



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. Additional information about Alcohol Beverage Control licensing and permit requirements can be found at www.abc.ca.gov/Forms/PDFSp.html



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

You can obtain more information at www.sandiego.gov/dsdbuildingpermit or call 619.446-5232.

Electrical Permit

If your event includes provisions to supply electrical power via electric generators, or by connecting to existing permanent electrical systems, you may be required to obtain an electrical permit from the Development Services Department. An electrical permit is required for electric power generating equipment of 50 KVA (KW) and larger. In some cases, electrical distribution plans and load calculations prepared by a California licensed Electrical Contractor or Electrical Engineer may be required. Electrical inspection is required on or before the event date and time.

You can obtain an electrical permit application at www.sandiego.gov/dsdelectricalpermit or call 858.492-5070. Additional information regarding electrical permit requirements is available at <http://www.sandiego.gov/development-services/industry/pdf/infobulletin/ib103.pdf>. This type of permit review may take an extended amount of time to process and an inspector may not be immediately available, therefore, please plan accordingly.



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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. Details about these permit types can be found at www.sandiego.gov/police/permits.

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

You can obtain more information at www.sandiego.gov/fireinspectionpermits

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



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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. You can obtain information at www.co.san-diego.ca.us/deh/doing_business/forms.html.

Lake Use Permit

The Water Departments has offered the public recreational use of its reservoirs since 1913, when the nucleus of the present water storage system was purchased from private operators. Further information about holding a special event (run, walk, reunion, birthday party, group picnic, etc.) at a city lake is available at www.sandiego.gov/water/recreation/.

Modified Special Event Permit for Alcohol Use in Restricted Areas

The City of San Diego has created a Modified Special Event Permit Application to address requests for alcohol use in association only with private events being held in Mission Bay Park. Applicants must first obtain a Park Use Permit and must meet additional specific criteria to obtain this type of permit. If your event qualifies for a Modified Special Event Permit for Alcohol Use in Restricted Areas, a Park and Recreation Department representative will provide you with an application after obtaining your Park Use Permit or can be accessed at www.parkandrecreationpermits.gov



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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 only be used for block parties in residential, non-mixed use areas. The event organizer is responsible for all fees related to requirements of the Fire-Rescue Department, 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. You can obtain more information at www.sandiego.gov/sdpdblockpartyapp.pdf.

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 authorization from the Park and Recreation Department to use the requested venue. You can obtain more information at www.parkandrecreationpermits.gov.



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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 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. You can obtain more information at www.sandiego.gov/fireinspectionpermits

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

At the sole discretion of the City of San Diego, events proposed to take place on private property that meet the qualifications for a TUP may be required to apply for a Citywide Special Event Permit due to the location, complexity, or other unique circumstances related to the event. Additional information can be obtained at www.sandiego.gov/dsdtemporaryusepermit.



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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 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.

You can obtain more information at www.sandiego.gov/fireinspectionpermits.

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. More information is at www.sandiego.gov/fireinspectionpermits.