

# Permit Application Process for Outdoor Special Events

FEASIBILITY	<b>STEP 1</b>	<b>CONTACT THE SFMTA, SF RECREATION &amp; PARK, PORT OF SF, OR RELEVANT LAND AUTHORITY</b> Contact the agency that permits the land. Share your event plans and take action to confirm if holding the event is feasible for the proposed date / time / location. SF Recreation & Park applications must be submitted at this time. Events often include more than one land authority.
	<b>STEP 2</b>	<b>RESEARCH CITY PERMITS, APPROVALS, AND COSTS</b> Identify the permits, approvals, and costs that may be associated with your event. Consult with City departments early on to learn the legal requirements for holding your event.
	<b>STEP 3</b>	<b>CONTACT LOCAL POLICE DISTRICT STATION &amp; SUBMIT SECURITY PLAN</b> Submit and discuss your proposed security plan to the Local Police District Station where the event will be located. If you are unsure if you need a security plan, contact the Local Police District Station. SFPD has final authority to change, approve or deny a proposed security plan to ensure the event is safe and secure. For an event on Recreation & Park property, the security plan must also be reviewed and approved by Park Rangers.
	<b>STEP 4</b>	<b>SUBMIT PERMIT APPLICATION TO ALL RELEVANT LAND AUTHORITIES: SFMTA, PORT OF SF, OR OTHERS. FOR SF RECREATION &amp; PARK APPLICATIONS, SUBMIT AT STEP 1</b> Submit the special event permit application and required supporting documents to the appropriate agency.
	<b>STEP 5</b>	<b>DO MEANINGFUL NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH</b> If you have confirmed with the relevant land authority and SFPD that holding the event is feasible, engage the residents and businesses that will be most impacted by the event. Listen to them, address any concerns, and take steps to reduce any potential impact.
PERMITTING	<b>STEP 6</b>	<b>DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW OF PERMIT APPLICATION</b> The relevant land authority will review the permit application, and make a decision to approve or deny the application, or put it on hold. In some cases, a hearing may be required. If closing or using a City street, the SFMTA/Interdepartmental Staff Committee on Traffic and Transportation (ISCOTT) will review your application and hold a public hearing.
	<b>STEP 7</b>	<b>APPLY FOR ADDITIONAL PERMITS AND OTHER APPROVALS</b> Upon approval by the relevant land authority, apply for any additional required permits, approvals, and City services. Examples include: Fire Dept. for cooking and generators, Public Health for food vendors and bars.
	<b>STEP 8</b>	<b>NO PARKING / TOW AWAY SIGNS AND ENFORCEMENT</b> If you need a temporary "No Parking" or "No Stopping" zone, SFMTA provides temporary tow-away signs for use during special events. Contact the SFMTA Temporary Sign Shop and apply for temporary "No Parking / Tow Away" signs.
EXECUTION	<b>STEP 9</b>	<b>DAY OF EVENT: INSPECTIONS AND ENFORCEMENT</b> If applicable, Fire Department, Public Health, Recreation & Park, or Port building inspector does on-site inspections. If applicable, SF Police Department Personnel, Parking Control Officers, or Recreation & Park staff provide enforcement.
FOLLOW-UP	<b>STEP 10</b>	<b>AFTER THE EVENT: CLEAN-UP AND REPORTING</b> Ensure streets, sidewalks, parks, or permitted space are clear of trash, debris, and objects. If applicable, participate in any required post-event reporting with the City departments, e.g., EMS Agency.

# Permit Application Process for Outdoor Special Events

## STEP 1

### Contact the SFMTA, Recreation & Park, Port of SF, or Relevant Land Authority.

Share your event plans and take action to confirm if holding the event is feasible for the proposed date/time/location. Events often include more than one land authority.

#### » EVENTS THAT USE OR OCCUPY A CITY STREET:

Contact: [San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency \(SFMTA\)/ISCOTT](mailto:specialevents@sfmta.com)  
specialevents@sfmta.com | (415) 646-2414

Review the [Temporary Street Closure Application and Rules](#) and the Special Event Factsheet. For a Neighborhood Block Party, [click here](#).

#### » EVENTS ON PARK PROPERTY:

Contact the [SF Recreation & Park Department](#) for any event on -- or adjacent to -- a City park or plaza. Submit your special event application at this time. This includes any parade or First Amendment activity. Review their [Special Events page](#) for permitting rules and regulations.

#### » EVENTS ON PORT OF SF PROPERTY:

For walks, runs, or other outdoor events, contact:  
Joyce Chan, (415) 274-0259 | [joyce.chan@sfport.com](mailto:joyce.chan@sfport.com)  
Jennifer Gee, (415) 274-0562 | [jennifer.a.gee@sfport.com](mailto:jennifer.a.gee@sfport.com)  
For all other Port locations, [click here](#) for contact information.  
Review the Port's [Guidelines and Application for Special Events](#)

#### » PARADES: Refer to "Parades" section.

#### » FOR ALL OTHER LAND AUTHORITIES: Refer to "Where to Begin: Contact the Agency that Permits the Land."

#### » FOR EVENTS ON PRIVATE PROPERTY: Contact property owner to confirm if holding the event is feasible for the proposed date/time/location. If confirmed, you may be required to obtain a letter of approval from the property owner.

## STEP 2

### Research City Permits, Approvals, and Costs.

- » The following sections may be used as resources in your research:
  - ❖ List of Common Permits, Licenses and Additional Approvals
  - ❖ Permit Fee Estimator
  - ❖ Pre-Application Questionnaire (optional)
  - ❖ Frequently Contacted Agencies
- » Early in the planning stages, consult with the following departments to learn the legal requirements and costs for your event.

- ❖ **Events that Use or Occupy a City Street:** Contact the [SFMTA/ISCOTT](#) to learn legal requirements, permit fees and, if applicable, any City service costs. For example, if the event footprint affects MUNI routes, or if parking and traffic enforcement are required, an event sponsor may be responsible for cost recovery charges.

If you need a temporary "No Parking" or "No Stopping" zone: Contact the [SFMTA Temporary Sign Shop](#) to learn requirements and costs. SFMTA provides temporary tow-away signs for use during special events.

#### FOR STREET CLEAN-UP PLAN AND CREW:

Contact: SF Public Works – Bureau of Street Environmental Services:  
(415) 695-2130

Primary Contact: Alison Mickels | [alison.mickels@sfdpw.org](mailto:alison.mickels@sfdpw.org)  
Linda Lee-Robbins | [linda.lee-robbins@sfdpw.org](mailto:linda.lee-robbins@sfdpw.org)  
Refer to "Clean-Up and Zero Waste" section

#### BARRICADES, FLASHERS & BARRICADE MONITORS:

The Event Organizer is responsible for arranging for barricades through a private vendor or through SF Public Works for a fee. SFMTA requires Type I or II A-frame barricades sufficient for closure – each must include flashing lights if used after dark. Metal barricades (6.5 ft or 8 ft.) also may be required. Adult monitor(s) also may be required per end of street closure(s). See the SFMTA's [Special Event Factsheet](#) for complete details. In addition to SFMTA, contact Alison Mickels at SF Public Works, (415) 695-2130, [alison.mickels@sfdpw.org](mailto:alison.mickels@sfdpw.org), to confirm the plans to provide barricades and flashers, and the name and contact of any private vendor providing the barricades.

- ❖ **For Cooking, Tents/Canopies, Generators, Pyrotechnics, Fenced or Enclosed Areas Used for Assembly, etc.:** Contact the SF Fire Department Bureau of Fire Prevention and speak with a Permits Inspector: (415) 558-3300 (main).
- ❖ **For Food/Beverage Vendors, including food booths, food trucks, and bars:** Contact SF Department of Public Health Temporary Events Program and review the [Temporary Event Health Permits page](#) and [food handling requirements](#). Review the [Requirements for a Food/Beverage Booth](#).

For questions, contact: [ehempevents@sfdph.org](mailto:ehempevents@sfdph.org).

- ❖ **For Events with 2500+ Attendees or Athletic/Water-Based Events:** Contact the EMS Agency's Prehospital Coordinator to develop your medical plan. The Prehospital Coordinator will discuss the plan, medical assets required, and will ensure there is proper coverage for the event. You may be obligated to submit a medical plan regardless of jurisdiction.

David Ebarle, EMS Agency  
 (415) 487-5014 | david.ebarle@sfdph.org  
[www.sfeventmedicalplans.com](http://www.sfeventmedicalplans.com)

- » **RECYCLING/ZERO WASTE PLAN:** Every event in San Francisco is required to offer recycling and composting at the event. Refer to [SF Environment's Event Recycling and Composting page](#) and this guide's "Clean-Up and Zero Waste Plan" section.
- » **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](#).

### STEP 3

**Contact the Local Police District Station for the event location and submit security plan. If you are unsure if you need a security plan, contact the Local Police District Station where the event will be located. To view a list and a map of Local Police District Stations, [click here](#).**

- » Speak with the station's Special Event Sergeant and submit information about the proposed event's location, time, security plan, and planned activities (e.g., liquor, food, entertainment, amplified sound). Work with the Special Event Sergeant to determine and address the event's potential impact on traffic, security, health, and safety of the public. Refer to "Security Plan" section.
- » The Local Police District Station will review the security plan and has final authority to change, approve or disapprove a proposed security plan in order to ensure a safe and secure event.
- » The Local Police District Station will determine if the event sponsor will be required to cover the cost of SFPD Personnel (sometimes referred to as "10B Police") to provide enforcement at the event.
- » **EVENTS ON PARK PROPERTY:** The security plan must also be reviewed and approved by Park Rangers.

- » **IF SERVING LIQUOR:** Submit the ABC Special Event Liquor Permit Application and the security plan to the Local Police District Station's Permit Officer.

**TIP:** If the ABC liquor application and SFPD Personnel request are submitted to SFPD at least 125 days prior to event, SFPD will notify the Applicant of the decision at least 90 days before the event. If submitted less than 125 days before event, SFPD will notify the Applicant of the decision at least 20 days before the event. Refer to "Alcohol Management and Licensing" for more information.

### STEP 4

**Submit Permit Application to All Relevant Land Authorities: SFMTA, Port of SF, or others. For SF Recreation & Park Department, submit application at Step 1.**

- » **EVENTS THAT USE OR OCCUPY A CITY STREET:** Submit the completed Temporary Street Closure permit application and fee payment to: [SFMTA/ISCOTT](#). Applications and payment may be submitted online.
- » **EVENTS ON PORT OF SF PROPERTY:** Submit the Special Event Application to the Port of SF. Refer to "[Guidelines and Application for Special Events](#)" PDF for instructions.

### STEP 5

#### Do Meaningful Neighborhood Outreach

If you have confirmed with the relevant land authority and SFPD that holding the event is feasible, engage the residents and businesses that will be most impacted by the event.

- » Who are the residents and businesses that will be most impacted by the event? Don't just tell them you're doing the event – engage them early, listen to them, address any concerns, take steps to reduce any potential impact, and create win-win relationships.
- » Refer to the "Neighborhood Outreach Plan" section for tips, best practices, and a list of neighborhood and merchant associations.
- » **SFMTA/ISCOTT EVENTS:** Outreach to neighboring residents and businesses must happen prior to event's ISCOTT Hearing. (See Step 6).

(continued on next page)

## STEP 6

### Departmental Review of Permit Application

The relevant land authority will review the permit application, and make a decision to approve or deny the application, or put it on hold. In some cases, a hearing may be required.

- » **EVENTS ON PARK PROPERTY:** Refer to the SF Recreation and Park Department's [Special Events page](#) for more information.
- » **EVENTS ON PORT OF SF PROPERTY:** Refer to the Port of SF's ["Guidelines and Application for Special Events"](#) PDF for instructions.
- » **EVENTS THAT USE OR OCCUPY A CITY STREET:**

SFMTA shares the Temporary Street Closure Permit application with members of the Interdepartmental Staff Committee on Traffic and Transportation (ISCOTT) for review. This committee includes representatives from the following City departments: SFMTA, Police, Fire, Public Health, Entertainment Commission, Public Works (BSES), Port of San Francisco, and EMS Agency.

ISCOTT representatives assess the proposed event, footprint, and activities, and consider a list of criteria including, but not limited to, the impact of the event on the traffic, security, health, and safety of the public. For the full list of criteria, refer to [Article 6, Section 6.2\(e\)1-5 of the SF Transportation Code](#). SFMTA notifies the Applicant of the Public Hearing date at least seven days in advance of hearing.

#### ISCOTT Hearing

The Applicant or an authorized representative is expected to attend the public ISCOTT Hearing and speak on behalf of the event. For more information, refer to ["What You Need to Know About the ISCOTT Hearing."](#)

#### What Happens if ISCOTT Approves the Permit?

If ISCOTT votes to approve the temporary street closure permit, then the Applicant receives approval to use or occupy the street(s). This means that the Applicant is still responsible for obtaining any other required permits, approvals or City services prior to the event.

#### What Happens if ISCOTT Puts the Permit Decision on Hold?

If ISCOTT determines that it does not have enough information to assess the proposed event, it may decide to put the application on hold until a future hearing. The Applicant will be asked to address any outstanding requests and resolve any issues before submitting additional information and returning for a future hearing.

#### What Happens if ISCOTT Denies the Permit?

While rare, if ISCOTT votes to deny the permit based on specific criteria, the Applicant has the right to appeal the decision.

Refer to ["Late Applications & Appeals"](#) section for more information.

## STEP 7

### Apply for Additional Permits and Other Approvals.

Upon approval by the relevant land authority, apply for any additional required permits, approvals, and City services from the relevant departments. Depending on your proposed activities and equipment, you may be required to obtain the following:

- » **COOKING, TENTS/CANOPIES, GENERATORS, PYROTECHNICS, BEVERAGE DISPENSERS WITH CO2:** Submit [Fire Permit Application](#) to the SF Fire Department's Bureau of Fire Prevention, Permits Division, 698 2nd Street, (415) 558-3300 (main). Application is due at least 10 days before the event (14 days for pyrotechnics, fireworks, flame effects).

**Note:** You will be required to schedule an in-person meeting with Fire Prevention to discuss the event layout and activities. For requirements and application forms, visit the [Fire Permits Page](#) and review the [Safety Requirements for Outdoor Food and Street Fairs](#).

- » **FOOD AND BEVERAGE VENDORS, INCLUDING FOOD BOOTHS, FOOD TRUCKS, BARS:** Submit application packet to the Department of Public Health's [Temporary Events Program](#), 1390 Market Street, Suite 210. Application packets are due 14 days in advance of the event. For the application forms and requirements, visit [DPH's Temporary Event Health Permits page](#). For questions, contact: [ehempevents@sfdph.org](mailto:ehempevents@sfdph.org).
- » **EVENTS WITH 2500+ ATTENDEES OR ATHLETIC / WATER-BASED EVENTS:** Submit your medical plan using the EMS Agency's online portal for review: <http://sfeventmedicalplans.com>  
Contact: David Ebarle, EMS Agency  
(415) 487-5014 | [david.ebarle@sfdph.org](mailto:david.ebarle@sfdph.org)
- » **SERVING LIQUOR:** If applicable, submit ABC Special Event Liquor License application and security plan:
  - ❖ **FIRST:** To the SFPD Permit Officer at the [Local Police District Station](#) (where the event is located) for initial decision
  - ❖ **SECOND:** Then, if approved by SFPD, submit the application to the CA Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control/ABC (San Francisco office). ABC will only accept an application between 30 and 10 days prior to the event.
  - ❖ Refer to ["Alcohol Management & Licensing"](#) for more information.
- » **EVENTS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL POLICE STAFFING:** If the Local Police District Station determines that the event will require additional Police staffing (sometimes referred to as "10B Police"), contact SFPD's Police Law Enforcement Services (PLES) Unit for a cost estimate, scheduling and invoicing: (415) 837-7268, [maureen.leonard@sfgov.org](mailto:maureen.leonard@sfgov.org).
- » **ENTERTAINMENT, OUTDOOR AMPLIFIED SOUND, SOUND TRUCKS:** Submit permit application to [SF Entertainment Commission](#) at least 2

weeks before the event. For amplified sound on Park property (parks, plazas), refer to [SF Recreation & Park Department](#).

Contact: Crystal Stewart, SF Entertainment Commission  
(415) 554-6678 | [crystal.stewart@sfgov.org](mailto:crystal.stewart@sfgov.org)  
Refer to "Outdoor Entertainment and Amplified Sound" section.

- » **IF APPLICABLE: TEMPORARY OCCUPANCY PERMIT** from SF Public Works is required for large structures, equipment, facilities – including stages, rides, bleachers, media equipment – that temporarily occupy a portion of the public roadway and/or sidewalk. Submit the [Temporary Occupancy Permit application](#) at least 7 days before the event to SF Public Works' Bureau of Street-Use and Mapping.
- » **OBTAINING DRINKING WATER:** To learn about alternative water sources and the Bottled and Packaged Water Ban, [click here](#). If you wish to provide drinking water from a fire hydrant, contact the SF Public Utilities Commission to request access to water mains and renting water meters. If there is no fire hydrant nearby, please visit [www.sfwater.org/eventwater](http://www.sfwater.org/eventwater) for other options.

SFPUC Customer Service Center  
525 Golden Gate Avenue, Main Floor, San Francisco, CA 94102  
(415) 551-3000

## STEP 8

### No Parking/Tow Away Signs and Enforcement

- » If you need a temporary "No Parking" or "No Stopping" zone, SFMTA provides temporary tow-away signs for use during special events. Contact the [SFMTA Temporary Sign Shop](#) to apply for No Parking/Tow Away Signs, Temporary Blue Zones (Disabled Parking), and to reserve Parking Metered Spaces, if applicable.
- » **RECOMMENDED:** Submit Temporary Signage application 2 months before the event, or as soon as your ISCOTT permit is approved, whichever is earlier.

## STEP 9

### Day of Event: Inspections and Enforcement

Ensure that all individuals associated with the event comply with the start and end times specified in the event permits.

- » Inspections will be conducted for compliance with laws, local ordinances and/or conditions of issued permits for the event by the event promoter, sponsors, vendors, participants and attendees. The event promoter/organizer/sponsor is responsible for providing notice and information in advance of the event to participants, vendors, sponsors, volunteers,

contractors and employees of the terms, conditions and requirements and rules of conduct. In order to run a successful event, the event promoter/organizer/sponsor should have a preexisting plan in place to monitor compliance by everyone connected to their event and take immediate corrective action.

- » If applicable, Fire Department inspectors do on-site inspection prior to the event opening to the public. Applicant is responsible for scheduling inspection in advance.
- » If applicable, Department of Public Health inspectors do on-site inspection of temporary food facilities prior to and during the event. Applicant is responsible for providing designated parking for inspection staff.
- » Some events will require additional deployment of SFPD Personnel. In some cases, these personnel may be referred to as "10B Officers." Speak with the Special Event Sergeant at the Local Police District Station to confirm if this is required.
- » If applicable, SFMTA provides Parking Control Officers (PCOs) for traffic enforcement.
- » If applicable, SF Recreation & Park Staff and Park Rangers monitor the event and provide enforcement.
- » If applicable, Port of SF building inspector does on-site inspections.

## STEP 10

### After the Event: Clean-Up and Reporting

Ensure streets, sidewalks, parks, or permitted space are clear of trash, debris, and objects. If applicable, participate in any required post-event reporting with City departments.

- » SF Public Works may inspect the area approximately 24 to 48 hours after the event to ensure that the streets and sidewalks are clean of trash, debris, and objects.
- » **IF MEDICAL PLAN REQUIRED:** Post-Event Treatment Report due to EMS Agency 2 weeks after the event.