

Special Event Permits and Compliance Items

COMMONLY-REQUIRED PERMITS AND COMPLIANCE ITEMS

There are a number of different Special Event-related permits that may be required in conjunction with a Final 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 permits. The City of Santa Barbara maintains sole discretion to determine the required permits for the proposed venue and/or components of your event.

Below is a list of the most common permit types you may be required to obtain. Your Conditional Special Event Permit will list any supplemental permits and provisions that will be required. These permits and “compliance” items must be received no later than **seven days prior to your event** before issuance of your Final Special Event Permit.

Site Plan/Route Map

The site plan or route map you include with your Special Event Application is a visual representation of all the infrastructure and operational event elements that you describe throughout your application. **This is required of all events.** It should include all stationary elements as well as moving routes.

All events are required to provide an event site plan and/or route map by the time designated on the Conditional Special Event Permit. First-time events are required to submit a rough site plan/route map with their application in order for the Special Events Coordinator to set fees and requirements correctly. The final site plan/ route map must be provided one month prior to your event. The site plan must show the total dimensions of the event footprint and all items placed inside the footprint, including but not limited to:

- Tent Structures
- Stages
- Canopies
- Generators
- Tables
- Bleachers
- Food, merchandise, and information booths
- Beer garden(s)
- Equipment/vehicle parking areas
- Kids’ activities
- Security guard placement
- Interior and perimeter fencing, with dimensions
- Portable toilets
- Dumpsters
- Bicycle valet zone
- Backstage area
- Storage trailers
- Light towers

Please label items on your site plan, along with approximate dimensions. Keep in mind the Santa Barbara Fire Department requires a 20’ clearance lane through your event for access by emergency vehicles and that your event is accessible to all.

The Final Special Event Permit issued by the City of Santa Barbara will only be valid for the venue areas and event elements described in your Special Event Application and site plan and/or route map. Modifications to your request may be required during the event planning process and will be incorporated in the Final Special Event Permit. Requests to make notable changes and/or additions to the site plan or route map after the on-site meeting may not be honored.

Insurance Requirements

All Special Events, except First Amendment Events and other events that have received a waiver pursuant to SBMC Chapter 15.17, are required to provide a Certificate of Insurance to cover all event, setup and breakdown days. Insurance limits are determined for each event by the City Risk Manager or his/her designee. All decisions made by the Risk Manager or his/her designee are final. Required insurance levels are based on the size, scope and elements of your event, including the amount of risk associated with event activities. General guidelines are as follows:

A Certificate of Insurance, **plus the endorsement** (to indicate coverage has been bound), must be received no later than four weeks prior to your first rental day, and must show you have contracted an insurance policy with the terms and conditions set forth at [SantaBarbaraCA.gov/SpecialEvents](https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/SpecialEvents).

- The minimums for comprehensive general liability and automobile liability coverage as set forth at [SantaBarbaraCA.gov/SpecialEvents](https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/SpecialEvents).
- Includes all set-up, event and breakdown days.
- Covers high-risk activities that you will have at your event such as alcohol, inflatable bouncers, Velcro walls, rock climbing walls, petting zoos, etc.; modified to reflect what activity organizer will have.
- Lists the City of Santa Barbara, its officers, employees and agents as additional insured.

Indemnification Requirements

Prior to issuance of an event permit, the applicant or the authorized officer of the sponsoring organization must sign an agreement to reimburse the City of Santa Barbara, in a form consistent with this requirement and acceptable to the City Attorney, for any costs incurred in repairing damage to City property occurring in connection with the permitted event and proximately caused by the actions of the permittee or sponsoring organization, its officers, employees, volunteers or agents, or any person who was under the permittee's or sponsoring organization's control insofar as permitted by law. For purposes of this Section, a person who merely joins in a special event is not considered, by reason of that act alone, to be "under the control" of the permittee or sponsoring organization.

Each Special Events permit shall expressly provide that the permittee agrees, at permittee's own costs and expense, to indemnify, hold harmless, and defend the City, including, but not limited to, the City Council, boards and commissions of the City of Santa Barbara, its officers, agents, employees and volunteers (collectively "City Indemnitees"), from and against any and all demands, claims, actions, suits, judgments, damages, liability, costs and expense, including, but not limited to, reasonable attorneys' and other professional fees (collectively "Claims"), to the extent arising directly or indirectly from one or more of the following:

1. The possession, occupancy, use, or enjoyment of the permitted area by Permittee or its officers, agents, contractors, subcontractors, employees, volunteers, sponsors, participants, guests, and invitees thereof (collectively the "Indemnitors");
2. Permittee's business, activities, operations, services or work conducted in, on or about the permitted area;
3. Any breach or default in the performance of any obligation on Permittee's part to be performed under the terms of the Special Events Permit;
4. Any negligent or wrongful act or omission of any Indemnitor;
5. Furnishing or supplying any work, services, materials, equipment or supplies by any person, firms, corporations, or other entities in, on or about the permitted area on behalf of the permittee; provided,

however, that Permittee shall have no obligation to indemnify, protect, or defend or hold harmless the City Indemnitees for Claims arising from the sole active negligence or willful misconduct of the City Indemnitees.

All provisions of the Indemnification Agreement shall survive the termination or expiration of the Special Events Permit. In addition to bearing the full cost and expense of defending the City, the Indemnitor shall also indemnify and hold the City harmless from any settlement entered into and any judgment that may be rendered against the City as a result of and in proportion to and to the extent of the alleged willful or negligent acts or omissions of the Indemnitor or Indemnitor's officers, agents, employees, or volunteers in connection with the permitted event or activity.

The indemnification requirement described herein shall be waived by the City for those applicants who have established a basis for the waiver of insurance pursuant to SBMC Chapter 15.17.

Alcohol Use Permit

Event organizers may be required to provide an Alcohol Management Plan. If you intend to sell or give away any alcoholic beverages at your event, you must receive authorization from the Santa Barbara Police Department (SBPD) and the State of California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC). It is your responsibility to obtain the appropriate "ABC permit" from the State of California Alcoholic Beverage Control Board office in Ventura, California. Additional information about Alcohol Beverage Control licensing, permit requirements and an application can be obtained by calling (805) 289-0100 or by visiting <https://www.abc.ca.gov/licensing/license-forms/>.

Before the ABC office issues their permit, they will require a signature on the ABC application by the Special Event Coordinator as the property owner representative. To obtain a letter of endorsement, an ABC Endorsement Application from the Santa Barbara Police Department must be completed and submitted. There is a charge for this application, which can be found at

<https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/go/depts/parksrec/recreation/events/plan.asp>.

Temporary Food Facility Permit

If you intend to sell, serve, give away, or sample food or consumable products including water and other beverages at a public event, you must obtain a temporary food facility permit. This County Health Permit is required whether you are serving food prepared on-site, pre-packaged food, or food and beverage considered to be "low risk" (i.e. bottled water, packaged cookies, cakes, etc.). The application is obtained through the County of Santa Barbara's Environmental Health Services Department at (805) 681-4900 or on their website at www.sbcphd.org/ehs. Since the County Health permit is usually issued on the day of the event, the Special Events Coordinator will directly confirm your approval status with County Health in advance. This requirement does not apply to private events or mobile food facilities (i.e., food trucks) already permitted with the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department.

Temporary Power Permit

Since most event locations do not have electricity available, generators are often brought in to add power to a site. If a towable generator with a grounding rod is brought in, a temporary power permit is required. Only a licensed electrical contractor can apply for this permit. An electrical inspection will also be required on or before the event day/time. A temporary power permit is not required if you are bringing in a small, portable generator or if you are connecting to an existing City electrical receptacle.

Building Permit

Events that erect temporary structures or install temporary electrical wiring may be required to obtain a Building Permit. Examples of structures that may require the permit are awnings, bleachers, art installations, facades, stages 24" or more in height or 120 square feet or more in size, enclosed tents, fencing higher than 3½ feet in height, food or beverage cooking/refrigeration/processing equipment, festoon lighting and convenience outlets. The City's Building and Safety staff will review the site plan and inspect the site for soundness, safety and accessibility.

One-Day Vendor’s License

If you plan to have vendors sell food, beverages, merchandise or services (i.e., a vendor selling massages after an organized run), you are responsible for ensuring each of your vendors applies for this license. An “Application for Special Event or One-Day Vendor’s License” must be completed prior to issuance of the license. Your Final Special Event Permit will not be issued until appropriate vendor fees are paid to the Finance Department.

Parking Restriction Waiver Permit

A parking restriction waiver permit must be acquired if you want to post “no parking” signs on a street that normally allows street parking in order to create an unloading/loading zone for your event vendors’ staff, and on-demand ride sharing vehicles.

Portable Toilet Contract

Depending on the size of your event, its duration, and whether food and/or beverages are served, you may be required to provide portable toilets at the rate of one for every 250–300 expected attendees. Please note that at least 10% of the toilets must be handicapped-accessible. Some events may be required to service their toilets during the day, depending on the volume of people and the duration of the event. Please keep in mind that permanent bathrooms on site are not factored in when determining the number of restrooms needed. Permanent restrooms are intended for the normal activity of the park and hours of operation and are not intended to accommodate public events. A copy of a contract from the portable toilet vendor, including delivery and pick up times that fall within the permit period, must be provided one week prior to your event as proof of compliance.

Public Assembly Permit

All public assemblies of more than 49 people in areas that are not regularly classified for use as public assembly sites must be reviewed and approved by the Santa Barbara Fire Department. Examples include barricaded streets, fenced beer gardens, ticketed events with a fenced event area, tented events, trade and events in defined venues.

Trash/Recycling Contract

All events are required to provide and place trash and recycling event containers with lids, side-by-side, throughout the event site. Events with 300 or more people may also be required to provide at least one trash dumpster, and a recycling dumpster may also be required if cardboard and other recyclables generated from food and beverage are a large part of your event. Any trash or recyclables overflowing from permanent or temporary trash/recycle containers or dumpsters within the event area must be picked up and properly placed in a container. The Special Event Coordinator will determine which trash receptacles are required, how many and location of placement. Event organizers can hire any company to provide and service additional event trash boxes (as long as all trash and recyclables in the event boxes are transported to a licensed processing facility within the City of Santa Barbara). For those events required to have extra dumpsters or roll-offs, the City’s franchised hauler, Marborg Industries must be used. One week before your event, you must provide a copy of your contract with the, showing proof of securing adequate trash/recycle containers and dumpsters and provisions for servicing them. .

Tent Permit

If you are planning to use a tent larger than 400 sq. ft. or a canopy larger than 700 sq. ft., you will need to obtain a tent permit from the City of Santa Barbara Fire Department (SBFD). Open flames are generally prohibited in tents.

Security Guard Contract

Professional, uniformed and licensed security guards may be required if an event has a large number of minors attending, if crowd control may be an issue, if alcohol is being served, if public safety issues are expected, or if deemed necessary by the Santa Barbara Police Department. Additionally, if any equipment is left in an event location overnight, professional, uniformed and licensed security services will be required to guard it.

Professional security guards must be contracted through a security guard company with a valid Private Patrol Operator (PPO) license number and the guards must have valid guard card numbers. A copy of the security company contract showing the hours of service must be submitted no later than one week prior to your event as proof of compliance along with the PPO license number and the names and guard card numbers of the security guards. The role of the private security guard at a Special Event is to maintain order, to prevent damage and destruction to property, and to notify SBPD Officers of any unlawful, disorderly, or dangerous conduct at the Special Event.

Waterfront Parking Lot Facility Use Application

A permit is required to reserve spaces in one of the paid waterfront parking lots from East Beach to Leadbetter Beach in order to provide parking for your event or as a staging area for food trucks, portable toilets, etc., and the event organizer must pay for the number of parking spaces you want to reserve.

LESS-COMMON PERMIT AND COMPLIANCE ITEMS

Below, for your reference, is a list of some of the less-common permit and compliance items your event may need.

Bicycle Valet Contract

The City strives to have all their events utilize alternative transportation methods in order to be sustainable and to ease traffic congestion and parking issues that cars and other vehicles bring. If your event takes place in a neighborhood with little available parking, a bicycle valet service may be required. A copy of a contract from the bicycle valet service must be provided one week prior to your event as proof of compliance.

Coastal Development Permit/Exemption

Temporary Events in the Coastal Zone

Temporary events in the Coastal Zone (see [map](#)) can require applications for Coastal Exemption determinations or Coastal Development Permits in order to comply with the California Coastal Act and SBMC §28.44. The specific regulations defining temporary events and governing when temporary events are exempt from coastal development permitting requirements are located in SBMC § 28.44.070.

Certain events are exempt from coastal permitting requirements and do not require a formal Coastal Exemption application and determination from the Planning Division. Unless specifically identified below, events occurring entirely on private property (including private off-street parking lots) or located at designated picnic areas or other facilities rented out regularly by the Parks and Recreation Department do not require a formal Coastal Exemption determination. A formal Coastal Exemption application submittal and determination from the Planning Division is generally required if the event would involve any one of the following:

- Is located on a sandy beach and includes: 1) placement of non-permanent structures (bleachers, perimeter fencing, vendor tents/canopies, stands, trailers, portable toilets, sound/video equipment, platforms, etc.); or 2) a fee for entrance; or 3) otherwise limit use of the sandy beach to the general public.
- Is located in a public open space area with natural habitat (oak woodland, etc.) and includes: 1) placement of non-permanent structures (bleachers, perimeter fencing, vendor tents/canopies, stands, trailers, portable toilets, sound/video equipment, platforms, etc.); or 2) a fee for entrance; or 3) otherwise limits use of the open space area to the general public.
- Occurs in summer between Memorial Day weekend and Labor Day (inclusive) and requires closure for more than three consecutive hours of any public roads or parking spaces in City-owned parking lots.
- Occurs after Labor Day weekend and before Memorial Day weekend and requires closure for more than three consecutive hours of a major public road providing access to the shoreline (i.e. Cliff Drive, Las Positas Road, Meigs Road, Shoreline Drive, Loma Alta Drive, Cabrillo Boulevard, Castillo Street, State Street, Garden Street, Calle Cesar Chavez, Milpas Street, Channel Drive, Old Coast Highway, etc.) or the majority of public parking in any shoreline lot.

- Is located on public parkland that is not rented out regularly for events or picnicking and includes a fee for entrance or otherwise limits use of the majority of the park for the general public for more than three consecutive hours.
- Involves fireworks.

Temporary events that have historically required a Coastal Development Permit to address and monitor associated impacts to coastal resources also require a formal Coastal Exemption determination or Coastal Development Permit.

Coastal Exemption determinations, when required, often take up to **four weeks** for the City’s Planning staff to review and process.

A Coastal Development Permit can often take six to eight months to review and process. Any event that meets all three of the following criteria is likely to require a Coastal Development Permit: the event would occur between Memorial Day weekend and Labor Day (inclusive); would be located on the sandy beach; and would involve a charge for general public admission or seating where no fee is currently charged for public use of the same area.

While some special events may not require formal Coastal Exemption determinations or Coastal Development Permits, please be aware that other portions of the Municipal Code or City rules and regulations may apply.

We recommend contacting the Planning Division as soon as possible when coordinating an event that may require a Coastal Exemption determination or Coastal Development Permit. Contact the City of Santa Barbara Community Development Department, Planning Division at (805) 564-5578 or by email at PlanningCounter@SantaBarbaraCA.gov or find the [Coastal Exemption Application](#) or [Coastal Development Permit Application](#) online.

Exhibit and Trade Show Permits

The Santa Barbara Fire Department provides plan check services to review booth layout, pedestrian flow, aisle width, exiting plans and other crowd safety issues associated with trade shows and expositions (including those held in tents) in compliance with the California Fire Code.

Marine Event Permit

A Marine Event Permit from the Los Angeles-Long Beach sector of the US Coast Guard is required for events with organized water activities such as swims, SUP paddles, kayak/canoe races, boating regattas, etc. Submit application at <https://homeport.uscg.mil/Pages/MarineEventFormSubmission.aspx>. There is no cost for this application if US Coast Guard reviews it and decides to issue an approval letter rather than a permit, but note that an application must be submitted regardless of whether the event was granted a permit waiver in previous years. For follow-up communications, contact the US Coast Guard Waterways Management Division at D11-DG-SectorLALB-WWM@uscg.mil.

Neighborhood Approval and/or Notification

The City expects that all special events will adopt a “good neighbor” approach with the residents and businesses adjacent to event locations. Sometimes events can severely impact a neighborhood’s on-street parking, vehicular traffic flow or normal noise level. In these situations, the City may require the event to receive pre-approval from more than 50% of the impacted neighborhood before a special event application will be considered. In other situations where impacts are less severe, the City may only require that an event provide advance notification to the neighborhood. If either is required, the approval and/or notification to the neighborhood should include such details such as the name of the event, the name and number of the Host Organization and/or applicant and the event coordinator (if applicable), the hours of the event and a description of the type of impacts the residents and businesses may experience.

Pre-approval is not required for First Amendment Events as described in this guide.

Open Flame Permits/Fireworks/Pyrotechnics/Special Effects

All activities associated with the use of pyrotechnics and open flames must be reviewed, approved, and permitted by the Santa Barbara Fire Department. Examples of activities in this category include outdoor fireworks, model rocket launches, open flame activities such as fire walking, hot-work, welding/cutting, fire performance, cooking over a flame, and special effects using pyrotechnic devices.

Professional Cleaning Contract

Cleaning during and after an event by a professional company may be required for events, if determined by City staff that there is past history of poor cleanup and/or use of event staff and volunteers was insufficient to accomplish the task successfully. Requirements for professional services may include the following:

- Pickup of any overflowing trash from trash/recycle containers (cardboard event boxes and permanent trash/recycle receptacles) within the event area.
- Thorough clean-up up any residual trash/litter (including confetti) from event area, including all streets sidewalks, gutters, drain inlets, catch basins and planters.
- Use of a vacuum to clean-up and capture confetti.
- Power washing with a water collection system (if required).

A copy of a contract from the cleaning company must be provided one week prior to your event as proof of compliance.

Coordination of Police and Private Security

The purpose of police presence during events is to ensure public safety and handle law enforcement matters only and should not be looked upon to provide services able to be handled by private security. The officer's role is to augment private security and respond to any emergencies which may require police presence.

Responsibilities of private security hired by the event organizer include, but are not limited to, checking IDs to prevent underage drinking, bag and security checks, managing capacity limits and denying entry. For more complex events, a pre-meeting can be conducted before the event to discuss responsibilities and conditions. An operational plan relating the event will be forwarded to the assigned officer(s) prior to the event. A contact person representing the event organizer must be at the event for its entire duration, and must have a copy of the Event Permit available for review.

Sidewalk Merchandising License

If you plan to use a street or sidewalk for vendors to sell food, beverages, merchandise or services a part of your event, you are required to have a Sidewalk Merchandising License. The application for this license may be obtained at the City of Santa Barbara Public Works Department Permit Counter at 630 Garden Street. At the time the application is submitted, you must include a detailed site plan diagramming the dimensions of the vendor's booth and all items that will be set up inside or near the booth, a photograph of the proposed merchandise for sale, a copy of your current City of Santa Barbara Business License Tax Certificate and a copy of your Certificate of Insurance naming the City of Santa Barbara as additional insured. The booth may not block accessible paths of travel, leaving a minimum four feet accessible.

Special Lighting Event Permit

The use of searchlights, laser lights and other similar high intensity outdoor lights are prohibited by the City's Municipal Code except pursuant to a Special Lighting Event Permit. If a searchlight is planned for your event, an application must be submitted to the Community Development Department two weeks prior to the event. Note that if a permit is granted, the searchlight, laser light or other similar light may only be operated for a period not to exceed eight consecutive hours, provided that no such permit has been granted for any one property or business location

within the City more often than five times during any 180 day period. Permission to operate the searchlight, laser light or other similar light between the hours of midnight and sunrise will not be granted.

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