

## In The Early Planning Stages

### RESEARCH CITY PERMITS, APPROVALS, AND COSTS. THE EVENT SPONSOR IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COSTS OF ANY CITY SERVICES.

In the early planning stages, identify the permits, approvals, and costs that are associated with your event. Consult with City departments early on to learn the legal requirements and determine the feasibility of holding your event. Knowing these requirements and costs before you apply for permits will help you make a more informed business decision.

Refer to these sections for more information:

- » Where to Begin: Contact the Agency that Permits the Land
- » List of Common Permits, Licenses and Additional Approvals
- » Frequently Contacted Agencies
- » Deadlines and Important Dates
- » Permit Fee Estimator
- » Pre-Application Questionnaire (Optional)

### COVERING THE COSTS OF CITY SERVICES

The City and County of San Francisco has a mandate\* to recover all actual costs of City services – including personnel, equipment and materials – to be provided for outdoor events, plus administrative overhead charges. The Event Sponsor is responsible for any City services, or other services required by the City, as determined by the relevant agency.

Examples of City services and their departments may include:

#### SFPD Personnel (sometimes referred to as “10B Police”)

- » Local Police District Station and Police Law Enforcement Services

#### Park Rangers and Park Staff

- » SF Recreation & Park Department

#### Parking Control Officers (PCOs)

- » SFMTA Enforcement Division

#### Bus, Train and Trolley Re-Routes

- » SFMTA Transit Division

#### Transit Supervisors

- » SFMTA Transit Division

#### Substituting Diesel Buses for Trolley Coaches (sometimes called “Electric Wired Buses”)

- » SFMTA Transit Division

#### Day-of-Event Inspections

- » SF Fire Department and SF Department of Public Health

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\*Per Chapter 10B of the San Francisco Administrative Code and Article 6 of the San Francisco Transportation Code.

### Street Clean-Up and Barricades

- » SF Public Works – Bureau of Street Environmental Services
- Note: A private vendor may be used.*

### Ambulances, Medical Staff required by EMS Agency

- » [Click here](#) for a list of City-permitted ambulance providers

### ROLE OF SF DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (DEM)

DEM facilitates the coordinated emergency response with city partners including SFPD, SFFD, EMS, Public Works and others during complex events. DEM may reach out to the event organizer for more information and to request planning details such as maps and information about event points of contact. For very complex events, DEM may hold a Citywide meeting prior to the event to ensure City agencies are familiar with operational details. [www.sfdem.org](http://www.sfdem.org)

### RESEARCH THE NEIGHBORHOOD. ENGAGE NEIGHBORHOOD STAKEHOLDERS.

Before you finalize your event’s location, date and time, research the surrounding neighborhood, its history and compatibility with outdoor events. Consider your event’s impact on nearby residents, businesses, traffic, parks, schools, churches, as well as other events happening at the same time. Be proactive in reaching out to neighbors and build an early consensus. Partnering with the neighborhood is vital to your event’s long-term sustainability. *Refer to “Neighborhood Outreach Plan” section.*

### Some good places to start your research:

- » [SFMTA/ISCOTT](#)
- » [SF Recreation and Park Department](#)
- » [Port of SF](#)
- » [Neighborhood Group Listings including Neighborhood and Merchant Associations](#)
- » [SF Entertainment Commission](#)
- » [Community Benefit Districts](#)
- » [Local Police District Station](#)
- » [Local Representative from the SF Board of Supervisors](#)

### USE THE PRE-APPLICATION QUESTIONNAIRE AS AN OPTIONAL PLANNING TOOL

The questionnaire is a place for you to start gathering information and exploring the feasibility of doing the event before you submit your permit applications. Use the questionnaire to foresee requirements and share your plans with different government agencies. *Refer to “Part Four: Appendix” section.*

### START THE PERMIT PROCESS EARLY

Know your planned location, date, time, activities, and attendance at least 6 months in advance of the event. While some permit deadlines may allow you to submit applications close to the event, waiting to submit your application until the latest possible date is not recommended. *Refer to the “Starting the Permit Process Early” bulletin and to the “Deadlines and Important Dates” section of this guide.*



Photo Credit: Nihomachi Street Fair, Inc



Photo Credit: SF Entertainment Commission, SF Chinatown Autumn Moon Festival

### KNOW THE EVENT SPONSOR'S ROLE

The Event Sponsor, or applicant, is legally responsible for fulfilling all requirements, paying all permitting fees and City service costs, and will be held liable for any ordinance violations. The Event Sponsor also may be held liable for any ordinance violations whether committed by the Sponsor, its vendors, or other event participants.

The Event Sponsor must obtain all necessary permits and approvals from relevant City departments and government agencies before hosting an event or engaging in any regulated activities. In addition, the Event Sponsor will be required by the land authority to obtain general liability insurance coverage for the special event.

The Event Sponsor should communicate all load-in, day-of-event, and load-out procedures, schedules and designated sites to their vendors. In addition, the Event Sponsor should communicate to vendors that they are responsible for complying with all safety requirements, posting all valid permits in a visible location, and being prepared for any inspections.

### KNOW THE VENDORS' ROLE

Make sure that your vendors receive and understand the following information in advance of your outdoor event.

All vendors are required to comply with the following:

- » All load-in, day-of-event, and load-out procedures, schedules, and designated sites.
- » All local and state permit requirements, including but not limited to Fire Department and Department of Public Health safety requirements
- » Keep all valid permits on-site during the event
- » Be prepared for any inspections from the Fire Department and Department of Public Health

### VENDORS IN GOOD STANDING

Are your vendors in good standing with their City and State permit and license requirements? Ask your vendors to provide proof that they have the required documents and that their licenses are current and valid. Did a food vendor have any high risk violations during a recent inspection? You can look up restaurant and food truck health inspection scores and violations on the [SF Data Portal](#) – Click on “Restaurant Scores” and search for the business name in the search field that says “Find in this Dataset.”

### HOTEL ROOM CAPACITY CONSIDERATION

Hotel room capacity in San Francisco is limited during the peak tourism and event season, with September and October among the months with the highest occupancy. Consider whether lack of hotel availability will impact attendance or housing for vendors and performers.

- » [Partial Convention Calendar](#)
- » [Hotel Availability Calendar](#)
- » For assistance with room blocks of 10 or more, email: [convention-sales@sfttravel.com](mailto:convention-sales@sfttravel.com)

**ACCESSIBILITY**

Is the event accessible to persons with disabilities and seniors? For ADA compliance guidelines, review the Land Authority's permit application requirements and the [SF Mayor's Office on Disability's Accessible Public Event Checklist](#). [www.sfgov.org/mod](http://www.sfgov.org/mod)

**ALCOHOL CONSIDERATIONS**

Are you planning on serving or selling alcohol during your event? Speak with an insurance company representative to determine the costs of liability insurance coverage for serving alcohol and for your event in general, as required by the Land Authority. Also, research the additional City staff and permit fees associated with serving alcohol. By weighing these costs in advance with your plans to serve alcohol, you can make a more informed business decision. Refer to "Alcohol Management and Licensing" section.

**CANNABIS AND OUTDOOR EVENTS**

Refer to this [FAQ sheet](#) for information on how to be a good neighbor and plan a legally compliant event. Cannabis rules and regulations are evolving quickly, and information is subject to change. Refer to these agencies for the most up-to-date rules and regulations:

- » [SF Office of Cannabis](#)
- » [State of California Cannabis Portal](#)
- » [CA Dept. of Public Health's Let's Talk Cannabis and Fact Sheets](#)

**BUSINESS PLANNING RESOURCES**

Here are some tools and resources that can assist you with your business planning:

- » [SF Business Portal](#) – The City's online hub to start, manage, and grow your business in San Francisco
- » [Small Business Assistance Center in City Hall](#)
- » [Free Booklet: How to Start a Small Business in SF](#)



Photo Credit: Peter den Hartog, Bayview SPARC