impacted area thirty (30) days prior to the event date.
 - If deemed necessary, Tacoma Police will require off-duty officers for road closures – applicant is responsible for payment of services.
- For residential neighborhood block parties:
 - Apply no later than 30 days prior to the event date.
 - The Special Events Office will supply the applicant with a generic traffic control plan.
 - The applicant is responsible for renting all traffic control devices and using them as specified in the approved traffic control plan.
- Pedestrians, bicycles, non-motorized transportation
 - Whether you close a street or use a sidewalk you and your event participants must adhere to all applicable laws. Special events are subject to all rules, laws and ordinances.

Insurance

- Accepted proof of insurance:
 - Except for residential block parties, all Special Event Permit Applications must be accompanied by a certificate of liability insurance in the amount of \$1million naming the City as additional insured using the following address block:
City of Tacoma
747 Market Street
Tacoma, WA 98402
 - Upload to Accela, or mail or email a copy to the Special Events Office
 - For residential neighborhood block parties, the applicant/permittee must live on the block to be closed.

Tacoma Fire Department

- Tacoma Fire Department permits may be required
 - Additional fees apply
 - Go to their [web page](#) for more information.

Waste Management

- Depending on the event activities, you may be required to rent portable restrooms. You may also be required to arrange for solid waste services, separate from those available to the general public.



Note: This Tip Sheet does not substitute for codes and regulations. The applicant is responsible for compliance with all codes and regulations, whether or not described in this document. Application submission does not guarantee permit issuance.

To request this information in an alternative format or a reasonable accommodation, please call 253-591-5030 (voice).

TTY or STS users please dial 711 to connect to Washington Relay Services.

Special Event Permit

- Portable restroom companies
- Solid Waste Services

Green Events Certification

- If a community event will involve more than 1,000 participants, or if a City of Tacoma sponsorship is involved, those events must participate in the City's Green Events Certification process.
 - Go to their [web page](#) for more information.
- Plastic bag ban is in effect in Tacoma City limits
 - All vendors must comply with [Environmental Services regulations](#) regarding this ban.

Food and Beverage Service

- If your event is open to the public and you will be selling or providing food, contact the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department directly
 - Go to their [web page](#) for more information.
- Alcohol service may be allowed at your event, and is regulated by the Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board
 - Use of Cannabis is prohibited in public spaces.
 - Contact them directly or go to their [web page](#) for more information.

Licensing

- Vendors selling products at your events must be licensed to do business in City limits
 - Contact [Tax & License](#) to find out more.

Amplified Music or Speeches

- The Special Event Permit allows for amplification within limits regulated by Planning and Development Services
 - Please be advised that loud and unreasonable noise (including music) is a violation of [Chapter 8.12.060 of the Tacoma Municipal Code](#).

Fees

- The application processing fee is assessed on estimated attendance at the event.
- It is non-refundable once the review process begins. Payment may be deferred to a later date.
- Non-profits receive a discounted fee. Early application submission results in a 10% discount – more than 60 days prior to the event date.
- Use the Fee Estimator in [tacomapermits.org](#)

Additional Information

Tacoma Parks

[Metro Parks Tacoma](#) manages and permits the use of most of the park properties in the City, with the exception of Tollefson Plaza, Fireman's Park, Ben Gilbert Park, Frost Park and War Memorial Park – these are permitted through the City.

The Foss Waterway Esplanade

[The Foss Waterway Owners Association](#) manages and permits the use of public ways along the Esplanade.

Constitutionally Protected Activity

As the First Amendment to the United States Constitution protects freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, and right to petition, should your event meet any of this criteria, you are free to assemble with the intent to hold an event with or without a Special Event Permit.

Special Event Municipal Code

[Link to Special Events Code 11.15](#)

City's Online Calendar

Keep up-to-date on events permitted by the City's Special Events Office – go to the [Events Calendar](#)

Links in this document, to copy and paste into your browser

Apply for a permit: [www.tacomapermits.org](#)

Fire Department Permits:

<https://www.cityoftacoma.org/cms/one.aspx?portalId=169&pageId=16037>

Environmental Services Web Page:

<https://www.cityoftacoma.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=169&pageId=56017>

Plastic Bag Regulations:

<https://www.cityoftacoma.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=169&pageId=79814>

Tacoma Pierce County Health Department:

<https://www.tpchd.org/home/showdocument?id=2363https://www.tpchd.org/home/showdocument?id=2363>

City of Tacoma Tax & License Web Page:

<https://www.cityoftacoma.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=169&pageId=6130>

Amplification Guidelines:

<http://cms.cityoftacoma.org/cityclerk/Files/MunicipalCode/Title08-PublicSafety.PDF>

Metro Parks Tacoma: <https://www.metroparkstacoma.org/>

Foss Waterway: <https://www.theafoss.com/events-on-the-foss>

Special Event Code:

<https://cms.cityoftacoma.org/cityclerk/Files/MunicipalCode/Title11-Traffic.PDF>

Event Calendar:

<https://www.cityoftacoma.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=169&pageId=19679>

Other online resources

List of private suppliers for event

<https://www.cityoftacoma.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=169&pageId=23575>



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