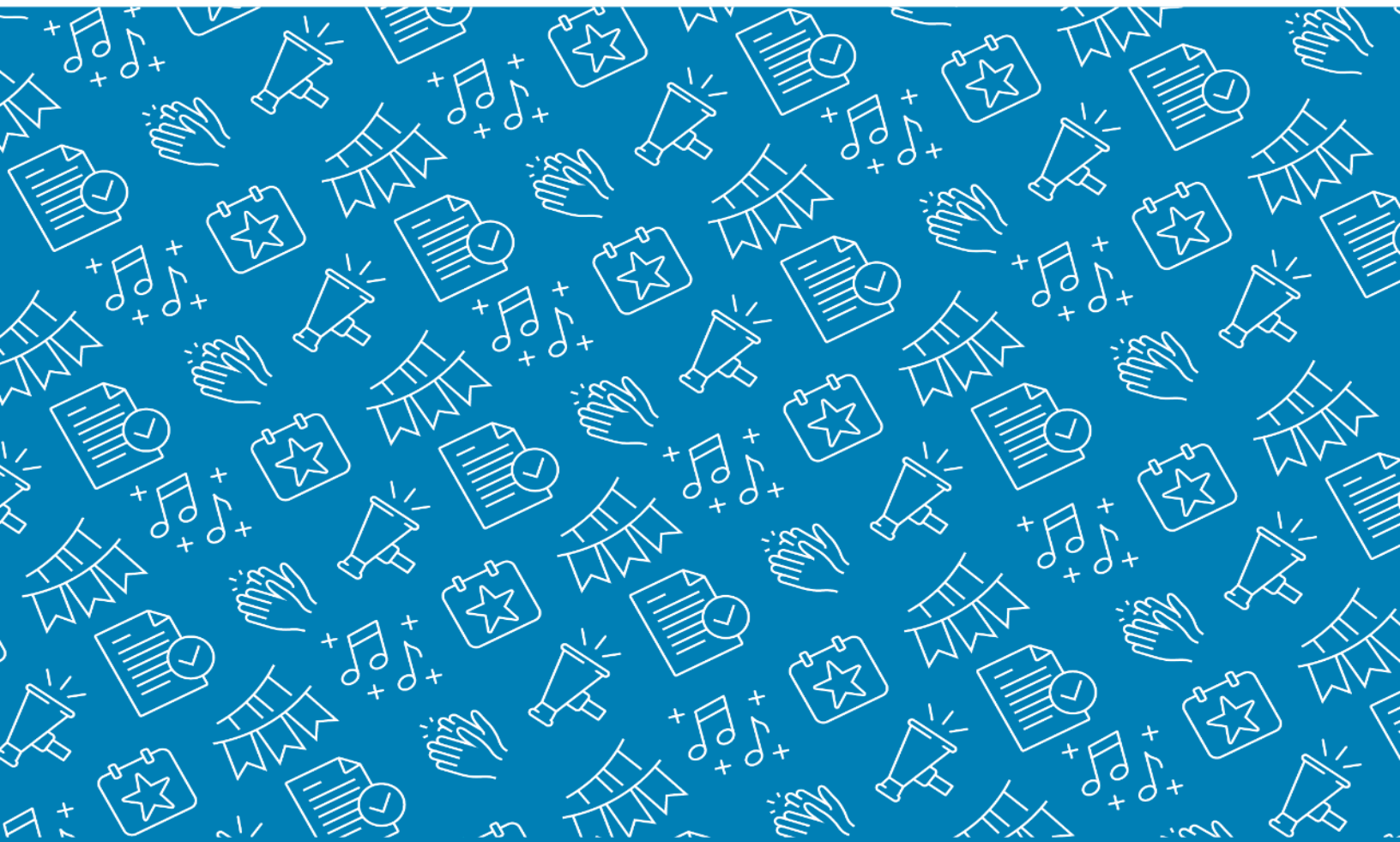


CITY OF VICTORIA | Arts, Culture and Events

Special Event Permit Guidelines



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Introduction

The City of Victoria supports special events that benefit the community socially and economically. Events require thorough planning, from start to cleanup. It is illegal to hold an event on City property without an approved permit.

There is no fee to apply for a Special Event Permit (SEP), but charges may apply for City services, bylaws, deposits and other event-related costs. Staff will inform you of service expectations and your responsibilities.

For a Special Event Permit to be issued, and for the applicant to receive City services, proposed activities taking place on City property must meet the City of Victoria definition of a Special Event, Neighbourhood Celebration, Community Celebration or Festival:

- **Special Event** - An organized, noteworthy happening, occurrence or competition held within the City of Victoria boundaries. All Festivals and Celebrations are Special Events, however, not all Special Events are Festivals and Celebrations.
- **Neighbourhood Celebration** - A neighbourhood or community event focused on developing, building and celebrating community arts and culture, organized by a non-profit society.
- **Community Celebration** - Cultural event that builds community, marking holidays or special days, organized by a non-profit society with city-wide appeal.
- **Festival** – A series of related events, usually focused on arts and culture, held annually for two or more consecutive days. Festivals have city-wide and regional appeal and are produced by a registered non-profit society.

Applicants that are not registered non-profit societies can apply for SEPs, however, costs related to the provision of City of Victoria services, fees and charges will be billed to the organizer. Commercial events may qualify for SEPs if proposed activities are noteworthy happenings within the City of Victoria and are deemed consistent with the definitions of Community Celebration, Neighbourhood Celebration or Festival and are open to the public.

Application Process

These guidelines outline the SEP application steps and required information in the application form and are intended to facilitate the approval process.

1. Review guidelines and contact the Arts, Culture and Events team if needed.
2. Complete the Special Event Permit application form.
3. Submit the signed form via email or in person at the Arts, Culture and Events office.
The signatory is responsible for meeting all requirements and conditions as outlined in their permit.
4. Completed applications must be submitted at least:
 - 120 days prior for new large events requiring road closures
 - 90 days prior for significantly changed events
 - 60 days prior for reoccurring events without significant changes and new events with no road closures
5. Include all items listed in these guidelines, except the certificate of insurance, which may be submitted after event approval.
6. Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant.
7. Staff will review complete applications and may either approve or request further information from the applicant. New, complex or repeat events that have changed may require review from the Special Event Technical Committee.

Event Information

Event Dates and Times

Provide start and end times for each event day, including setup, tear-down and cleanup. Performance schedules, production schedules and any other important timelines should also be provided as attachments if applicable. All contractors, suppliers and other people involved with the event in any way should be aware of these critical times and are required to schedule work accordingly.

Requested Event Location

Include the address or venue name, and any additional public or private space needed (e.g., sidewalk, road, plaza, etc.).

Event Description

Provide a brief overview of the event, including its purpose and activities (e.g., community-sourced or professional entertainment including music, theatre or cultural performances, food service, activities for children, cultural celebration, etc.)

Changes for this Year

If the event was previously held, identify any changes that will affect the planning or approval of the event. If there are no major changes aside from date or programming content, please indicate “no change” in this field.

Applicant Information

Contact Information

This is the person who is considered the event’s primary contact during the planning process. They will be contacted directly to discuss and resolve all issues relating to the event. This person must ensure that the most current information relating to the event is communicated to and from the City and those involved in the event.

Non-profit or Commercial Event

[Registered non-profits](#) with a valid B.C. Society number and in good standing may qualify for venue and City service assistance. Commercial events where the public is invited will be required to cover all costs related to the use of public space and City services. The City does not issue permits where the applicant is an individual that is not associated with a non-profit society or commercial entity.

On-Site Liaison and Permit Contact

In addition to the primary applicant, an on-site liaison person must be identified, present and available via cell phone during setup, tear-down and during the event. This person can be the same person as the applicant. They must have the authority to make decisions on behalf of the event organizer and must be accessible to City staff, police and any other identified individuals or organizations. The person's name and contact information may be provided to the public and media.

Site Plan and/or Route Map

Detailed site plan: Provide a detailed site plan for each event location. This plan should be clearly presented, drawn to scale and include the date it was prepared (any revised plans must include the date).

Include:

- Location of all event components (e.g., stages, tents, toilets, bins, hoses, etc.)
- Entrances and exits, gates, fencing, fire lanes and fire hydrants (fire hydrants cannot be obstructed, and their location should be shown)
- Parade, walk, or run routes, including assembly and dispersal areas

Modifications: City staff may recommend changes before approval. Inaccurate or incomplete site plans will be returned to the applicant.

Tools and Resources: Not all events require detailed CAD (Computer-Aided Design) site plans. Events with only minor equipment and a limited amount of infrastructure deployed in public space can make use of more basic online tools such as the City's [Vic Map](#) and Google Earth, to create site plans.

Event Details

Number of Staff, Volunteers, Performers and Attendees

- Provide accurate estimates of participants and spectators for safety planning.
- Include details on vehicles and participants for parades, walks or runs.

Temporary Structures

- Include the location and size of tents, stages and portable toilets on the site plan.
- Tents must meet [NFPA](#) (National Fire Protection Association) standards and CAN/ULC-S109 flame resistance requirements.
- A manufacturer's label must be attached to the tent confirming compliance with these requirements. If a label is not attached, the user will be responsible for providing

documentation from the manufacturer that the tent meets these standards prior to its acceptance.

- Secure tents with cement blocks. Spikes or ropes tied to trees are not allowed unless approved.
- Organizers are responsible for any damages from unauthorized setup.

Sale or Handouts of Food or Beverages

- Food, beverage and merchandise sales must be submitted and approved prior to permit approval and should be described in your application (vendor name, products, location).
- All sales or handout of food and beverages require health approval by an Environmental Health Officer with Vancouver Island Health Authority.
- Event organizers must submit [Temporary Food Event Application](#) to Island Health and ensure all participating food and beverage vendors submit a [Temporary Event Application](#). All applications must be submitted 14 days in advance of the event date otherwise a late administrative fee applies. See the [Island Health Food Safety](#) guide for more information.
- Event organizers are also required to comply with the Capital Regional District [Clean Air Bylaw No 3962](#) that prohibits smoking in areas where food and beverages are served or consumed, and within 7 metres of all building doorways, open windows and air intakes.
- Food vendors need:
 - Temporary Health Operating Permit from Island Health
 - Valid City of Victoria business licence
 - Approval from the City of Victoria Fire Department (250.920.3361)

For more information:

[Environmental Public Health Office](#)

[Victoria Fire Department – Fire Prevention Division](#)

[Island Health Food Safety](#)

Alcohol and Cannabis

Permit Requirements:

- Beer and liquor sales require a [Liquor and Cannabis Special Event Permit](#) from the B.C. Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch.
- Applications may be obtained online or at any government liquor store.

- “Serving it Right” certification is required and the applicant is responsible for protecting guests from any harm that may come to them as a result of drinking at the event.

Operating Hours:

- Beer gardens may have different operating hours from the event.
- They must close no later than the conclusion of event programming or 10:00 p.m., whichever is earlier.

Food and Facilities:

- Food must be available within the beer garden area.
- Adequate washroom facilities must be provided and meet Island Health requirements.
- Refer to the [Municipal Property Alcohol Guidelines](#)

Approval and Compliance:

- Written approval from both the City and Victoria Police Department (250.995.7245) is required for events in public (municipal) space
- The City Special Events team may recommend approval based on experience with the event and confidence that the sales will be well managed. Any special conditions, beyond those stated in your BC LCRB permit, required by the City of Victoria related to the provision of alcohol or cannabis will be included in your City of Victoria Special Event Permit.
- All cleanup within a beer garden is the responsibility of the organizer.

Sales of any kind

Permitted Sales:

- Only event-related products may be sold on site.
- Food and beverages are considered event-related (except in Beacon Hill Park where sales of any kind are prohibited).
- Sponsor products must not be sold unless they relate directly to the event (e.g., running shoes at a marathon).

Restrictions:

Products that significantly compete with similar products sold by adjacent merchants are not allowed.

Licensing Requirements:

- All vendors selling products must either have an individual City of Victoria Business licence, or all vendors can be covered under a temporary business licence obtained by the event organizer.
- For more information, email businesslicence@victoria.ca.

Sound

Noise Control:

- Sound levels for entertainment, music and speeches should not unreasonably impact neighbouring residents or businesses.
- Amplified sound requires an [exemption to the noise bylaw](#).
- A sound management plan is required to control the type and volume of sound.
- Times, duration and level of sound must not result in unreasonable impacts on the surrounding neighbourhood.

Guidelines and Resources:

For more information, consult the [Sound Policy for Outdoor Special Events](#) and the [Noise Bylaw](#). The Arts, Culture and Events team can advise on a sound management plan, including location and orientation of performers and speakers, establishing a maximum allowable decibel level and providing appropriate notification to nearby residents and merchants. Sound meters can be borrowed from the City events office.

Entertainment Performance Rights and Licenses

Organizers are responsible for obtaining fair compensation for artists and record companies for their performance rights and licensing recorded music for public performance, broadcast and new media. Event organizers are responsible for contacting [Re:Sound](#) for the event.

SOCAN – The Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada (SOCAN) represents Canadian performing rights and licenses the legal use of music. Event organizers are responsible for contacting [SOCAN](#) for the event

UAV/Drones

All event venues in the City of Victoria are within the controlled airspace of the inner harbour airport. To fly a drone within controlled airspace, drone pilots require an Advanced Operations Pilot Certificate, a drone with the appropriate manufacturer safety declaration,

and authorization from [NAV Canada](#). Confirmation of NAV Canada approval must be provided prior to issuance of your event permit.

Sponsor Signs and Banners

Sponsorship acknowledgment is often required by organizers to secure funding for non-profit events. The City requires that this acknowledgment be limited to playing a supportive role in event presentation and therefore the size and number of banners and signs are limited only to what is necessary. The primary and most visible information must be event-related. The area of signage allocated to sponsor identification may not be greater than 40 per cent.

The location of all sponsorship acknowledgement, including sponsor vehicles and tents, must be shown on the site plan. The times when sponsor or media representatives will be present on site must also be provided. Sponsor products unrelated to the event must not be sold, though samples may be handed out as a form of promotion. You will find more information in the [Guidelines for Sponsor Identification at Special Events](#).

Notification Plan

Ensure all residents and businesses not involved in your event are informed and minimally impacted. For larger events, it is recommended that you consult with [neighbourhood associations](#) prior to submitting your final application.

Event organizers must provide written notification to all businesses and residents likely to be affected by sound, parking or street closures. Include contact phone numbers for event enquiries before, during and following the event. City staff will review and approve the notification letter before delivery.

Some events may require signage and broad notification through local media. Applicants are required to notify and consult in-person with management at sightseeing tour companies and Ship Point businesses for inner harbour events and festivals. Property owners affected by street closures should also be consulted. Begin consultations early (at least two months before the event) with a reminder closer to the event date. Consultation may occur after initial discussions with the Special Events team.

Personnel

Your event must have an adequate number of properly trained staff and/or volunteers. Consider identifying staff or volunteers as coordinators during your early planning. For example, a designated waste management coordinator can oversee waste operations, leaving the primary organizer to higher level planning and management.

For events in motion, such as parades and runs, volunteer marshals are essential for tasks such as barricade set up, crowd control and event safety. They must at least 16 years old, wear appropriate safety equipment. It is marshals' responsibility to help motorists and pedestrians follow the direction set by signage and barricades, not to control traffic or enter conflict situations. It is the organizers' responsibility to ensure marshals have a full understanding of their role and expectations.

Communication protocols and direction to volunteers during the event should be in place to prevent confusion and misdirection. The organizer is responsible for ensuring an adequate number of marshals are in position at all agreed times.

Waste Management and Environmental Plans

The City will empty public garbage bins in the normal course of its duties. The event organizer must arrange for waste removal and pickup of any additional garbage and recycling produced by the event and those attending it.

Events should be as environmentally friendly as possible. Applicants must outline how waste products will be reduced or substituted. Include provisions for collecting and recycling returnable and compostable materials. For events with food and merchandise vendors, describe measures for separating and collecting cardboard, glass, metal and organics. Identify and address any potential environmental risks, such as spills. Grey water collection systems may be necessary and details required. Refer to the [Zero Waste Event Guide](#) for advice and resources to help you reduce as much waste as possible.

Traffic Management

Anticipated traffic impact and mitigation

Identify the impact of your event on traffic. Submit a traffic control plan for events requesting road closures. City staff and police may assist with developing a traffic plan which minimizes disruptions to business, traffic flow and addresses event safety. Plan the times and locations of your events to avoid impacting primary access routes to neighbourhoods and businesses, and to ensure detour routes are available.

The City prioritizes pedestrians, cyclists and transit and seeks to minimize impacts to pedestrian passage, AAA cycling corridors and transit routes. Impacts to high demand pedestrian and cycling corridors need to be considered with practical temporary detours that are safe and accessible. Maintaining accessible pedestrian routes for people with disabilities is required for temporary event installations, including but not limited to temporary ramps, non-slip surfaces, high contrast materials and sufficient path widths.

Review public transit routes and bus stops to minimize disruptions to [bus services](#). Large impacts to pedestrians, cyclists or transit users need to be adequately communicated to the public well in advance.

Police support may be available for parades and other events with road closures for public safety. Police only supplement traffic control measures provided by the organizer. Event organizers should budget for contracted traffic control personnel support and other traffic control signage such as variable message boards as required by the City.

Note: Plan for emergency vehicle access which may stop, delay or otherwise interfere with your event.

Parking

Your event may require reserved parking for essential event support vehicles such as first aid and emergency services or for storage of supplies. Parking for volunteers, staff, board members and most vendors are not considered essential event support vehicles and must seek off-site parking. Special event parking signage will be installed by the City.

Road closures and detours may be needed to facilitate the safe use of streets and parking lots for event activation. Notify residents and businesses impacted by road closures and detours at least five days before parking removal. Windshield reminder notices may be distributed by the organizer the evening before the event.

Towing may be either ticket-and-tow to an impound lot at the owner's expense for those ignoring event No Parking signage, or by courtesy tow to a nearby location if the vehicle was legally parked prior to sign posting and notification. The organizer may choose to avoid potentially contentious ticketing approaches in some situations and opt for courtesy tows. For larger events with significant parking removals required (e.g., runs, parades, etc.), a representative of the applicant organization may be required to accompany a City parking ambassador on a tow route to evaluate the scope of necessary parking removals. Closures of Accessible Parking stalls require alternate temporary locations to be considered and reviewed during the event.

Vehicles, including media, are not permitted on sidewalks, paths or grass areas unless they are a functional part of the event and have been approved in advance.

Alternative Transportation

Your plan must include how participants and spectators will travel to your event. Detail how you will encourage and facilitate alternative transportation methods such as cycling (e.g., bike lockups or valet), carpooling and public transit. BC Transit may be able to provide enhanced service to and from the event site.

A schedule and plan for that includes vehicle access for set up, delivery of supplies and access for vendors must be provided.

Safety and Security

Security

The applicant is responsible for the behaviour of event participants and must ensure appropriate security measures are in place. Costs associated with police callouts may be billed to the organizer if they result from neglect to identify and mitigate risks. Emergency access points must be identified in the site plan (section 3).

Security personnel should be briefed in advance, trained and equipped to assess and intervene in situations that may arise. They should be visible and present on-site at all scheduled times and have an emergency protocol and communication plan in place.

Police may assist with developing a security plan for your event and in some cases police approval will be required.

First Aid Provision

For some events, first aid services will be required, and locations of these services must be shown on the site map. Evaluate event size, activities, demographic and risk to determine if on-site first aid services should be included. Sporting events, alcohol service, events with over 200 attendees and those involving children or the elderly usually require on-site first aid services. B.C. Emergency Health Services may require an on-site contact and unimpeded access to the site.

Safety

The site layout and installation must consider safety hazards. For example, electrical cords should be covered with cable matting and tripping hazards marked. Fire hazards should be identified, and management provisions will be approved by the Fire Department.

A minimum access corridor width of 6.1 metres must be maintained on streets and other areas identified by the Fire Department for emergency vehicle access. No materials which cannot be quickly removed or displaced (e.g., barricades) can be placed in this access corridor. Fire hydrants must also be unobstructed.

Access for persons with disabilities

Your event plan must include provisions for access for persons with disabilities or mobility challenges. Considerations should include parking and street access, pathways, washrooms and viewing areas.

Applicants must ensure their event complies with human rights provisions as described in the City's [Access to Public Facilities Policy](#).

City Services

Most events that are run by non-profit societies, and bring economic and social benefits to the community, are afforded a basic level of City support to ensure that they have access to public space that is clean and safe (e.g., police services, street cleaning, parking signage and delivery of City-owned traffic control equipment, etc.)

The availability of City services and whether costs will be waived will be determined before event approval.

Use of City Parks and Greenspaces

Additional financial assistance may be available for outdoor festivals, celebrations and events held in the City of Victoria. However, this is dependent on availability and must be approved for each event each year. Visit the [City Grants](#) webpage for more information.

The City's Parks Bylaw prohibits certain activities in parks and greenspaces. If any part of your event is situated in a park, a site meeting with the Parks Division may be needed. This will be arranged by Special Events staff. Requirements such as access to washrooms, fees for additional City garbage bins and keys to gates should be discussed at this meeting.

Police

The City may require police presence to ensure public safety. A safety and/or security plan is mandatory for large events and events requesting street closures in the downtown area. Safety and security plans must include a commitment on the part of the organizer to provide or fund sufficient resources to complement those provided by the City and successfully implement the plan.

Only police or those designated by police have authority to undertake traffic control duties in the City of Victoria. Events needing police support cannot start until the senior police officer on-site ensures that the route is secured, and all required resources are in place.

Fire

The City may require Fire Department personnel to ensure public safety. Most Fire Department requirements will be undertaken during the approval process and through any required inspections of the site setup. In some cases, Fire Department services may be requested such as providing hydrant hookups.

Street Occupancy

Summarize your specific requirements for supporting traffic, transportation and parking (e.g., parking meter numbers, lanes and lengths of streets involved).

The City's Public Works team will provide necessary traffic control equipment (e.g., barricades, lane dividers, pylons, signage) to ensure street occupancy needs are met and for the safety of the public. Unless specified in the event permit, it is the event organizer's responsibility to set up barricades at the permitted locations.

Use of Traffic Control Equipment

The City may lend organizers additional traffic control equipment, such as barricades, cones, lane dividers and safety vests, for their own deployment. A deposit for equipment may be required. Note that barricades provided by event organizers or contractors must meet WorkSafe B.C. standards.

City-owned festival equipment may be available to rent. ***A deposit and rental fees may be required in advance of the event.*** For more information see the [Equipment Rental Request](#) forms or contact the Festival & Event Coordinator at culture@victoria.ca.

Access to Water or Power

The City may be able to provide access to water or power at some sites. Specify how much power is needed and how you intend to distribute it. All safety precautions should be outlined and a [Temporary Entertainment Electrical Permit](#) may be required prior to event approval.

Insurance

Managing risk of property damage and personal injury is essential when planning your event. Identify potential risks and address them before the event.

General Liability Insurance coverage of a minimum of \$5 million is required for all events. The insurance certificate must list the City of Victoria as an additional insured, with a cross-liability clause and must be submitted to the Arts, Culture and Events team for review before a permit is issued.

By signing the Special Event Permit application form, the organizer agrees to indemnify and save harmless the City in respect of any and all claims, demands, suits and costs arising out of any act or omission of the organizer or of any servant, agent or officer of the organizer arising out of or resulting from the use of the site/route by the organizer.

For running events and other higher-risk events, waivers signed by event participants are recommended to inform them of potential risks. Both spectators and participants must be

covered by your insurance policy.

For events such as parades, ensure participants (e.g., marching bands) carry insurance that covers their liability.

General Conditions

- The organizer shall not use the site or route for any other purpose than that stated in the permit.
- Applicants must ensure their event complies with human rights provisions as described in the City's [Access to Public Facilities Policy](#).
- The organizer shall be responsible for returning the site, route and/or any City equipment to its original clean condition following the event.
- The organizer shall be liable for any damage done to the site or route or City equipment during the event.
- Nothing can be fastened to, hung from or placed in boulevard trees, planters or other City property without specific permission.
- No posters advertising the event are to be located on any public property, such as lamp posts, park benches and building walls. Posters may be taped only to poster cylinders provided on designated lamp poles downtown, or placed on private property with the owner's permission.
- Distribution of any pamphlet, handbill, flyer or other printed, typed or written matter is prohibited at the event or at any time prior to the event except as approved on the permit for notification purposes.

Additional conditions and comments will be included in the approved permit.

Cancellation

The City retains the right to cancel the event up to and including the day of the event, or at any time during the event in an emergency or if the applicant does not adhere to permit conditions (e.g., Noise Bylaw Exemption). Organizers must designate a named on-site liaison person with authority to ensure compliance with permit conditions or stop the event if necessary, at any time during the event.