



2025 SPECIAL USE PERMIT GUIDE

All documents and questions for Parks can be submitted to the Recreation Facilities General Manager at marlerh@bloomington.in.gov.

PARKS PROPERTY VERSUS OTHER CITY PROPERTY

This guide relates only to City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department property. For use of other City of Bloomington Right of Way property, such as streets, etc., contact cassie.werne@bloomington.in.gov at the City of Bloomington Department of Public Works.

CRITERIA FOR A GATHERING TO NEED A SPECIAL USE PERMIT

Any public gathering on Park property that meets ANY of the criteria below are required to obtain a Special Use Permit.

- ☐ 100+ participants at the event.
- ☐ Advertising or marketing to the general public.
- ☐ Selling and/or distributing food, goods, or services to the public.
- ☐ Charging admission or similar fees to the public.
- ☐ Use of temporary structures during the event (such as tents, inflatables, porta-lets, etc.).
- ☐ Use of one of the stages.
- ☐ Amplified music.
- ☐ Organized walk, run, or parades (may also require other permits depending upon route).
- ☐ Requests for exclusive use of locations normally intended for first-come, first-served, public activities (such as pickleball courts, skate park, etc.).
- ☐ Requests for exclusive use of locations not normally accessible by the public.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF PARK PERMITS

Parks offers various permits based upon location and use. Visit

<https://bloomington.in.gov/parks/rentals/mobile-stages> for information and access to each permit.

Park staff contacts for submission or questions included.

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|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small Event Special Use Permit (250 or less people) | marlerh@bloomington.in.gov |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Large Event Special Use Permit (more than 250 people) | marlerh@bloomington.in.gov |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peoples Park/Hopewell Permit | ritterc@bloomington.in.gov |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hourly Park Permit | shelby.drake@bloomington.in.gov |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Stage Rental | ritterc@bloomington.in.gov |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noise Permit | marlerh@bloomington.in.gov |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Filming Permit | rameyj@bloomington.in.gov |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific Study Permit | cotters@bloomington.in.gov |

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APPLYING FOR A SMALL EVENT OR LARGE EVENT SPECIAL USE PERMIT

1. Event Organizer Submits Special Use Application

Special Use Permit application must be submitted at least eight weeks prior to event and include the following:

- ☐ Special Use Permit application.
- ☐ Site Plan.
- ☐ Timeline of event day activities, including load in/load out, etc.
- ☐ Noise Permit application (if applicable).

2. Once Submitted

- ☐ Parks will check date for other events conflicts, maintenance conflicts.
- ☐ Parks may ask for additional information.

3. If Approved by Parks

- ☐ From submission to approval the process may take three to five weeks. Incomplete information, missing forms, etc. may delay the process.
- ☐ Organizer will receive a Letter of Approval and Invoice from Parks.
- ☐ Organizer is then responsible for all required documents and payments of fees.

4. At Least Two Weeks Before Event

APPROVAL IS FORFEIT without submittal of all required permits, documents, and payment of fees, at least two weeks prior to the event.

- ☐ Payment of fees.
- ☐ Certificate of Event Liability Insurance.
- ☐ Either a caterer's alcohol license or State of Indiana Temporary Alcohol Permit (if applicable).
- ☐ Other permits or planning documents as required by Parks on Approval Letter.

SITE PLAN

REQUIRED DURING SUBMISSION OF SPECIAL USE PERMIT APPLICATION

A site plan is required to apply for a Special Use Permit. It should be a map (or maps) with all event activities and vendors clearly marked for all events.

- ☐ The Switchyard Park website includes a variety of planning maps and floorplans to facilitate event planning. <https://switchyardpark.com/>
- ☐ City of Bloomington GIS can be used to create maps. <https://bloomington.in.gov/departments/esd>
- ☐ Google or other maps are acceptable.

Runs/walks must additionally include a route map. Route maps should include route signage, volunteers, etc. Parks suggest using these website to plan the route.

- ☐ On the Go Maps <https://onthegomap.com/#/create>.
- ☐ Foot Path App <https://footpathapp.com/map>.

For Runs/walks crossing a city street options are:

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- ☐ Contact cassie.werne@bloomington.in.gov at the City of Bloomington Department of Public Works for a special event or neighborhood block party permit to close down the street(s).
- ☐ Contact the City of Bloomington Police Department (BPD) and ask for traffic control officers. Note: BPD has very limited resources for this type of activity.
- ☐ Post a volunteer at busy intersections and follow traffic laws concerning safe crossings. Parks recommend this option.

TIMELINE OF EVENT DAY ACTIVITIES

REQUIRED DURING SUBMISSION OF SPECIAL USE PERMIT APPLICATION

A timeline is required to apply for a Special Use Permit. A detailed timeline should include not only specific start and ending time of activities, but also setup/load-in, tear down/load-out times, and exit times.

- ☐ Park and trail operating hours are 5:00 am to 11:00 pm. Events and event tear down must exit before 11:00 pm.
- ☐ Items may NOT be left in the park overnight without special clearance (portable toilets, tents, sound equipment, etc.). Additional fee may apply.

NOISE PERMIT

REQUIRED DURING SUBMISSION OF SPECIAL USE PERMIT APPLICATION

If the event includes amplified music a Noise Permit is required.

- ☐ Event Organizer must comply with all City of Bloomington's Ordinances regarding acceptable noise levels. See City of Bloomington Municipal Code, Noise Ordinance, Title 14, Chapter 14.09. [Noise Violations | City of Bloomington, Indiana](#)
- ☐ Event Organizer must comply with all federal and state copyright laws.
- ☐ Approval of a Noise Permit does not exempt Event Organizer from being in violation of ordinances or laws.
- ☐ For events on Park property there is the Parks Noise Permit. For events on other city property there is the ESD Noise Permit. The two permits are nearly identical. Check the signatory line to see you have the correct version.
- ☐ OBSCENITIES OR VULGAR LYRICS ARE PROHIBITED. If abused, this can result in the event immediately being stopped.
- ☐ Amplified music is not approved after 9:00 p.m.

STAGE, SOUND EQUIPMENT

See Noise Permit.

- ☐ Stage use for performances requires a Noise Permit.
- ☐ Services and prices differ between stages. See Special Use Permit application.
- ☐ Parks does not provide sound techs at permanent stages. If necessary, Event Organizer to provide.
- ☐ Event Organizer is responsible for providing sound equipment.

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- ☐ For locations without a permanent stage, the Mobile Stage can be requested <https://bloomington.in.gov/parks/rentals/mobile-stages>. Additional fees may apply.

ELECTRICAL AND WIFI ACCESS

- ☐ Park properties have varying levels of electrical and Wi-Fi access. Event Organizer should check in advance. Additional fees may apply.

CERTIFICATE OF EVENT LIABILITY INSURANCE

REQUIRED AT LEAST TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO EVENT

The Event Organizer shall maintain comprehensive general liability insurance in the amount of One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000) for bodily injury per person in any one occurrence and Two Million Dollars (\$2,000,000) in any one occurrence for all persons in that occurrence. Property damage shall be in the amount of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) per occurrence.

THE POLICY SHALL NAME THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT AND THE RENTER AS ADDITIONAL INSURED PARTIES, and the organizer shall provide Parks with a certificate of insurance at least two (2) weeks before the event. If the organizer, applicant, or their guests will be driving onto Parks property, each automobile must have Automobile Liability Insurance.

- ☐ Large Event Special Use Permits or events with specific risk concerns may be required to have higher amounts.
- ☐ Event Organizer should send Certificate of Event Liability to marlerh@bloomington.in.gov

MARKETING

DO NOT BEGIN MARKETING UNTIL PERMIT IS APPROVED BY PARKS

- ☐ Include marketing examples with Special Use Permit Application if possible.
- ☐ Parks cannot promote outside events using Parks resources, such as social media, unless it's for a pressing informational need for the public. For example a large event cancellation.
- ☐ Event Organizer can tag Parks locations on social media.
Instagram - @btownparks
Face Book - Switchyard Park - City of Bloomington
location hashtags - #switchyardpark, #bryanpark, #waldronhillbuskirk, etc

SIGNAGE

In general, Park Policy prohibits any outside signs on any Park property. As part of the permit, signage may be allowed with the following guidelines.

- ☐ NO signage is allowed on Park property before the day of the event.
- ☐ NO signage is allowed on Park property not related to the location of the event.
- ☐ Signage locations must be indicated on the site map.
- ☐ On the day of the event, signage is allowed at that park location for marketing and directions. Yard signs are allowed. Banners are allowed at some locations.

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- ☐ Signage must be removed at end of event. Failure to remove signage may result in a Trash Removal Fee being assessed.

AMUSEMENT AND ENTERTAINMENT PERMIT

REQUIRED AT LEAST TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO EVENT, IF APPLICABLE

It is the responsibility of the organizer to contact the Indiana Department of Homeland Security to verify if event requires an Amusement and Entertainment Permit and inspection.

<https://www.in.gov/dhs/fire-and-building-safety/code-enforcement/application-for-amusement-and-entertainment-permit/>

VENDORS

- ☐ Fees apply per number of commercial vendors. This would include a food truck, merchandise seller, etc. See Special Use Permit Application.
- ☐ Event Organizer is responsible to ensure all food vendors have the proper permits and licenses.
- ☐ There may be restrictions on where vendors can setup. Vendor locations should be indicated on the site map.
- ☐ There is no fee for non-commercial vendors.
- ☐ Parks reserves the right to prohibit a vendor.

SAFETY

- ☐ Parks encourages Event Organizer to designate a safety officer and have a safety plan.
- ☐ Parks reserves the right to require emergency/medical services on site.

WEATHER

- ☐ Event Organizer may choose to cancel an event due to weather. Parks must be notified when the decision is made.
- ☐ Parks reserves the right to cancel the event in cases of weather, severe property damage, or the best interests of the City of Bloomington.
- ☐ See Cancellation Policy.

SECURITY

- ☐ Parks reserves the right to require Event Organizer to hire security at events.
- ☐ In the event of an emergency at the event, Event Organizer must notify on site Parks staff. If no Park staff available, contact 812-349-3961 or marlerh@bloomington.in.gov within 24 hours of the emergency. Parks may request a written report of the emergency.

REQUEST FOR ALCOHOL AT EVENT

ALL DOCUMENTATION, LICENSES, PERMITS ARE REQUIRED AT LEAST TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO EVENT

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In addition to an approved park permit application, rental groups requesting to serve beer or wine event must submit a proposal including how the following guidelines will be met before qualifying for a temporary alcohol permit.

General Guidelines:

- ☐ Beer and wine are the **ONLY** alcoholic beverages permitted for sale or distribution on Parks property.
- ☐ Alcohol requests will **ONLY** be considered for public events.
- ☐ Private events with closed invitations like family reunions, weddings, etc. will not be considered for alcohol sales in the parks.
- ☐ Alcohol may be considered for private events with closed invitations like family reunions, weddings, etc. **ONLY** at the Switchyard Park Pavilion
- ☐ Alcohol requests at Switchyard Park will be approved/denied by the Recreation Facilities General Manager.
- ☐ Alcohol requests at any Park locations other than Switchyard Park, must be recommended by the Recreation Facilities General Manager, then approved/denied by Board of Park Commissioners and the Parks and Recreation Services Director.
- ☐ Alcohol requests at any Park locations other than Switchyard Park should add at least eight weeks to the application timeline to allow for Board of Park Commissioners approval.

Application Process:

- ☐ An approved Park Special Event Permit Application must be on file and the rental group in good standing with the City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department
- ☐ Once obtained, a copy of the approved Temporary Beer/Wine Authority/Type 118 or a copy of an approved Catering Authority/Type 222 Application from the State of Indiana, Alcohol & Tobacco Commission must be on file with Bloomington Parks and Recreation.
- ☐ Rental group(s) shall employ a licensed security company to be present throughout the event and/or anytime alcohol is present. The number of security needed will be determined by Bloomington Parks and Recreation staff and will be dependent on site set up and size/scope of event.
- ☐ Fencing plans must be included as part of the proposal and installation methods approved by Bloomington Parks and Recreation prior to event. Fencing may not be staked without prior approval. Plastic snow fencing will not be allowed. At some locations Parks may be able to provide fencing for an additional fee.
- ☐ The detailed floor plan, map or diagram on file with the State of Indiana, Alcohol & Tobacco Commission must also be submitted with the proposal to Bloomington Parks and Recreation. Once approved, floor plan, map or diagram may not be altered.

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- ☐ Anyone entering the bar area where alcohol is served must be over 21 and wearing either a wrist band or hand stamp indicating that they are of legal age to consume alcohol.
- ☐ There must be signage indicating specific time range of when alcohol will be served and maximum amount of alcohol that can be purchased per sale.
- ☐ Alcohol Permit fee is \$200 or ten percent of gross, whichever is greater (alcohol permits granted on a case by case basis and require additional paperwork and approval by the Board of Park Commissioners).

Temporary Permit Application Instructions:

https://www.in.gov/atc/files/2015_Temp_Permits_App_Instructions.pdf

Indiana State Regulations for Beer/Wine Authority (Permit) include:

1. *There must be a **well-defined premises** i.e. building, tent, enclosure, or fenced-in or designated area.*
2. *You **must** submit a floor plan or diagram. If minors are present, you must have a defined separation between the bar area and family area. (Must be on floor plan.)*
3. *There shall be **NO** carry-out privileges, **NO** carry-in privileges, and **NO** spirituous beverages allowed.*
4. *Each applicant must designate an individual to be responsible for the event and such person must sign the authority.*
5. ***ANY** and **ALL** persons dispensing or accepting payment for alcoholic beverages **MUST POSSESS** a valid ATC employee permit.*
6. *The event must meet applicable Indiana State Board of Health requirements, particularly with regard to restroom facilities.*
7. *If the event is held in a town park, you must have approval from the town board.*
8. *Legal hours of dispensing alcoholic beverages (Prevailing time)
Monday through Saturday – 7 a.m. to 3 a.m. the following day
Sunday – 7 a.m. to 3 a.m. the following day*
9. *Applicant **must** file with the district ATC office at which the event will be held at least 5 days prior to the event. Failure to comply is grounds for denial.*
10. *The authority (permit) must be posted in the most conspicuous place at the location of the event. An excise officer or commissioner, for good cause, has the authority to revoke a temporary permit during the event.*

Indiana State Regulations for Catering Authority (Permit) include:

1. *The exact address of the proposed catered event must be disclosed upon the application form.*
2. *A floor plan of the designated licensed premises must be submitted along with the application form. There must be a well-defined premises, i.e., a building, a tent, an enclosure, a fenced area, or roped off area. The exact area from which alcoholic*

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beverages shall be dispensed must be listed on the floor plan. Areas where minors will be present must be so designated on the plans. No minors shall be allowed within the area where alcoholic beverages are dispensed.

- 3. Consumption of alcoholic beverages shall take place on the licensed premises only. There shall be **NO** carry-out privileges.*
- 4. Each applicant must designate an individual to be responsible for the event. Such person shall possess an employee's permit and shall be available to the Excise Police during the event.*
- 5. An Excise Officer has the authority to revoke approval of a catered event before or during the event for good cause.*
- 6. The event must meet applicable Department of Health sanitation requirements, particularly with regard to restroom facilities.*
- 7. All applications should be received a full fifteen (15) days prior to the event.*
- 8. If the catered event is open to the public, the applicant shall notify the local law enforcement agency responsible for the area in which the catered function is held. The Excise Police may ask for proof of notification to local police which may be demonstrated by a copy of a letter, a "log" entry by the police department, or other means deemed as an appropriate authentication.*
- 9. The wholesaler servicing a supplemental caterer may deliver alcoholic beverages directly to the location of the catered event if the supplemental caterer has his letter of authority posted at that location.*
- 10. A supplemental caters permit is to be used for a specific off premises function of event and not for a permittee to use any adjoining or remote facilities to enlarge or enhance his own business enterprises.*

TEMPORARY STRUCTURES

- ☐ Use of temporary structures, including tents and inflatables, must be cleared in advance.
- ☐ STAKING DOWN TEMPORARY STRUCTURES IS PROHIBITED. Temporary structures must be weighted down. This includes tents, inflatables, etc.
- ☐ No tables, tents, or signage is allowed to block or impede trails.

PARKING

- ☐ Parks encourages Event Organizer to assess the parking situation during the planning stages.
- ☐ Parks encourages Event Organizer to provide specific instructions to volunteers and vendors where to park.
- ☐ Large Event Organizers will be required to provide a detailed Parking Plan.
- ☐ All Parks properties have some accessible parking spaces.

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EVENT VEHICLES

- ☐ NO vehicles are allowed on Parks property without advance consent. Any vehicles approved in parks must have scheduled ENTRANCE/EXIT TIMES and must be ‘WALKED IN’ by an individual. At Switchyard Park, this includes food trucks, vendors unloading/loading at the Pavilion, equipment and performer vehicles behind the Switchyard Park Main Performance Stage, etc.
- ☐ Event vehicles must have arrival and departure times listed on the Timeline.
- ☐ Any damage resulting from vehicles will be the responsibility of the event organizer.

RESTROOMS

Parks requires one public toilet for every 150 participants at an event. If number needed exceeds what park has available, it will be the event organizer’s responsibility to acquire the necessary number or portable toilets.

- ☐ Unless special arraignments are made in advance with Parks, portable toilet drop off and pick up must be day of the event. Additional fess may apply.
- ☐ At Waldron, Hill, Buskirk Park, the Event Organizer may request restroom access at the Allison-Jukebox Community Center. Additional fess may apply.

GRILLING

- ☐ Grilling in parks is only allowed where grills have been permanently installed by Parks.
- ☐ Personal grills are not permitted.
- ☐ Fire pits are not allowed.
- ☐ The dumping of hot coals or grease on Park property is not allowed. If either is found after an event, a Trash Removal Fee will be assessed.

TRASH REMOVAL AND CLEAN UP, PROPERTY DAMAGE

- ☐ Event Organizer must clean up litter and debris before leaving or be subject to a Trash Removal Fee of a MINIMUM of one hundred dollars (\$100.00).
- ☐ All Parks properties have existing trash disposal containers on site. If trash exceeds trash disposal container capacity, Event Organizer must have a plan for removal.
- ☐ Property damages related to the event, either from the Event Organizer, vendors, or public will be billed against the damage deposit. In cases, where the damage amounts exceed the damage deposit the Event Organizer will be billed for the remaining amount.

ANIMALS

- ☐ Service animals are legally allowed in any public space where people are allowed.
- ☐ Well-behaved, leashed emotional support animals, therapy animals, and pets are allowed at outside events in any public space.

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- ☐ Well-behaved, leashed emotional support animals, therapy animals, and pets may be allowed or prohibited by choice of event organizers in an enclosed private event space. Signage required.
- ☐ Livestock or wildlife animals must be cleared in advance. Either a state/federal education permits or City of Bloomington Animal Control Animal Exhibition, Transient Permit is required.
- ☐ Out of control animals or animals that represent a safety issue may be removed.
- ☐ Event Organizer is responsible for all cleanup and damage done by animals.

CANCELLATION POLICY

- ☐ If the event cancels due to weather, event will not receive any refund.
- ☐ If the event cancels less than two weeks prior to the event, event will not receive any refund.
- ☐ If the event cancels two to four weeks before the event, event may receive a partial refund of one-half the paid fees.
- ☐ If the event cancels four weeks or more prior to the event, event may receive a full refund of all paid fees.

BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

See Park Policies 11080 for a complete list of Behavior Guidelines.

- ☐ The violation of federal, state, or local laws and ordinances will not be permitted at the Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department or on its property.
- ☐ Tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs are prohibited on Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department property.

FIREARMS

Pursuant to Indiana Code 35-47-11.1-2 and 3, the City is prohibited from enforcing its former policy on firearms in public parks and city facilities as of July 1, 2011. However, per Indiana Code 35-47-11.1-4(10), a person or organization who rents space in a Parks facility may develop and implement, at its own discretion, rules of conduct or admission regarding the possession, carrying, and storage of firearms, upon which attendance at and participation in its activities is conditioned. If a person or organization who rents space in a Parks facility develops such a policy for its activities, it will be responsible for implementation and enforcement of such a policy. Signage will be required and a copy of the policy must be sent to the Recreation Facilities General Manager at least two weeks prior to the event.

COVID-19 GUIDELINES

The Parties understand and agree that due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, there may be limitations and restrictions enacted that will affect the ability of the Parties to perform as required under this Agreement. The Parties agree that, in the event a limitation or restriction is

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enacted which prevents performance of the terms of the Agreement, Parks may terminate the Agreement in its sole discretion if it determines that there is no reasonable alternative means of performance under the Agreement. Parks shall notify [Contractor/Partner/Agency] of any such termination and the reasons therefore in writing.