

Montgomery Parks, M-NCPPC Special Event Permit Policy

Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to establish an organized process to manage third party special events that occur on park property, ensure proper care of parkland, and not hamper regular services, programs or activities to the public.

This policy clearly outlines the expectations and guidelines to which users must agree in order to obtain a permit for a special event on parkland. Policing, trash removal, proper care of the facility or amenity used, sanitation services, crowd control, insurance, and related traffic or parking issues must be considered and addressed before a permit will be issued. Some of these services can be provided by Park staff for an additional fee or the permitted group can arrange to provide them independently.

It is the goal of Montgomery Parks, M-NCPPC, to offer suitable parks and facilities for use by the public as venues of special events in exchange for fees that will cover the costs of providing the services and personnel to support the event. The Department of Parks wholeheartedly supports the worthwhile events that are held on park land and recognizes the break-even and non-profit nature of most of these efforts, but cannot provide these amenities wholly free of charge, as that places an undue burden on the general taxpayer.

Criteria

By definition, a special event is an organized activity such as a walk, run, fair, tournament, festival, or other gathering hosted by a third party (not the Department of Parks) on park land for public or private entertainment that requires the general or exclusive use of one or more park facilities or features and that may:

- Be advertised or open to the public;
- Attract more than 100 people;
- Require the use of the facility or park for more than 4 hours;
- Provide some form of entertainment (shows, music, demos, etc.);
- Offer food, beverages, or merchandise items for sale; and/or
- Require maintenance, sanitation and/or police services above and beyond what is already provided by park staff.

Event Fees and Charges

Event organizers will be held responsible for all additional costs and requirements set forth by Montgomery Parks to ensure the event is safe, well organized, and does not represent a burden to the general taxpayer. Fees will be assessed to cover any additional event costs. The event organizer is liable to the Department for all charges, costs and expenses incurred directly related to the special event. These can include, but are not limited to:

- Facility rental fees and security deposits;
- Additional trash or recycling cans;
- Advertising/signage/banners;
- Transportation/busing;
- Additional maintenance or park management staff;
- Repairs or maintenance;
- Security/Park Police officers;

- Portable restrooms;
- Grounds preparation;
- First Aid stations;
- Special Use Permits to cover entertainment, fundraising or mechanical amusements; and,
- Additional Permits for vending/concessions or commercial photography.

The event organizer is responsible for describing the proposed event as accurately as possible on the Special Event Request Form and attaching all required documentation before submitting the request. This will help park staff determine if any additional resources or requirements are necessary to ensure the event runs as smoothly as possible. An application fee will be charged for each request made.

Once all fees associated with the event are calculated, an Agreement Form will be completed by staff. The Agreement Form lists all costs, requirements and conditions of use for the proposed event. Permit Staff will review this Agreement Form with the permittee, who will need to sign the form to acknowledge the cost and other requirements. All fees must be paid and the Agreement Form signed and returned before the permit can be issued. All required fees must be paid in full at least two weeks prior to the event date.

A refundable security deposit is required for all special events and must be paid at the same time as the event fee. The actual amount of this deposit will vary based on the number and type of facilities requested as well as any other associated costs. The park or facility must be left in the same condition in which it was found. Any damages or needed repairs will be the sole responsibility of the event organizer and will be deducted from the event security deposit. If no damages occur, this deposit will be returned within 30 business days after the event date.

Fees can be paid in cash, by certified check, cashier's check, credit card or debit card, and should be made payable to "M-NCPPC." Additional fees may be assessed for any change made to the event agreement once payment has been received (e.g., change of date or location). A charge will be assessed for returned checks.

Fee Waivers or Reductions

The Department of Parks does not waive fees for special events hosted by third parties on park property. Reductions of 50% will be considered by the Director of Parks only if the event provides a direct benefit to or directly supports the stated mission of the M-NCPPC. Groups interested in being considered for a fee reduction should submit a letter of request for a waiver to the Permit Office with their completed Special Event Request Form.

Cancellation

If the event is canceled by the event organizer after the Agreement Form is signed but more than 30 days in advance of the event date, the Permit Office will deduct a processing fee and return the balance of monies paid.

If the event is canceled by the event organizer after the Agreement Form is signed and less than 30 days in advance of the event date, the event organizer will be charged for any costs and fees already incurred by the Department in preparation for the event (e.g., any goods, facilities or services already paid for, permitted or performed, respectively) as well as a processing fee. Any outstanding balance will be refunded.

If the event is canceled by Montgomery Parks due to an unanticipated park or facility emergency or closure, all monies will be returned to the event organizer and no processing fee will be assessed.

Permit Application Schedule

Anyone interested in hosting a special event on park land must submit a completed Special Event Request Form to the Park Permit Office. All associated forms and documents required as part of the request must be submitted at the same time or the request will be denied.

Special Event Request Forms can be submitted to the Park Permit Office at any time. Event organizers are strongly encouraged to submit requests at least 45 business days in advance of the requested event date to ensure park staff has sufficient time to review and evaluate the request. Requests for special events likely to attract more than 500 people should be submitted at least 120 business days in advance of the event date. Applicants will receive a response within 30 business days of submittal. Requests made within three weeks (15 business days) of the requested event date will be charged an extra fee for expedited processing. No requests within a 10 business-day window will be considered.

If the event is approved, the Permit Office will provide and review with the event organizer a Special Events Agreement Form outlining the costs and requirements necessary for the organizer to host the described event on park land. This form must be signed by the event organizer and payment for the event must be made at this time.

Park and Facility Selection

Event organizers are asked to request a specific park or facility location of their choice on the Special Event Request Form. Montgomery Parks will honor these requests as appropriate but reserves the right to identify an alternate park location if it is better suited to accommodate the event as described by the event organizer.

Facility Use Regulations

Special events must adhere to the official use guidelines for the park facilities requested. Park facilities that are closed for the season or for repairs cannot be used for special events scheduled during those times. Please note the following restrictions:

- Exclusive, private use of an entire park may not be granted for the purposes of a special event.
- Use of any park athletic fields is prohibited during the following periods: December 1 – March 31 and August 15 – August 31. These periods are established to allow for rest and seasonal maintenance. Exceptions to this rule can be made for synthetic turf fields.
- Permits will not be issued for some regional or recreational fields on Memorial Day weekend, Labor Day weekend, or on other established M-NCPPC holidays. Event organizers should note that the event rates are likely to be higher for holiday use of park facilities.
- Use of picnic shelters, group picnic areas, and our two permitted campgrounds (Cabin John and Parklawn) is limited to the period between April 1 – October 31. Event organizers wishing to use these facilities outside of those dates are required to submit a special request in writing along with their request form. This will then be sent to the park manager for review.
- The park activity buildings, the indoor gym, the Ridge Road inline rink, synthetic turf fields, and our regional and recreational park bus parking spaces are available for permitted special event use year-round.

General Guidelines for Special Event Use of Parks and Facilities

All event organizers are required to adhere to the following guidelines and ensure adherence by spectators and participants. Violation of these guidelines may result in immediate closure of the event, fines, and/or the loss of future permitting or use privileges:

- The event organizer must comply with all M-NCPPC rules and regulations and with all local, state and federal laws and regulations, and is responsible for ensuring the adherence of all event participants and spectators as well;
- The event organizer must obtain and pay for all necessary park permits as outlined by Park Permit guidelines and policies and stated on the Agreement Form;
- The park or facility must be left in the condition in which it was found. All damages or repairs will be the sole responsibility of the event organizer and will be deducted from the event security deposit;
- The event organizer must secure a certificate of insurance for the event listing M-NCPPC as additional insured, for an amount of up to \$1,000,000;
- The park or facility must be completely vacated by dark, with all cleanup completed;
- The permit must be in the possession of the permitted group or individual during the permitted time;
- The permit is for the sole use of the group or individual named on the permit contract and is not transferable;
- Any loud music, bands, amplified sound, or excessive noise which disturbs the peace is prohibited unless stated otherwise, in writing, on the permit;
- No beer or alcohol of any kind is allowed unless the event is occurring in a group picnic area and/or an alcohol permit has been approved;
- No urinating or changing clothes in public;
- No littering. All trash must be picked up and placed in the nearest receptacle or carried away for proper disposal. All recyclables must be picked up and placed in the nearest recycling receptacle or carried away for proper disposal;
- No stapling, attaching or nailing of any paper products, balloons, flyers, banners etc. to any amenities, buildings or trees, including park signage and picnic tables;
- Removal or repositioning of goals installed by authorized M-NCPPC staff or contractors on park fields is not allowed;
- The use of tobacco products is not permitted on benches, playing areas, or those areas in proximity to any playing field (this includes cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, and snuff);
- An approved vendor permit must be obtained for each vendor selling food, beverages or merchandise on park property. These vendors must furnish the Commission with a copy of a current Maryland State Sales and Use Tax License and a Food Service and Facility License issued by Montgomery County Government, Department of Health and Human Services;
- No fundraising or charging of admission or other fees is allowed on park property without the express, written permission of the Director of Parks;
- Carpooling is encouraged, and parking is allowed in designated parking areas only;
- Even if you have a permit, the use of an athletic field is prohibited whenever:
 - It is closed for renovation or repair;
 - Water is standing on the field;
 - Soil is frozen;
 - The soil is wet and "spongy";
 - Steady rain is falling;
 - A lightning/electrical storm is occurring;
 - The field is deemed unplayable by Park staff or Park Police.

Permit Denial and Revocation

Any users found to be in violation of the guidelines outlined in this policy will be subject to all applicable fines and penalties, including the immediate closure of the event and loss of future permitting and use privileges. If an event is shut down due to violations, no refund will be given. A permit may be denied or revoked if the permit holder or any member of the permitted user group:

- Violates the guidelines stated in this policy or does not comply with M-NCPPC Rules & Regulations and Park Permit Office Conditions of Use;
- Removes posted signs or markers, or removes or repositions goals installed by authorized M-NCPPC staff or contractors on park fields;
- Uses a field or facility that is closed due to weather or undergoing renovations or repairs; or,
- Fails to comply with the requirements agreed to in the Special Events Agreement Form.

The Department of Parks reserves the right to revoke or deny a permit as necessary if immediate closure of the permitted park or facility is necessary. In all such cases, event organizers will be given as much notice as is possible.

Application Procedures

A completed Special Events Request Form and the application fee must be submitted no less than 60 business days in advance of the event date or 120 business days if the event is likely to attract more than 500 people. Requests made within three weeks (15 business days) of the requested event date will be charged an extra fee for expedited processing. No requests within a 10 business-day window will be considered. Applicants will receive a response within 30 business days of submittal.

Instructions and request forms are available at the Wheaton Park Permit Office locations and online at [Park Permits](#). Completed request forms may be submitted in one of two ways:

1. In person at our Permit Office location during operating hours:
Montgomery Parks, M-NCPPC
Park Permit Office, 2nd Floor
2425 Reddie Drive
Wheaton, MD 20902
2. Online at [ParkPermits](#) or
3. By mailing a written request and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

Montgomery Parks, M-NCPPC
Park Permit Office, 2nd Floor
2425 Reddie Drive
Wheaton, MD 20902