



Title: PICKETS, PROTESTS, & DEMONSTRATIONS POLICY		
Subject: HUMAN RESOURCES & LEGAL AFFAIRS	Page: 1 of 5	Policy Number: 06.50.00
Category: DISTRICTWIDE POLICY	Approval Date: 08/26/2014	Last Revised Date: 06/13/2018

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Forest Preserve District of Cook County (*the "District"*) serves Cook County residents and visitors, including those with different perspectives, identities, cultures, and backgrounds. The District respects the freedoms and rights of every individual. Some of the individual rights and freedoms include that of free speech, the right to peaceably assemble, the right to petition the government for a redress of grievances, and the right to association. Such rights and freedoms of expression come with a responsibility to welcome and promote this freedom for all, even in disagreement or opposition.

The rights of freedom of expression at the District include peaceful protests and orderly demonstrations. At the same time, the District has long recognized that the rights to Demonstrate does not include the right to engage in conduct that disrupts the District operations, violates the District Code of Ordinances or any other relevant laws, or endangers the safety of others. The District expects that those who enjoy the opportunity for open discourse (*i.e. picketing, protesting, or demonstrating*) also accept the responsibility for maintaining order and discipline.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this document is to set out the District policies, procedures, and guidelines regarding Demonstrations.

AFFECTED AREAS:

This policy applies to all District employees, volunteers, stewards, community service workers, partners, and District guests/visiting public, including those involved in Demonstrations.

Application of this policy does not preclude the application of other District policies, ordinances, permitting rules, or other regulations as may be warranted by a given situation.

DEFINITIONS:

Demonstration: A public assembly, a meeting or gathering, a rally or protest event, a demonstration, a picket line, speechmaking, and all other like forms of conduct, the primary purposes of which is expressive activity or the communication or expression of views or grievances, and the conduct of which has the effect, intent, or propensity to draw a crowd and/or onlookers.

Disruptive Behavior: Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to: **(1)** directly or indirectly preventing a speaker from speaking - even for a brief period of time; **(2)** seizing control of a public forum for one's own purposes; **(3)** blocking; obstructing or impeding passage of a person or vehicle; **(4)** actions that result in bodily harm; **(5)** erecting or placing of obstructions that result in depriving others of their rights; **(6)** unlawful activity; **(7)** destruction of property including, but not limited to, the flora, fauna, and scenic beauties within the District; **(8)** failure to comply with District ordinance, policy, or permit instructions and rules; and/or **(9)** obstruction of the normal operations of the District.

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Permit: A written authorization issued by the District for events or activities including, but not limited to, Demonstrations (defined above) involving 25 or more persons under stated terms and conditions.

Permittee: The person or entity to whom a permit is issued.

PROCEDURE/PROCESS:

1) Demonstrations With No Permit:

- a. All Demonstrations with twenty-five (25) or more individuals require a permit.
- b. Those participating in Demonstrations on District property with less than twenty-five (25) individuals must comply with District policies and other relevant laws, including not conducting any disruptive behavior (*Please refer to section F of this procedure*).
- c. Those utilizing a bullhorn, tents (*larger than 10x10*), amplified sound, lights, overflow parking and/or generators require a special use permit.
- d. If a District employee knows of a Demonstration on District property, regardless of the number of participants, they shall immediately: **(a)** Inform their supervisor; **(b)** Inform the District- Dept. of Permits, Rentals & Concessions; and, **(c)** Inform the District- Law Enforcement Department.

2) Permit Requirements:

- a. A permit is required for all Demonstrations of twenty-five (25) people or more.
- b. All related permits are charged the appropriate special event rate, as stated in the District Code: Fee Schedule- Section 7-1-1, not including any additional fees or fines.
- c. The District - Department of Permits, Rentals & Concessions should be contacted by the individual/entity completing the permit application to discuss Demonstration-specific regulations, location opportunities and/or requests, and, other safety related issues.

3) Locations:

- a. Permittees may request specific District permitted locations for the site of their Demonstrations.
- b. The location of all approved Demonstrations shall be determined or approved by the District in accordance with this policy.
- c. District employees shall take into consideration the following when determining or approving locations of these Demonstrations:
 1. Other scheduled events;
 2. Nature of the event and/or the demonstration;
 3. Site specific location requests (no road-side or non-permitted locations);
 4. Security needs of the event and/or the demonstration;
 5. Time of the event and/or the demonstration; and/or
 6. Any other necessary considerations
- d. Demonstrations may not block access to a venue, place of employment, or other visited property.

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- e. Demonstrations may not harm the flora, fauna, or scenic beauties within the District.

4) **Time and Duration:**

- a. Permittees may request specific times and durations for their Demonstrations.
- b. The time and duration of all approved Demonstrations shall be determined or approved by the District in accordance with this policy.
- c. District employees shall take into consideration the following when determining or approving time and duration of these Demonstrations:
 1. Other scheduled events;
 2. Nature of the event and/or the demonstration;
 3. Security needs of the event and/or the demonstration;
 4. Time of the event and/or the demonstration;
 5. Any other necessary considerations; and/or
 6. District general operating hours of sunset to sunrise.

5) **General Requirements:**

- a. Demonstrations utilizing pickets, large items, bullhorns, or other loud or amplified sound making devices are usually confined to the exterior of buildings so as not to disrupt regular and essential operation of the District or create health and safety issues. Use of such devices may result in additional fees pursuant to the District Code.
- b. The use of District utilities (power, water, etc.) is prohibited for all demonstrations.
- c. Distribution of materials such as leaflets may not be confrontational and must allow people to decline to receive the materials.
- d. Organizers must remove all items and materials at the end of the Demonstration.
- e. Demonstrators may not mark or use trees or District structures to support or display signs, messages, materials, or equipment without prior approval of the District - Department of Permits, Rentals & Concessions.

6) **Public Safety:**

- a. The District may determine when behavior is being disruptive.
- b. Permittee should explain to other organizational members, guests, or other demonstrators the implications for failing to comply with District policies.
- c. Permittee should attempt to gain cooperation or control of their event by asking those responsible for being disruptive to stop or leave the District.
- d. District Law Enforcement or other employees have the authority to respond to acts of violence, threats of violence, or overcrowding without first contacting the event hosts.

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- e. Furthermore, a protester or demonstrator that significantly disrupts the operations of the District, or fails to adhere to permitting rules or District Law Enforcement instructions, may be discharged from the District property, and/or incur other legal repercussions.

7) Employee Participation in Demonstrations:

- a. The District does not bar its employees from participating in Demonstrations and/or other similar related activities when they are off duty.
- b. Only authorized employees may speak on behalf of the District.
- c. Employee violations of this policy may be subject to discipline.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Department of Permits, Rentals & Concessions: The Department of Permits, Rentals & Concession shall: **(1)** manage the permit process for all Demonstrations for which a permit is warranted; **(2)** assist in determining locations and parameters for all approved Demonstrations; **(3)** ensure that the General Superintendent, Chief Attorney, Director of Communications, and, Chief of Police are notified for all relevant permit application requests and approved permits involving Demonstrations; and, **(4)** be proactive in consulting and collaborating with District administrative leaders, and relative departments, of the identified strategies and plans for specific Demonstrations for which a permit is or will be issued.

District Employees: District employees are required **(1)** to comply with this policy; and, **(2)** to notify the District Law Enforcement Department if they become aware of any Demonstration.

Law Enforcement Department: The Law Enforcement Department shall: **(1)** assist in determining locations and parameters for all approved Demonstrations; **(2)** ensure that all related Demonstrations comply with this policy; **(3)** have available Law-Enforcement officers available to monitor, periodically or continually, all Demonstrations; and, **(4)** assist in ensuring person(s) involved or participating in a Demonstration with less than twenty-five (25) individuals are made aware District policies, including the ban on disruptive behavior.

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS:

N/A

COMMUNICATION PLAN:

- 1) This policy should be distributed to all relative/necessary staff.
- 2) This policy should be distributed to all individuals/entities that seek to, or are, Demonstrating on District property.
- 3) This policy should be added to the District shared drive, intranet, and website.

REFERENCES:

Cook County Rules & Regulations
Rule 8.03 (c).9

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Forest Preserve District of Cook County

Limitation on Remedial Action FPDCC Code Section [3-3-20](#)

Forest Preserve District of Cook County

Application for Permits FPDCC Code Section [6-1-1](#)

Forest Preserve District of Cook County

Revocation of Licenses or Permits FPDCC Code Section [6-1-4](#)

Forest Preserve District of Cook County

Fee Schedule FPDCC Code Section [7-1-1](#)

Forest Preserve District of Cook County

Employee Handbook- Rules of Conduct Section

POLICY LEAD:

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POLICY HISTORY:

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If you have questions, comments, or suggestions concerning District policies, please contact:

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