



Customer Guide to Special Events & Permitting

City of Sarasota
Office of Special Events

801 North Tamiami Trail
Sarasota, FL 34236

941-263-6283
SpecialEvents@SarasotaFL.gov

www.SarasotaFL.gov



Welcome!

Thank you for your interest in hosting a special event in the charming City of Sarasota.

Special events are cherished in the City because they are engaging and bring harmony to the community. These events support the vibrant lifestyles within our diverse downtown locations.

The Office of Special Events is here to assist you navigate through the special event permitting process to help maintain safe, welcoming, and accessible events to the public.

We have created the Special Events Guide to help you easily plan and implement a successful event.

Please review the information in the guidebook then feel free to contact us when you are ready to move forward with your event.

Sincerely,

City of Sarasota
Office of Special Events
specialevents@sarasotafl.gov
(941) 263 - 6283

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What is considered a “Special Event”?

A special event is any organized activity occurring on city-owned property or within city-maintained right-of-ways for which the organizer requests the use of city services above and beyond the ordinary everyday use, or which requires a commercial vending permit, pursuant to section 23-3.6 of the [City of Sarasota Municipal Code](#).

Special events may include, but are not limited to the following examples: carnivals, ceremonies, community events, concerts, cultural events, educational events, historical events, public assemblies, street festivals/fairs, or other planned group activities which require coordination of several city departments or other agencies. This includes events with the consumption of alcohol, on-site cooking, food sales, or large-scale temporary structures.

» ***The City of Sarasota does not issue Special Event Permits for the portions of a special event venue that are the land management responsibility of other jurisdictions, located exclusively on outdoor private property when City public property is not a part of the venue, and facilities.***

All special events require a special event application to be completed by the event organizer, also known as the sponsor, and approved by the City of Sarasota Office of Special Events. The application will undergo the review process and is contingent on the scope of the event and services requested by the City. Submission and acceptance of the special event application is not to be construed as an approval of the request for permit. The special event application is subject to the [municipal code 29-6.5 – Standards for approving, with or without conditions, or denying special event permit](#).

Upon approval, a special event permit will be issued that grants the applicant permission to host their function within the parameters outlined on the finalized application.

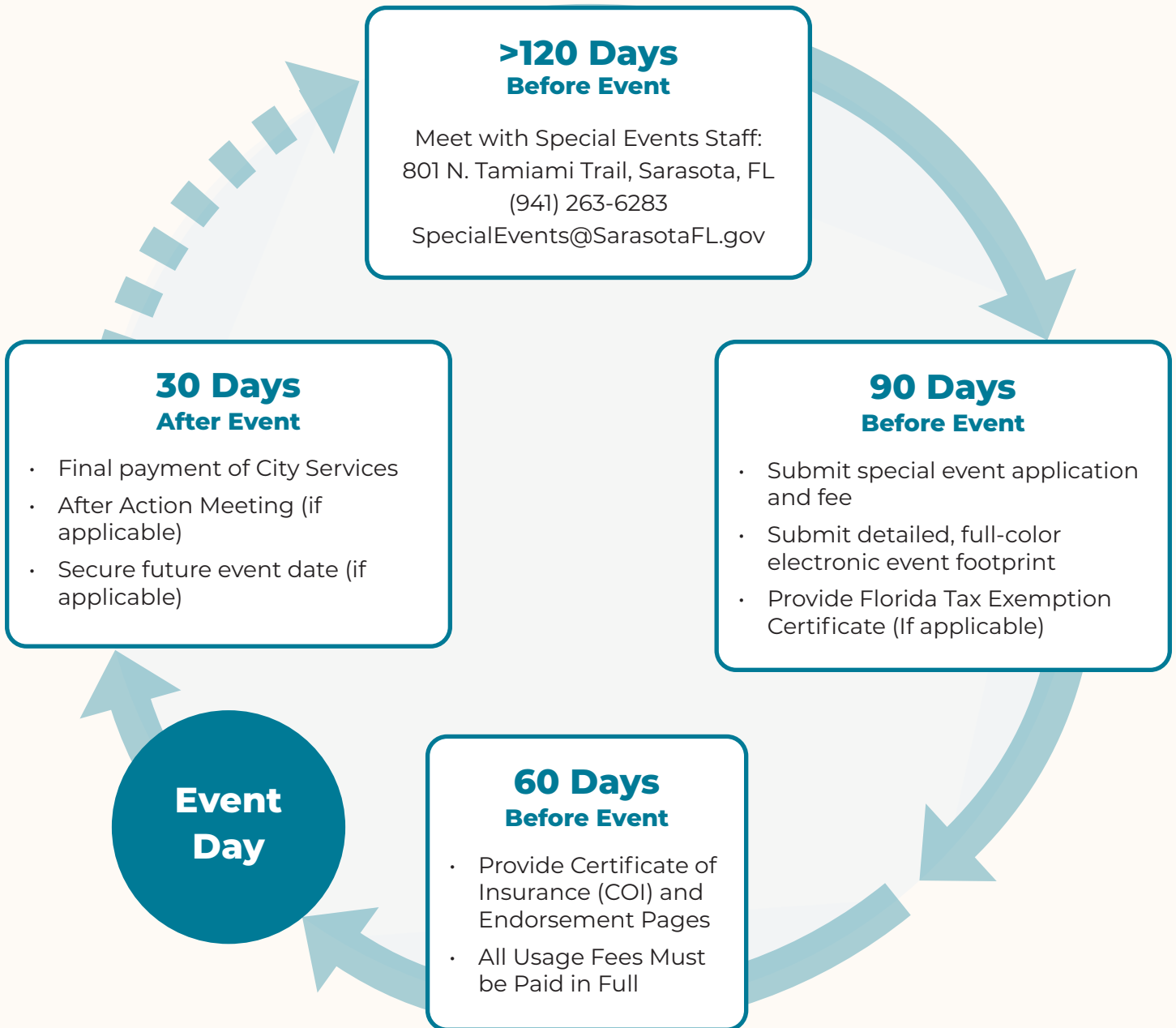


Special Event Application

The [Special Event Application](#) is designed to ensure event organizers are fully knowledgeable and comply with all local, state, and federal codes, laws, policies, and regulations along with providing supporting documents, permits, and communications.

Sponsors/organizers are responsible to assess the event site, provide estimated number of attendees, and consider event components of the proposed event to properly develop and implement management strategies that ensure the safety of participants, neighboring residents and businesses, and the surrounding environment impacted by the event.

Special Events Timeline:



Application Submittal Deadline

The [City of Sarasota Municipal Code](#) requires permit applications to be submitted no later than ninety (90) days prior to the actual date of your event. The Code allows applications to be submitted as early as three hundred sixty-four (364) days except events that were permitted the previous year may submit a special event reservation request no more than three hundred seventy-four (374) days in advance. At the sole discretion of the City of Sarasota, you may be authorized to submit written changes to your initial permit application due to unique or varying circumstances related to the event.

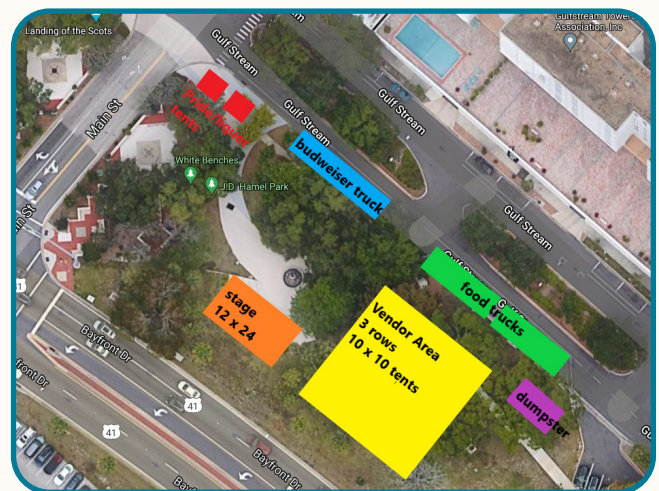
Changes to your permit application must be submitted to the Office of Special Events. Information requested by a designated reviewing authority (i.e. Risk Management, Public Works, Sarasota Police Department, etc.) that clarifies information already provided in the permit application must be submitted directly to the [Office of Special Events](#) prior to sending to the sponsor/organizer.

Applications must be complete.

Under the provisions of the [Special Events Ordinance](#), a person or persons may seek a special event permit from the Office of Special Events. The submitted application must be fully and accurately completed before it goes through the review process. All required information and supporting documentation must be submitted at least ninety (90) days prior to the event.

For an application to be considered complete, applicants must submit the following minimum information required in sections of the Special Event Permit Application along with the **\$50 non-refundable application fee**:

- **Event Summary Section**
 - Name of the event
 - Dates and times to include set-up and breakdown times
 - Requested street closures
 - Estimated total attendance
 - Sponsor/Organizer Information
 - Two (2) on-site event contacts with cell phone numbers
- **Description of Event** (All aspects that relate to the specific event)
- **Detailed Event Footprint**
 - Digital version of event area including names of streets and/or parks that will hold the event. Google Maps is the preferred method for clarity and consistency.
 - Location and dimensions of all equipment being placed within footprint including, but not limited to stages, vendor booths, signs, barricades, port-o-lets, and tables
 - Location of alcohol booths/tents, if applicable
 - Fencing outline, if applicable
 - Locations of generators
- **Signature Sections**
 - **Any required documentation relevant to the permit application processes and requirements set forth in the Special Events Planning Guide and Special Event Permit Application.**



Applicants are responsible for obtaining all permits, authorization and/or exemptions required by other agencies with jurisdiction for any element of the event (e.g. Alcohol Beverage Control Permits, Health Permits, U.S. Coast Guard, etc.).

City of Sarasota Customer Guide to Special Events and Permitting

Insurance Requirements:

The City of Sarasota requires copies of the Declaration Page and Special Endorsement with "The City of Sarasota" indicated as the named insured and an original Certificate of Insurance.

Minimums for ALL EVENTS:

- General liability: \$1,000,000 each occurrence
- \$2,000,000 general aggregate
- Property damage: \$100,000 per occurrence
- Alcohol coverage: \$1,000,000 per occurrence (if alcohol is served or made available)

Description of Operations:

- Specific Name of Event or Type of Activity (i.e. Earth Day, Walk America, etc.)
- Date(s) of Event (include rain dates, if any)
- Location of Event (i.e. Bayfront Park; 1565 First Street; 1400 block of Main Street, etc.)

Additional Considerations:

- For parade/walks/runs, location is not essential, but is desirable – a general location may be used for these types of events (i.e downtown, Lido Key, from Van Wezel to Lido Pavilion, 1300 through 1800 blocks of Main Street; etc.)
- "City of Sarasota" should be named as "Additional Insured."
- Certificate Holder Should Be Listed As: *City of Sarasota, 1565 First Street, Sarasota, FL 34236*

Sample Certificate of Insurance (COI):

ACORD		CERTIFICATE OF LIABILITY INSURANCE		DATE (MM/DD/YYYY)														
<p><small>THIS CERTIFICATE IS ISSUED AS A MATTER OF INFORMATION ONLY AND CONFERS NO RIGHTS UPON THE CERTIFICATE HOLDER. THIS CERTIFICATE DOES NOT AFFIRMATIVELY OR NEGATIVELY AMEND, EXTEND OR ALTER THE COVERAGE AFFORDED BY THE POLICIES BELOW. THIS CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A CONTRACT BETWEEN THE ISSUING INSURER(S), AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE OR PRODUCER, AND THE CERTIFICATE HOLDER.</small></p> <p>IMPORTANT: If the certificate holder is an ADDITIONAL INSURED, the policy(ies) must have ADDITIONAL INSURED provisions or be endorsed. If SUBROGATION IS WAIVED, subject to the terms and conditions of the policy, certain policies may require an endorsement. A statement on this certificate does not confer rights to the certificate holder in lieu of such endorsement(s).</p>																		
PRODUCER Insurance Company Info		INSURER(S) AFFORDING COVERAGE INSURER A: Insurance Company CONTACT INFO INSURER B: INSURER C: INSURER D: INSURER E:																
INSURED The Sponsor's Name & Address		INSURER(S) CONTACT INFO NAME: PHONE (A/C, H, Ext): FAX (A/C, No): MAIL ADDRESS: NAIC #																
COVERAGES		CERTIFICATE NUMBER:		REVISION NUMBER:														
<p><small>THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE POLICIES OF INSURANCE LISTED BELOW HAVE BEEN ISSUED TO THE INSURED NAMED ABOVE FOR THE POLICY PERIOD INDICATED. NOTWITHSTANDING ANY REQUIREMENT, TERM OR CONDITION OF ANY CONTRACT OR OTHER DOCUMENT WITH RESPECT TO WHICH THIS CERTIFICATE MAY BE ISSUED OR MAY PERTAIN, THE INSURANCE AFFORDED BY THE POLICIES DESCRIBED HEREIN IS SUBJECT TO ALL THE TERMS, EXCLUSIONS AND CONDITIONS OF SUCH POLICIES. LIMITS SHOWN MAY HAVE BEEN REDUCED BY PAID CLAIMS.</small></p>																		
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UMBRELLA LIAB EXCESS LIAB					EACH OCCURRENCE \$ AGGREGATE \$													
WORKERS COMPENSATION AND EMPLOYERS LIABILITY APPLICABLE TO THE OPERATIONS? Y N N/A (Mandatory in FL) IF APPLICABLE, INDICATE: RESIDENTIAL OPERATIONS, TRADE					EL. EACH ACCIDENT \$ EL. DISEASE - EA EMPLOYEE \$ EL. DISEASE - POLICY LIMIT \$													
A Liquor Liability IF Applicable					Ea. Occurrence \$1,000,000 Gen Agg. \$2,000,000													
<p><small>DESCRIPTION OF OPERATIONS / LOCATIONS / VEHICLES (ACORD 101. Additional Remarks Schedule, may be attached if more space is required)</small></p> City of Sarasota is added as an additional insured but only with the respects to the operations of the named insured during the policy period. Event: EVENT NAME Hosted by: SPONSOR NAME Date: EVENT DATE Location: EVENT LOCATION																		
CERTIFICATE HOLDER City of Sarasota c/o Special Events Office 1565 First Street Sarasota, FL 34236		CANCELLATION SHOULD ANY OF THE ABOVE DESCRIBED POLICIES BE CANCELLED BEFORE THE EXPIRATION DATE THEREOF, NOTICE WILL BE DELIVERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE POLICY PROVISIONS. AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE SPONSOR																

Sample Declaration Page:

POLICY NUMBER: U	COMMERCIAL GENERAL LIABILITY
THIS ENDORSEMENT CHANGES THE POLICY. PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY.	
ADDITIONAL INSURED - DESIGNATED PERSON OR ORGANIZATION	
This endorsement modifies insurance provided under the following:	
COMMERCIAL GENERAL LIABILITY COVERAGE PART	
SCHEDULE	
Name Of Additional Insured Person(s) Or Organization(s) Event NAME City of Sarasota City of Sarasota C/O Special Events Office 1565 First Street Sarasota, FL 34238	
Information required to complete this Schedule, if not shown above, will be shown in the Declarations.	
<p>Section II. Who Is An Insured is amended to include as an additional insured the person(s) or organization (s) shown in the Schedule, but only with respect to liability for "bodily injury", "property damage" or "personal and advertising injury" caused, in whole or in part, by your acts or omissions or the acts or omissions of those acting on your behalf:</p> <p>A. In the performance of your ongoing operations; or</p> <p>B. In connection with your premises owned by or rented to you.</p>	
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Sarasota Police Department Extra Duty Officers

[Sarasota Police Department](#) will determine if and how many extra duty officers are needed based on several planning variables including: the estimated number of attendees; the availability of alcoholic beverages; event location; time of day during which the special event is conducted; the need for street closures or rerouting of vehicular or pedestrian traffic; and history of event.



Events requiring road closures or involving alcohol are required to hire extra duty officers for the safety of the attendees. If extra duty officers are required, SPD will provide staffing requirements and a application to be completed by the sponsor/organizer.

Application Fees

The following Special Event Fee Schedule has been approved by the City Commission of the City of Sarasota:

- **General:** The fee charged to the applicant/sponsor shall include the time needed for setup and teardown of their event or other use. The sponsor/representative shall be present for the duration of the usage period. Overage of allotted time shall result in additional charges.
- **Application fee:** *A non-refundable \$50 fee is due at time of submission* to review all Special Event Request applications. **NO SPECIAL EVENT APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED LESS THAN 30 DAYS PRIOR TO THE EVENT.**
- **Restricted Events or those with a For-profit Sponsor:**
 - Special events that include the restriction of the public into an event (public must pay a fee to attend event), or are sponsored by a for-profit organization, will be charged a permitting fee of \$33 per hour per 10,000 square feet of event space, or \$415, whichever is greater.
- **Events open to the public with a Non-Profit Sponsor:**

Event Categories:	Daily Rate:
Small event (less than 3 acres) in a Public Park	\$415
Medium event (3-6 acres) in a Public Park	\$830
Large event (6 plus acres) in a Public Park	\$1,660
Small Event (less than 3 acres) with Street Closures	\$515
Medium event (3-6 acres) with Street Closures	\$830
Large event (6 plus acres) with Street Closures	\$1,660
Linear Runs 5K-10K with Street Closures	\$1,100
Linear Runs greater than 10K with Street Closures	\$2,500



Application Fees (Continued)

- **Events longer than three days** will continue to accrue permitting fees at the One (1) Day Event Flat Rate.
- **City Co-sponsored Special Events:** Special events co-sponsored by the City of Sarasota shall adhere to the established special event guidelines.
- **Sound Permit Fee:** A sound permit fee grants a waiver of City Ordinance #03-4416 shall be available for \$50. All conditions of the sound permit must be adhered to by the sponsor/organizer.
- **Sales Tax:** Applicable sales tax may apply and must be added to the fees for Event Sponsors.
- **Security Deposit:** A security deposit for Public Works and Police services is due 31 days prior to event. The amount of the deposit (\$500-\$10,000) will be determined by the size of the event and activities included in the event. Security deposit will be refunded upon payment of city services.
- **Non-refundable reservation fee:** City of Parks and Urban Spaces Reservation Form and License Agreement must be accompanied by a non-refundable \$500 Reservation Fee to secure a date and location. However, if an applicant sponsors four (4) or more events during a calendar year, they may keep a rolling \$1,000 deposit to cover all of their events with the understanding that if they cancel any event they shall forfeit \$500. The \$500 shall be replenished immediately or the deficit in the rolling deposit shall be a basis for revocation of the permit.
- **Late Filing Fee:** Special Event applications that are received less than 90 days prior to the event date will be subject to the following late fees:
 - **\$250 – Special Event application received 89 to 60 days prior to the event.**
 - **\$500 – Special Event application received 59 to 30 days prior to the event.**
- **Change order fee:** Revisions made to the Special Event application after the date of submittal will be charged a \$50 change order fee.

Cancellations and Refunds

- Cancellation of a Scheduled Special event will be allowed a full refund minus the \$500 reservation fee and the \$50 application fee when occurring 30 days or more prior to the event date. Cancellation of a scheduled event will not be provided a refund of any fees when occurring less than 30 days prior to the event date. A special exception will be made for extreme weather events.
- The security deposit will be refunded upon verification by city staff that the rental area has been returned in the same condition as that prior to use and after payment for any additional city services has been paid. In the event of damages, the applicant will be responsible for all costs associated with damages to park facilities, equipment, furnishings, grounds and right-of-way, including but not limited to labor, materials and equipment required to complete repairs.

Other Costs and Fees

- In addition to the permit application fee, you may be assessed other city permit fees, department rates and fees, costs and fees associated with resources provided to your event by a city department, program or division, as well as fines that may be assessed by the city for the cost to repair and/or restore any public property damaged by an event receiving benefits under the provisions of the Special Events Ordinance.
- A cost estimate for event usage and City Public Works will be prepared by the Office of Special Events for each event based on information submitted in the Special Event Application. Upon the applicant's agreement to pay all associated event costs, the event coordination and permit process will begin. A security deposit of 15% of Public Works Fees or a minimum of \$500 will be assessed.

City Service Fees that may be Applicable for a Special Event:

Building:

- Tents over 30 x 30 Feet:
 - 1st Tent (\$75.00 to Building Dept., \$25.00 to Zoning Dept.): **\$100**
 - Additional Tents: **\$10 Each**
- Right of Way Permit - Sidewalk/Street Closure: **\$50**
- Temporary Valet Permit (2 Days): **\$50**

City Service Fees that may be applicable for a Special Event (Continued):

Risk Management:

- Insurance Certificate Review ***Included with application fee***

Police:

TBD

- Estimate to be provided by Police Department. Police services and costs will be decided on an individual basis once the event is evaluated. ******Event applications received less than 30 days will result in off-duty Officer rates of time and a half.***

Public Works:

- Trash Containers – Each, per day, per dump **\$30**
- Recycling Containers – Each, per day, per dump **\$30**
- Electrical Usage - Special Events **\$280**
- Electric Sub Panel Setup **\$25**

Please Note:

- Barricades, Traffic Cones, Message & Arrow Boards are the responsibility of the Sponsor.
- Proof such as copy of the barricade contract is required.
- All should be placed accurately as indicated by the Maintenance of Traffic plan provided by the City of Sarasota Engineering Department.
- Electrical cords, adaptors, accessories, etc. are the responsibility of the Sponsor
- Emergency call out of City Personnel - \$200 minimum
- The type and amount of Public Works services required for a special event will be decided on an individual basis once each event is evaluated by City Staff.

Fees are subject to change without notice.

DENIAL OR REJECTION OF A SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT APPLICATION

The Office of Special Events may reject or deny a permit application on one or more of the following:

- Failure to apply within the time periods outlined in [City of Sarasota Ordinance 14-5095](#)
- The applicant has not tendered the Security deposit, flat rate permit fee, or certificate of liability insurance thirty-one (31) days in advance of the proposed event date.
- The special event request (including any required attachments and submissions) was not executed properly or is incomplete.
- The application contains material misrepresentation or fraudulent information.
- The applicant owes the City of Sarasota money from another event, services provided or damages to city property.
- The Office of Special Events has already received a completed application and given preliminary approval for the same date and or space.
- If the use or the event would conflict with previously planned programs organized and conducted by the city or non-governmental agencies previously scheduled for the same time and place.
- The applicant does not comply with all applicable city ordinances, traffic rules, park rules and regulations, state health laws fire codes and liquor licensing regulations.
- The use or event proposed by the applicant would present an unreasonable danger to health or safety of the public or applicant.
- If the applicant cannot comply with applicable local, state and federal requirements for all or part of the planned event.
- If the use or activity is inconsistent with the classification or uses of the public park or area pursuant to [Sarasota City Code Section 22.5](#)
- The special event requires the closure of a right-of-way and the applicant has not obtained a right-of-way usage permit as required under [Sarasota City Code Section 30-21 or 30-23](#).
- The sponsor of the special event intends to have commercial vending but has not obtained a commercial vending permit as required under Sarasota City Code Section 23-3.5.
- The City is unable to provide the services required by the applicant to conduct the event

Additional Standards, Restrictions and Requirements for events in St. Armand's Circle Park:

- The Office of Special Events shall not issue special event or park permits for events to be held during the time period from February 1st through April 30th.
- During the remainder of the year, no more than one special event shall be permitted in St. Armand's Circle Park per weekend and no more than one two (2) special event shall be permitted in St. Armand's Circle Park except for the months of January and October, when no more than three (3) events per month shall be permitted.
- No activities associated with the event (including set up and removal) shall take place in the park prior to 7:00 am or after 11:00 pm.
- Storage of materials and equipment for the special event shall not occur more than one day prior to the commencement of the event and all materials and equipment placed in the park for the event must be removed not later than one day after the event.
- No special event shall cause the closure of lanes of traffic on St. Armand's Circle or shall re-direct traffic from its normal flow around the Circle.
- When a reservation request for a special in St. Armand's Circle Park is filed with the Special Events Office, notification shall be given to the St. Armand's Residents Association, St. Armand's Circle Association and the St. Armand's Business Improvement District via email that the request has been filed.
- No special event permit shall be approved sooner than forty (40) days from the date that the notice of the reservation request was emailed to the aforementioned parties.
- The Office of Special Events shall approve, approve with conditions, or deny any request for a special event permit, based upon the applicable standards contained in this section. In the event of a denial, the office of special events shall specify the standards under the is section that the decision was based upon. These findings shall be provided in writing, with specificity, to the applicant.

Emergency Medical Services

If the sponsor requires the need of emergency medical services, it is the responsibility of sponsor to secure services with the [Sarasota County Fire Department](#).

Tent Permits

A tent with a square footage in excess of 900 square feet (30' x 30') requires a tent permit from [City of Sarasota Development Services](#).

Fireworks/Pyrotechnic Displays and Drones

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulates the airspace for a distance up to five miles from the SRQ Airport as such, is the determining authority on anything that would be released or displayed into or near an airport's airspace which could affect aircraft navigation. Such items can be as varied as balloons, fireworks, laser lights, search lights, smoke makers, sky lanterns, doves, butterflies, and event feathers. The FAA has a process of notification of approval which event organizers must follow well in advance (preferably 30 days) of the actual event. In addition, the FAA will require that event organizers notify the local airport authority so they can inform local air traffic of the upcoming event.



Regarding search light displays and fireworks, the FAA also requires advanced notification based on its specific location and height. The FAA also has specific "Request for Fireworks Display" form available online. Commercial Fireworks operators are usually familiar with this process but at times fail to notify the airport. For the fireworks, the FAA can be contacted at: 9-ATO-ESA-OSG-Fireworks@faa.gov.

Sponsor will be required to provide firework permit number to Special Events Office, prior to obtaining approval of event.

Regarding drones, the FAA has taken a strong stand against their use near airports. The FAA defines drones as model airplanes and prohibits them from flying near an airport without permission from air traffic controllers. Drones are prohibited from flying more than 400 feet above ground and are not permitted to fly overpopulated areas where there is an increased risk of injury from a model plane to crash.

Amplified Sound

If an event plans to have a band or amplified sound, the applicant will ensure compliance with the [Noise Ordinance 10-4905](#) established by the City of Sarasota. Amplified sound is defined as any sound projected or transmitted by artificial means, including, but not limited to, loudspeakers, amplifiers, beat box, compact disc or digital media device, or similar devices. A sound permit approval does not allow for the sound to exceed 100 decibels. Events held between Thursday – Saturday the sound level is to be reduced to 65 decibels by midnight. Events held between Sunday – Wednesday the sound level is to be reduced to 65 decibels by 10 pm.



Temporary Alcoholic Beverage Sales

Florida registered non-profit organizations can download the Liquor License application from [Alcohol, Beverage and Tobacco](#). A copy of the approved temporary alcohol permit must be submitted to the Office of Special Events at least 20 business days prior to the event date.

Waste Management/Recycling

The special event applicant is required to provide adequate number of trash receptacles and recycle containers during the special event. Applicants will be required to comply with [City of Sarasota Recycling and Solid Waste Ordinance](#) as outlined in the Recycle Agreement that must be signed as part of the event application.

Electrical Services

The existing electrical service at a park or in the city right-of-way may be inadequate for certain special events or not available. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that there is adequate electrical capacity to hold the event and to obtain additional electrical supply if needed. Any damage to existing electrical services due to overload will be the responsibility of the applicant. Special event sponsors will be required to complete and Electrical Usage Detail form stating what the electric will be needed for with proper amp notated.

Portable Restrooms

The Florida Department of Health has detailed requirements specifying the number of portable restroom units needed at special events based on the anticipated number of attendees. Additionally, one hand washing station is required for every 10 portable restroom units and one ADA compliant portable restroom for every 20 units. Portable restrooms at special events must be serviced at least daily. The [Florida Department of Health Chart](#) below will assist in the planning process.

Number of Portable Restrooms Required for Special Events
(Number of People per day per Number of Hours for Event per day):

People Per Day:	1 Hour	2 Hours	3 Hours	4 Hours	5 Hours	6 Hours	7 Hours	8 Hours	9 Hours
250	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3
500	2	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
1,000	4	5	6	7	7	8	8	8	8
2,000	6	10	12	13	14	14	14	15	15
3,000	9	14	17	19	20	21	21	21	21
4,000	12	19	23	25	28	28	28	28	28
5,000	15	23	30	32	34	36	36	36	36
6,000	17	28	34	38	40	42	42	42	44
7,000	20	32	40	44	46	48	50	50	50
8,000	23	38	46	50	54	57	57	58	58
9,000	26	42	52	56	60	62	62	62	64
10,000	30	46	57	63	66	70	70	72	72
12,500	36	58	72	80	84	88	88	88	88
15,000	44	70	84	96	100	105	105	110	110
17,500	50	80	100	110	115	120	125	125	126
20,000	57	92	115	125	132	138	138	144	144
25,000	72	115	144	154	168	175	175	176	176
30,000	88	138	168	192	200	208	208	216	216

Parking

Each applicant should arrange for adequate parking for the event and should have a parking and traffic plan that addresses traffic control, safety and security for the proposed event. Special Event applicants are encouraged to speak with the [City of Sarasota Parking Management Division](#) to discuss appropriate parking for events.

Accessibility

As referenced at the [Cornell University Human Resources website](#), disabilities are physical or mental impairments that limit one or more major life activities, such as walking, seeing, or hearing. Disabilities present themselves in many forms. Some are visible but most are not apparent. Non-visible disabilities include partial sensory impairments, such as low vision or hearing loss, chronic medical conditions, mental health conditions, and learning disabilities.



For persons with disabilities, inclusion means designing an event that is free of barriers so that they can participate fully. One important aspect of being a caring community is thinking about how a person's disability will affect his or her attendance and enjoyment of a program or workshop and planning so that he or she will feel welcomed and valued.

Planning for access in advance will optimize the opportunity for a well-planned accessible event and minimize the need to make last minute changes. Sponsors are responsible under federal and state laws to ensure full access for program participants. A well-planned event ensures the participation of all.

It is the obligation of the sponsor to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities. Taking the necessary steps to make an event accessible for all the participants can be easy when done in the early stages of planning. Pre-planning for comprehensive accessibility often reduces the need for individual accommodations.

There is no single way to provide accessibility, and the type of need may differ among persons with the same condition. It is often necessary to explore access alternatives and to consult with the individual who needs access to determine how best to accommodate for a specific circumstance. Every type of program, meeting, exhibit, tour, and event must consider the access needs of persons with disabilities.

There is also an obligation to ensure accessibility to events being held at any location. If you are involved with coordinating the use of outdoor space with external groups, you should discuss whose responsibility it will be to ensure accessibility and accommodations.

Sponsors are responsible for planning and providing for the accessibility needs of participants with disabilities at any event. Planning for accessibility will maximize the opportunity for all to participate and minimize the need for last minute, and perhaps costly changes.

The costs associated with disability access are considered part of the overall expense of the event. Sponsors should include the expense of any anticipated accommodations as a budget item in the event planning. Most accommodations can be made at little or no cost, such as choosing a wheelchair accessible venue for the event. Accommodations such as sign language interpreting will incur a cost. Sponsors who think the cost of the accommodations cannot be supported by the event should discuss alternative funding sources.



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