

Events & Public Space Activations – Special Event Permits

The City of Alexandria is committed to facilitating a wide range of special events that highlight the diverse communities within the City. Events & Public Space Activations is a unit within Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities Office of the Arts and manages the special event permitting process for events throughout the City and manages reservations for [Oronoco Bay Park](#), [Waterfront Park](#), [King Street Gardens Park](#), and [Montgomery Park](#).

Per City Council, only the south lawn of Waterfront Park may be reserved for events not produced by the Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities, Office of Historic Alexandria, and Visit Alexandria.

[Click here](#) for information about picnic shelter and park rentals.

[Click here](#) for information about booking a wedding.

[Click here](#) for Waterfront District park rental guidelines.

[Click here](#) to find parks, community centers, trails, and more.

[Click here](#) for a list of Community Parks.

[Click here](#) for the Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Fee Schedule.

[Click here](#) for Recreation Center contact information.

[Click here](#) for information about holding yoga or fitness classes in City parks.

[Click here](#) for a printable version of this information.

What is a Special Event?

A special event is an event that restricts public access to public space and requires special permitting needs and/or support from City staff, such as Alexandria Police Department or Fire Marshal.

According to the [Special Events Policy](#), an event must be permitted as a Special Event if it is a short-term activity on public property that, due to the anticipated number of attendees or nature of the event:

- requires City services to ensure compliance with Federal, state, or local laws;
- uses city owned or managed property such as public streets, sidewalks, parking lots, alleys, parks or any other city owned/managed open space;
- completely or partially closes any public right-of way;
- requires traffic control requiring City of Alexandria Police Department or Transportation & Environmental Services personnel;
- impairs emergency vehicles access;
- or requires attendance of Emergency Management Services personnel.

Family reunions, birthday parties, and picnics should make their reservations through [RPCA's Registration and Reservations Office](#) if the reservation is not in Oronoco Bay Park, Waterfront Park, EF Pier Gazebo, King Street Gardens Park, or Montgomery Park. The Registration and Reservations Office can provide you with contact information to obtain permits for moon bounces, amplified sound, propane tanks, and tents. Picnic areas are available for rental April through October, beginning March 1 of each year.

All other events, including parades, foot races, charity walks, fundraisers, concerts, outdoor film series, or festivals in any park, should submit a [Special Event Permit Application](#).

Events & Public Space Activations; the Office of the Arts; and Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities is not responsible for activities immediately surrounding the vicinity of the area permitted for a special event or wedding. The Waterfront District is an active marina with continuous improvement projects that occur as scheduled or without notice.

What parks can I reserve through Events & Public Space Activations for Special Events?

Events & Public Space Activations oversees park rentals for:

- Oronoco Bay Park
- Waterfront Park south lawn

Community Parks cannot be reserved for private events, birthday parties, or activities. They are used on a first-come, first-serve basis. [Click here](#) for a list of Community Parks.

Parks are reserved on a first-come, first-serve basis. No holds are placed on parks for potential events or weddings. [Click here](#) for guidelines on holding events in Waterfront District parks.

If you would like to hold an event at a recreation center, please contact the [recreation center directly](#) to reserve their space.

If you would like to reserve an athletic field or outdoor court, please [Click here](#) to access the Athletic Field and Outdoor Court Request Form.

If you would like your event to take place in a public area not listed above, please name the area in your special event permit application.

How to apply for a Special Event Permit

You may apply for a Special Event Permit by submitting a [Special Event Permit Application](#) online. You will need a valid email address and credit card to pay the application fee. Only Visa and MasterCard are accepted.

Applications should be submitted at least 6 months before the event date. You may apply year-round for a Special Event Permit by submitting an online application. [Click here for the online application](#). You must upload a site map with your event application. The site map must clearly show where tents, vendors, and other elements of the event will be located. Please indicate parking and street closures on the map if you need them.

Changes to site maps and applications must be submitted for written approval.

The Special Events Committee cannot consider a permit application without a site map. [Click here](#) for an example of a site map.

If you would like to use Market Square for your event, you will also need to fill out a [Market Square Application](#).

How much does it cost to organize a special event?

A nonrefundable \$50.00 application fee is due at the time the Special Event Permit Application is submitted.

The total cost of the event will depend on which permits you need to file, if you are renting a park or City equipment, and if you need any City staff support.

[Click here](#) for the Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities Fee Schedule.

[Click here](#) for a list of estimated permit and staffing costs.

All fees must be paid at least 30 days before the event date.

When should I apply?

The Special Event Permit Application must be filed at least 180 days, or 6 months, before the event date.

What happens after I submit my application?

You will receive an email confirmation that your application has been received. If you do not receive a confirmation email that the application was submitted, then you need to resubmit the application. After your complete application and site map are received, they are considered by the Special Events Committee for approval.

If the Committee has any questions about your event, you will receive the questions by email. You may be asked to attend a Special Events Committee Meeting to talk about your event with the Committee so that your event needs are met.

Once your permit application is approved you, you will receive:

- A Fee Estimate Form detailing an estimate of permitting and City staff costs
- A Special Event Permit Checklist that provides contact information for each City Department you need to contact to file your permits. All permits needed for the event must be filed at least 30 days before the event date.

You will return the signed Special Event Permit Checklist to Events & Public Space Activations after you have filed all required permits and contacted the required departments. Your Special Event Permit will be issued after the completed and signed checklist has been received.

For more information about the Special Event Permit Application process, please [email the Event Permit Manager](#) (insert maureen.sturgill@alexandriava.gov).

How do I reserve a park for a wedding?

Weddings taking place in Oronoco Bay Park and EF Pier Gazebo must be reserved using the [Park Rental Form](#). The form and a site map of how your wedding will be set up must be completed, printed, and emailed to the Torpedo Factory Art Center Event Rental Coordinator at _____.

There is a \$50.00 application fee and payment can be made either online or with a check made payable to the City of Alexandria. You will be contacted after your park rental form and site map have been received to set up a payment option. Your reservation will not be processed until the \$50.00 application fee is paid.

You will not receive a Park Rental Permit until all park rental and permit fees are paid in full. Fees must be paid in full at least 30 days before the date of the wedding.

Fitness and Yoga Classes in Parks

There are options for outside groups/trainers/instructors interested in holding fitness or yoga classes in parks:

- If the program or class is free and offered in a park or recreation center, the person or business must enter into a [PARKnership](#) agreement with the Department.
- If the person or business is charging a fee for the class, they will need to [become a contractor](#) with the City.
- If the person or business is not interested in contracting with the City, they will need to file a [Special Event Permit Application](#) or reserve a park through the [Registration & Reservations Office](#), depending on which park they would like to reserve.

Important Information

[Special Events Policies and Procedures](#)

[Online Special Event Permit Application](#)

[Park Rental Form](#)

[Weddings on the Waterfront](#)

[Special Events Guidelines and Permit Requirements](#)

[Fitness and Yoga Classes in Parks](#)

[Calendar of Events & Activities](#)

[City Concerts](#)

[Parking in Old Town](#)