

Outdoor Entertainment and Amplified Sound

The Event Sponsor must develop a plan that limits the impact of event-generated amplified sound on the surrounding neighborhood. The first step is to assess the environment where the event will take place.

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN DEVELOPING YOUR PLAN:

- » The proximity of speakers to residences, businesses, and public spaces.
- » The direction speakers are pointed.
- » Use of directional speakers systems with cut-off points.
- » Placing smaller sound systems in specific locations throughout the event area is less obtrusive to surrounding areas than larger, far-ranging single speakers.
- » With live music, ensure that the event sound technician can control the upper limit of the overall volume and work with musicians to set volume limits for electric instruments (e.g., guitar amps).

For more information, contact:
 San Francisco Entertainment Commission
 City Hall, Room 12, Lower Level
 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, San Francisco, CA 94102
 (415) 554-5706, (415) 554-6678
www.sfgov.org/entertainment
 Office Hours: Monday to Friday, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

PERMIT TYPES

IMPORTANT: The Entertainment Commission's issues permits for outdoor events with entertainment or amplified sound on City streets and sidewalks and other non-residential property, Port of San Francisco property, and Treasure Island. For events on property overseen by SF Recreation & Park Department, Presidio Trust, or U.S. National Park Service, refer to those agencies for outdoor amplified sound and event permitting.

- » A **One Time Outdoor Entertainment Event Permit** is required for an outdoor event that provides Entertainment for a group of people on a limited basis with or without amplified sound. This includes, for example, a street fair, concert, athletic event, arts festival, block party, fashion show, fundraiser, or another type of outdoor event with Entertainment.
- » A **Sound Truck Permit** is required for the outdoor use of amplified sound equipment attached to, or being carried on, a motor vehicle or other means of conveyance. Examples include parades, floats, marches that use amplified sound equipment.
- » A **One Time Outdoor Amplified Sound Permit (No Entertainment Furnished)** is required for an event with outdoor amplified sound where Entertainment is not involved. Examples include (but are not limited to) events that play or project any of the following outdoors on a limited basis: amplified human speech (e.g., rallies, speeches), film/video/tv screenings, radio, iPod, pre-recorded background music or sound with no live performer, or streaming media.
- » For Permit FAQs and "What is Entertainment?" [click here](#).
- » For a **One Time Indoor Event with Entertainment** at a location that does not already hold a permanent entertainment permit, contact the SF Entertainment Commission for permitting information.



RULES FOR OUTDOOR USE OF AMPLIFIED SOUND

Outdoor use of any sound amplifying equipment, whether truck-mounted or otherwise, within the City and County of San Francisco, is subject to the following regulations*:

- » Sound amplifying equipment may be operated only between 9:00 am and 10:00 pm. In some cases, the Entertainment Commission may approve use of sound amplifying equipment prior to 9:00 am or after 10:00 pm at its own discretion. A public hearing may be required.
- » No amplified sound may occur outside of the times and locations that the Entertainment Commission has approved for your event.
- » The volume of sound must be controlled so that it's not audible more than 250 feet from the furthest attending audience member.
- » Amplified sound may not be unreasonably loud, raucous, jarring or disturbing to persons with normal sensitivities within the area of audibility.

*This is not a complete list of rules and exceptions. For the full list, [click here](#).

NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH

The Event Sponsor is strongly encouraged to communicate with area residents and businesses that might be impacted by amplified sound from the event.

TIP: In your neighborhood communications, include a name and mobile phone number that will be answered by an event staff member throughout the event set-up, event duration, and tear-down. For a full list of tips and best practices, see "Neighborhood Outreach Plan."

SOUND INSPECTOR

All outdoor events with entertainment or amplified sound are subject to an inspection by the SF Entertainment Commission. The Event Sponsor or delegated representative must have the Entertainment Commission Permit on-site and available at all times at the event.

For more information, contact:
 Entertainment.Enforcement@sfgov.org | (415) 554-5706

BULLHORNS

A pedestrian-operated bullhorn of 10 watts or less does not require a permit.



Photo Credit: Don Bowden, BayviewLIVE

Permit Application Process Flow Chart for Outdoor Events with Entertainment or Amplified Sound

01

Applicant must obtain a Special Event Permit from these land authorities* if applicable: SFMTA/ ISCOTT, Port of SF, Treasure Island. For activity taking place on private non-residential property, submit a letter of approval from the property owner or manager.

02

Submit the appropriate permit or letter of approval, application, fee, and any required supplemental documents to the SF Entertainment Commission (EC). Submit and pay online or in-person at least 14 days prior to event. Permit types may include:

- » One Time Outdoor Entertainment Event
- » Sound Truck
- » One Time Outdoor Amplified Sound (No Entertainment Furnished)

03

EC will evaluate application based on planned activities and may request applicant to submit an amended application. EC will send application to Local Police District Station for review.

04

Local Police District Station will provide recommendation to "Approve" or "Deny" to EC.

05

Executive Director of the EC will evaluate application based on Police Department recommendations and planned activities. Executive Director or Police Department may impose conditions on the permit.

06

If permit is approved, EC will send the issued permit to the applicant. The applicant or designated representative must have the approved permit on-site and available at the event.

* For SF Recreation & Park, U.S. National Park Service/GGNRA, or Presidio Trust, refer to those agencies for outdoor amplified sound rules and permitting.