

General Information/Rules & Regulations

Updating/Cancelling a Permit

Updating - Requests for changes must be submitted by the permit holder at least 14 days before the event date using the Permit Change form. You can find the form on our website: <https://fpdcc.com/permits/picnics-event-permits/>. Please note that additional fees may apply. Requests submitted less than 14 days before the event may be denied or incur late fees.

Cancelling - Cancellation requests must be submitted by the applicant using the Permit Change Form or by contacting the permit office. Please note that permit reservation and add-on fees are non-refundable. This includes cancellations due to failure to comply with State or County guidelines or adverse weather conditions.

Picnic Packages - Picnic packages are non-refundable. You must use an approved vendor for all rented items, and all rentals must be in the name of the permit holder. Most additional items cannot be added after the package is purchased.

Prohibited Activities

- a) **Admission/Parking Fees** – **Admission and parking fees cannot be charged for any picnic or event unless you have received permission for on-site registration through the special event approval process.**
- b) **Confetti & Other Party Debris**- Confetti, glitter, small / tiny decorations are not allowed on Forest Preserve property. Leaving these items in the picnic area **may result in fines and other disciplinary actions.** All decorations must be removed by the end of the event.
- c) **Driving/Parking** – Driving/parking anywhere outside of designated roadways or parking areas is prohibited.
 - a. **Parking is open to the public, even during permitted events. No parking is guaranteed for permit holders.**
- d) **Multiple Picnic Space reservations**- Booking multiple groves for a basic picnic event is **strictly prohibited.** This includes having anyone else—whether a member of your group or not—reserve an additional grove in the same area or adjacent to yours.
- e) **Close Time** – FPCC closes at sunset, and all event participants must leave the preserve by that time. Events should **end at least 30 minutes before sunset to allow time for guests to leave and the area to be cleaned.** Individuals remaining in the preserve after sunset may be ticketed, arrested, and/or have their vehicles towed.
- f) **Water Based Activities**-No water-based activities are allowed on FPCC property. This includes, but is not limited to water balloons, water slides, water guns, kiddie pools and more.
- g) **Weapons/Fireworks** – **No person shall at any time bring into any preserve, nor have in their possession, nor discharge or set off anywhere within the FPCC, any toy firearm, air rifle, air gun, water gun, toy cannon, or any water cannon, slingshot or bow and arrow or any gun/firearm that discharges projectiles either by air, explosive substance, or any other force on any day of the week or holiday including July 4, unless specifically authorized by law.**
- h) **Balloon/Animal/Cremains Releases**- Balloons, animals, and cremains are not permitted to be released on FPCC property under any circumstances.
- i) **Open Fires/Bonfires** – Open fires or bonfires are prohibited on FPCC property.
- j) **Gambling/Raffles** – The sale or use of gambling devices is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to bingo, silent auctions, and any games of chance.
- k) **Glass Beverage Containers** – Glass containers are prohibited on FPCC property. Please note that the consumption of alcohol upon or within 50 feet of any roadway, parking area or entrance is prohibited.
- l) **Native Landscape** – Native Landscape (trees, shrubs, plant matter, etc.) shall not be cut, trimmed, removed, or destroyed. Attaching signs/banners on trees and/or FPCC signage is prohibited.
- m) **Cannabis Use**: Permit holders, event attendees, and other visitors **may not** use, consume, distribute, sell, share, or gift cannabis (including edible cannabis products) within the Forest Preserves of Cook County.

- n) Vandalism/Paint – Vandalism of buildings, structures, signs, picnic tables, or other FPCC property is strictly prohibited. No paint shall be used on grounds, trees, rocks or any other FPCC property.
- o) Vending – Vending of any products/services on FPCC property without an event permit & applicable fee paid is prohibited.

Advertising:

Advertising to the public is prohibited without the Forest Preserves of Cook County’s (FPCC) written approval. Examples include, but are not limited to Eventbrite, public website domain, public Facebook page, and more. Any unapproved advertising discovered by the FPCC (including web and social media advertising) may result in the revoking of the permit and denial of future permit applications. Permit that wishes to publicly advertise must become a Special event and follow the protocols attached to the event type (more information on pg. 5).

Amenities:

FPCC does not guarantee the availability of tables, potable water, shelters, portable bathrooms, or other amenities not naturally found in the preserve. Picnic groves are cleaned by the FPCC Landscape Maintenance department no later than **10:00 am**. **FPCC will strive to provide at least one portable restroom per preserve, not per grove. Portable restrooms provided by FPCC are not for exclusive use and are open to the public. Flushable restrooms are not guaranteed to be the working day of the event. Additional portables can be rented through the Forest Preserve at a cost or can be added on to your permit via the special use process once one is rented.**

Application Deadlines:

Picnic and event permits go on sale annually on November 15th at 8:00 AM, both online and by phone. If November 15th falls on a weekend, sales will begin on the next business day. New permits or changes requested after these deadlines may be denied or subject to a \$30 late fee. Events that are 400+ can be booked on October 15th via the permit application (not over the phone or online). If October 15th falls on a weekend, sales will begin on the next business day.

Type of Permit	Online Deadlines	In-Person Submission
Picnic	14 days prior to event	14 days prior to event
Special Event	60 days prior to event	30 days prior to event
Athletic Event	N/A	30 days prior to event
Changes/Updates	N/A	14 days prior to event

Application Definitions:

- a. **Applicant (Permit holder)** – The applicant is the sole point of contact and will be held responsible for submitting all required documentation, paying fees, and will be required to abide by FPCC rules and policies pre-event, during event and post-event. Any changes to permits or inquiries must be made by the applicant at least 7 days prior to the permit start date. Applicants **must** be 21 years of age or older.
- b. **Special Use** – Special accommodations for items/activities on FPCC property including, but not limited to, generators, inflatables, rides, amplified equipment, pony rides, petting zoos, portable restrooms, etc. require FPCC approval. All documentation such as insurance and rental agreements must be in the permit holder’s name. *Non-Approved Vendor insurance is not accepted.*

Certificate of Liability Insurance Documents:

All Special/Athletic/Other Event permits (issued by the FPCC) require a Certificate of General Liability Insurance **with Endorsement** in the amount of \$1,000,000 per occurrence (groups with 1,000+ attendees require \$2,000,000 per occurrence). The Certificate must name the Forest Preserves of Cook County, 536 N. Harlem Avenue, River Forest, IL 60305 as an additional insured; the wording “additional insured” must be exact. The Certificate should also reference the name of the applicant, date of event and location of event. See page 14 for sample.

Use of Grove Space:

FPCC permits do not grant you or your group/organization exclusive-use privileges. It is agreed that no event may exclude any person from participating in, deny any person the benefits of, or otherwise subject any person to discrimination because of the person's race, color, religion, sexual orientation, national origin or any disability during the use of FPCC lands.

Inclement Weather & Force Majeure:

The FPCC reserves the right to cancel or relocate an event before or on the event date due to weather or other conditions. **FPCC does not grant refunds due to inclement weather or force majeure (i.e. "acts of God" or similar unpredictable events).**

Non-for-Profit Discount:

A bona fide Non-Profit organization is engaged in charitable, educational, civic, youth and faith-based activities. The following documents are needed to receive Non-for-Profit discount:

- a. Exemption given under Section 501(c)(3) & Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code including a current registration with the Illinois Attorney General as a non-profit.
- b. The location of the official headquarters or administrative office of the organization submitting the request for the permit is in the County of Cook and is the same as that which is on file with the Illinois Attorney General, except in the case of local chapters of national organizations, wherein the local chapter maintains a Cook County office and submits proof of affiliation with the national organization. The following are acceptable:
 - i. Letter on company letterhead signed by management; and
 - ii. Business card with the name of applicant.
- c. If the applicant is a school located within Cook County, a letter on school letterhead signed by an official of the school stating that the activity/event is officially sanctioned under and supervised by employees(s) of the school is required.
- d. Veteran organizations include, but are not limited to, the Retired Enlisted Association, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and American Legion. An applicant must submit proof of the following:
 - i. Exemption under Section 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code, and the official headquarters or administrative office of the organization requesting the permit must be in Cook County.

Security Deposit:

All permits (except for events with 25-399 attendees and **without** special use items & fitness/leagues) require a deposit. If you are applying for more than one event, separate security deposits must be submitted for each event, even if the applicant is the same. All deposits are returned providing that there are no violations of FPCC rules/regulations and if grounds are left in satisfactory condition (e.g., leave no trace). **Security deposits paid via credit card are reimbursed to the card used for payment two to five weeks after your event. Deposits paid via check or cash are reimbursed four to six weeks after your event.**

Things to Know for Your Picnic/Event

Day of Event:

- a) Permit Fees are non-refundable. This includes rain dates, severe weather, and more.
- b) Hours of Operation: Forest Preserves are open from sunrise until sunset year-round. Refer to fpdcc.com/closures for an up-to-date list of closed picnic groves. All permits should end at least 30 minutes before sunset to allow time for guests to leave and the area to be cleaned. Individuals remaining in the preserve after sunset may be ticketed, arrested, and/or have their vehicles towed.
- c) Charcoal - **DO NOT dump charcoal on trees or grass areas. Hot coals can damage or kill trees.** You must extinguish all grill fires and dump your charcoal in the charcoal disposal containers provided near your grove. Failure to properly dispose of charcoal may result in disciplinary action and fines.
- d) Portable Restrooms – **GREEN** Portable Restrooms on FPCC property are for the use of all FPCC patrons. It is highly recommended that the permit holder rent additional portable restrooms or sinks from an outside establishment or entity for their event through the special use process.
 - a. Patrons may rent private portable restrooms through the vendor of their choice OR rent private portable restrooms through FPCC directly. Portable restrooms rented via FPCC will be **BLUE**.
 - b. All portable restrooms must be placed **10 feet from parking curb**. Portable restrooms are not allowed in green space near shelters.
 - c. District Provided Portable Restrooms may not be available November - April.
- e) Picnic Tables- FPCC will provide an average of 8-10 tables per grove, but that amount is not guaranteed. Patrons are welcome to bring additional tables and chairs as needed at no extra cost. Picnic Tables are not to be moved.
- f) Special Use Items– Special use items may be operated between the hours of 10 am and 7:30 pm, but no later than one hour before sunset. FPCC has the authority to assign and limit the area where permitted Special Use items are erected and placed/operated including, but not limited to, amplified sound (DJ, live band, etc.), generators, inflatables, portable restrooms, stages, pony rides, petting zoos, etc. FPCC also has the full authority to cancel any permit and prohibit Special Use items from entering FPCC lands if, in FPCC's opinion, such use may cause damage to or disrupt the native landscape, wildlife and/or turf/grounds.
 - a. *Special Use Item Removal* – All special use items must be removed from FPCC property by the end of your event. Portable restrooms must be removed by 12 pm on the next business day after your event. Violation of this policy may result in fines and/or tickets
 - b. All Special Use requests/documents received less than two weeks prior to the event date will receive a late fee.
- g) Cleaning Area - All event signs, balloons, paper debris, decorations and trash must be removed from FPCC property at the close of your event. Please dispose of all trash in appropriate bags and containers. Any incident reports and/or citations written by FPCC staff for your event may affect the issuance of future permits and/or you may incur post-event clean-up fees.
- h) Contact– Please call FPCC Police at (708) 771-1000 for day of event concerns/issues at the event site. For emergencies, please call 911. For maintenance issues, please contact the division maintenance office listed in the notes section of your permit. Maintenance office hours are Monday – Sunday from 6:30 am to 2:30 pm.
- i) Permit changes must be submitted 14 days before the day of the event. Changes week of are not accepted.
- j) Permit Copy– Printed or electronic versions of permits must be available for view.
- k) Green Portables are serviced twice a week on Tuesdays & Fridays/Saturday during off-peak season times. During peak season the portables are cleaned three times a week: Tuesday, Saturday, & Sunday.

Special/Athletic/Other Event Permit Requests

Q: What is a Special/Athletic & other event permit?

- Any gathering open to the public or featuring additional activities—such as routes, vendors, promotions, fundraising, etc.—may be classified as a special, athletic, or other type of event.
- Events with attendees of 400+ attendees will be classified as a large capacity event and must be held in a designated large event area (see page 12 for list).

Q: What is required to obtain a Special/Athletic & other event permit?

- Basic requirements include:
 - Certificate of Liability Insurance with endorsement page
 - Map with *proposed* route (if any) submitted with application
 - Post Cleanup Plan.
- Additional requirements will vary depending on the nature and activities of your event and may include the following:
 - Rental of portable restrooms
 - Dumpster Rental
 - On-site meeting with FPCC staff
 - Approval from Resource Management department
 - On-site security/FPCC police presence
 - Transportation/Parking Plan
 - Emergency Response Plan
 - Liquor License-If planning to sell Alcohol at an event. Only Not for Profit organizations can request to sell alcohol. County/IL State licenses required.
 - Rental Agreement for all rented items.

Q: How will I be notified of additional requirements?

- Upon receipt of application, a permit assistant is assigned. The permit assistant will evaluate your application, reserve the space, and provide you with more specific requirements/fees for your event.
- It is highly recommended that you review additional requirements on the following page and fee sheet to better prepare for your event.

Q: When will I receive my security deposit?

- If you are applying for more than one event, separate security deposits must be submitted for each event, even if the applicant is the same.
- All deposits are returned providing that there are no violations of FPCC rules/regulations and if grounds are left in satisfactory condition (e.g., leave no trace). Security deposits are reimbursed 4 to 6 weeks after your event.

Additional Special/Athletic & Other Event Permit Requirement Details

All required documentation is due *at least* three weeks prior to the event date. **Requirements that are not fulfilled before the three-week deadline may result in a cancellation/or late fee.**

Clean up Plan:

Due to the impact of large and special events, additional maintenance requirements apply:

- I. Dumpsters– FPCC may require applicants to supply their own dumpsters for their event. Quantity and size will vary based on the number of attendees and type of event.
- II. Portable Restrooms– FPCC may require applicants to supply portable restrooms for their event. Basic ratio is one portable restroom per 100 attendees. Patrons may rent private portable restrooms directly from the FPCC or through a vendor of their choice. (see page 17 for FPCC portable restroom rental details)
- III. Clean-up Plan – Please provide a detailed plan for post-event clean-up. This document should include the number of staff/volunteers scheduled to assist with clean-up of area and estimated start/end times for clean-up.

Safety Plan:

To ensure the safety of our patrons and the participants of your event, a safety plan must be submitted with the following documents to process your application:

- I. Event Layout – Layouts must detail the placement of portable bathrooms, vendors, dumpsters, equipment vehicles and registration area.
- II. First Aid Station – At least one first-aid station is required.
- III. On-site Security – All events are subject to possible FPCC security fees depending on the request. Your on-site security plan should detail the number of personnel, contact phone numbers, requests for overnight security, and other pertinent information. The use of private security officers must be approved by FPCC Police Department. Private security must be licensed, insured and bonded with the State of Illinois and may not be armed. Cancellations for FPCC security must be received at least one week prior to the event date. Cancellations received less than one week prior to the event date are non-refundable.
- IV. Route – If your event is a run/walk, or any other activity in which participants will be following a course, you must submit your planned route marked on official FPCC trail maps. Maps are available for download at <https://fpdcc.com/places/pdf-maps/>. Please make sure to indicate start/finish lines, locations of course marshals, aid stations, street crossings and a compass on your map.
 - Markings used must not damage any property/vegetation.
- V. Signage – If your event is a run/walk, or any other activity in which participants will be following a course, signage along the course must be placed at least one week prior to the event, notifying regular users of the upcoming event. A sample sign must be submitted to FPCC for approval. All signage must be removed from the post-event to avoid an impact on your security deposit refund.
 - Signage used must not damage any property/vegetation.
- VI. Transportation/Parking Plan – In cases where there is limited parking at the proposed event location, please submit alternate parking locations with a plan for how participants/spectators will get to and from the event location.
- VII. Emergency Response Plan – Large capacity events may be required to submit a clearly defined process to be followed in the event of an emergency to protect the health, safety, or welfare of people or to limit damage to property during a planned event.

On-site Meeting:

To reduce day-of-event issues, FPCC may require an on-site meeting involving field staff and event organizers. On-site meetings should be completed no less than 30-45 days prior to permit start date.