



# **TOWN OF OCCOQUAN SPECIAL EVENT POLICY AND GUIDELINES**

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Occoquan Town Hall  
314 Mill Street | PO Box 195  
Occoquan, VA 22125

[www.occoquanva.gov](http://www.occoquanva.gov)  
[info@occoquanva.gov](mailto:info@occoquanva.gov) | (703) 491-1918

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# TOWN OF OCCOQUAN

## SPECIAL EVENTS POLICY AND GUIDELINES

### I. PURPOSE AND POLICY

The purpose of this Special Event Application and Policy is to outline the Town of Occoquan, Virginia's ("Town") policy, process and rules governing special events not specifically developed by the Events Director and Events Committee that occur on the public streets and/or public property of the Town where the public is invited.

The policy of the Town of Occoquan is to encourage and accommodate special events held within the Town as they enhance the quality of life for Town residents and encourage tourism and commerce by attracting visitors to Town.

Individual Town parks and Town venues may have site-specific rules, regulations, and fees (see [Facility Use Policy and Guidelines](#)) that are to be read and applied in concert with this special event policy. This policy is to be implemented by the Town's Events and Community Development Director or their designee in concert with the advice and consent of the Occoquan Police Department.

### II. DEFINITIONS

**Event Organizer** means the person, business, or organization responsible for the special event.

**Special Event** means any event not solely sponsored by the Town or Occoquan Business Partners, where Town streets, sidewalks, parks or other public areas will be utilized and where members of the public are invited. The Town requires a Special Event Permit under the following conditions:

1. any loud sounds such as from concerts or fireworks,
2. any use or blockage of public rights of way within Town,
3. any sale or consumption of alcohol,
4. any event marketed towards and including the general public,
5. and/or any event collecting fees or monetary contributions.

Examples of special events include but are not limited to: foot races, bike races, demonstrations/protests, parades/marches, festivals, concert series, celebrations,

tours, car shows, street dances, fundraisers, classes, etc. These special events may or may not be in-part sponsored by the Town.

### III. APPLICATION SUBMITTAL PROCESS

- A. Applicants requesting a Special Event permit are required to submit a Special Event Application (composed of a cover page and pertinent information for Events and Public Safety staff). All applicants must pay a **non-refundable \$25 application fee**. A recurring special event is considered one special event for application purposes.
- B. Any applicant seeking to use a Town property (Mamie Davis Park, River Mill Park, or Town Hall) for their special event will need to fill out a Facility Use Request Form as well.
- C. Town-sponsored and Occoquan Business Partners-sponsored events shall have priority of use of the particular location/venue for the dates those events are scheduled, and those locations/venues shall be considered reserved for those days and times.
- D. All applications must contain the name of the event, name(s) and contact information of the event organizer (present at all times during the event), audience, activity, goals, date, time, duration (start time and end time), purpose of event, requested location/venue, estimated number of persons attending, (including the maximum expected at any one time), site plan, security plan, whether event is being advertised and through what medium, and any other information required in the Occoquan Police Department Special Event Informational Package.
- E. Applicant(s) or designee are responsible for providing a specific and accurate representation of the special event to allow the Town to identify the level of services required to ensure a safe and successful event including, but not limited to: Police, Public Works, and Events staff.
  - a. Additional Town Services may include:
    - i. Occoquan Police Department for security and traffic control
    - ii. Electric power usage
    - iii. Water usage
    - iv. Facility rental
  - b. If the special event requires additional town services that are deemed unreasonable or are unavailable, the event may be denied.
- F. All special event signage must conform to the Architectural Review Board's (ARB) guidelines on color, location, size, and material of signage within the

historic district. Suggested signage must be submitted for approval **no later than 2 weeks prior to the event**. Temporary banner colors are limited to four per banner, including black and white. ARB Exterior Elevation guidelines can be found here: <https://www.occoquanva.gov/architectural-review-board/>.

- G. Depending on the venue and event, applicants may need to submit a current General Liability Certificate of Insurance insuring the event organizer, and with the Town, as an additional insured in the minimum amount of \$1,000,000. If alcohol service is approved, the event organizer shall provide proof of liquor liability insurance naming the Town as an additional insured.
- H. Completed applications must be received by the Events Director for review and processing no more than 12 months and **no less than 30 days prior to the date of the proposed event**. Applications should be sent via email to: [townclerks@occoquanva.gov](mailto:townclerks@occoquanva.gov).

#### IV. ACTION ON APPLICATIONS

- A. Completed applications will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis for the location(s) and date(s) requested and will be processed in the order received. A completed application will be processed and either granted or denied within a reasonable time of receipt, but not more than 30 days after receipt of a completed application. **Completed applications must be reviewed and approved by both the Events Director and the Occoquan Police Department**. A decision will be sent to the event organizer in writing, and will contain the conditions, if granted, or the reasons for denial.
- B. Considerations for approval:
  - a. The proposed special event does not present an unreasonable safety or health risk to participants, spectators or the public, or an environmental hazard;
  - b. The time, duration, route and size of the special event will not unreasonably interrupt the safe and orderly movement of vehicular or pedestrian traffic or the normal use of public property in a place open to the general public;
  - c. The special event will not unduly interfere with the proper fire and police protection of, or ambulance service to, the remainder of the Town, or unreasonably disrupt other public services and protection normally provided to the Town;

- d. The event organizer has provided staffing or made a request for additional town services sufficient to control the orderly conduct of the special event (roughly 1 volunteer per 20-30 guests);
- e. Town resources necessary to support the special event are reasonably available;
- f. The special event will not interfere with another previously scheduled special event;
- g. If necessary, the event organizer has provided proof of liability insurance underwritten by insurers acceptable to the Town, indemnifying the event organizer and naming the Town as an additional insured; and
- h. The special event will conform with all applicable town and state regulations and laws governing the proposed event as set forth in this special event policy.

C. The Events Director may deny a request if:

- a. An event organizer fails to submit an application **at least 30 days prior to the special event**;
- b. The application is late or incomplete;
- c. The application contains intentional falsehoods;
- d. The special event fails to meet the criteria for approval listed above;
- e. An event organizer is not in good standing with the Town in regards to outstanding fees, taxes or other obligations, including, but not limited to parking tickets;
- f. The event organizer has damaged Town property and has not paid for the damage;
- g. Inadequate staffing which threatens the public health, safety and welfare;
- h. Anticipated attendance levels exceed the capacity or occupancy limitations for the location or venue requested;

- i. There is a conflicting special event and the alternative location, route, date, and/or duration is not acceptable to the event organizer; or
  - j. The event poses serious public safety concerns as determined by the Chief of Police or their designee.
- D. The Events Director may approve an application with conditions imposing reasonable requirements concerning the time, place or manner of holding the special event as necessary to coordinate multiple uses of public property, assure preservation of public property and public places, prevent dangerous, unlawful or impermissible uses, protect the safety of persons and property and to control vehicular and pedestrian traffic in and around the venue, provided that such requirements will not be imposed in a manner that will unreasonably restrict expressive or other activity protected by the Virginia or United States Constitutions.
- E. Nothing herein shall permit the Events Director to condition or deny an application based upon political, social or religious grounds or reasons or based upon the content of the views expressed in the application or elsewhere.
- F. When the grounds for an anticipated denial of an application can be corrected by altering the date, time, duration, route or location of the special event, the Events Director may conditionally approve the application, subject to the event organizer's acceptance of such conditions. Any conditions imposed shall provide only for such modification of the event organizer's proposal as may be necessary to achieve compliance with this section.
- G. The Events Director, or their designee, will commence review of all applications within **10 business days** of receiving a completed application and refer the application to the Occoquan Police Department for its recommendation and approval. A decision will occur within **30 days** of receipt of the completed application.

## V. RAIN DATES OR ALTERNATE DATES

The Events Director will make every effort to honor rain date requests, within the following guidelines:

- A. It is recommended that a rain date be requested on the application.
- B. All rain date requests will be considered, but rain dates are not guaranteed. Rain dates cannot conflict with existing Town events. Existing or annual special events take precedent over new special events.

- C. If a rain date or venue is unavailable, an alternative rain date or location will be suggested by the Events Director.

## **VI. CANCELLATIONS**

- A. Weather cancellations may be made by the event organizer twenty-four (24) hours prior to the start of the special event. If 24-hour advance notice is given, facility use fees will be refunded.
- B. At any point prior to a special event, the Events Director reserves the right to cancel the special event should the Events Director deem future weather conditions will threaten public health, safety and welfare and/or Town employees. All severe weather alerts will be followed. Should the Events Director cancel an event due to weather, no fees will be charged and an alternative date will be arranged, if possible.
- C. At any point prior to a special event, the Events Director reserves the right to cancel the event should the Director reasonably believe the special event will threaten public health, safety and welfare and/or Town employees.
- D. If an event organizer desires to amend their original application when applying for a new date after a cancellation, a written request must be submitted to the Events Director thirty (30) days prior to the new special event date.

## **VII. RULES REGARDING ALL SPECIAL EVENTS**

- A. No itinerant vendor shall conduct business within the confines of a special event or within a Town park without submitting itinerant vendor fees to Town Hall before the event or requesting the fees be waived by Town Council. This does not apply to Town-sponsored itinerant vendor events.
- B. If not in compliance with this special event policy, the Police Department and/or Events Director have the right to terminate the gathering or revoke permission.
- C. The presence of animals at special events will be evaluated on a case by case basis and in accordance with the Town Code.
- D. Participants shall not interfere, impede or block the flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic or interfere, impede or block entrance to public buildings.



- E. No participants shall violate the Town's noise ordinance. See Town Code, Title IX, § 92.02.
- F. The Events Director may designate separate locations for separate special events based upon the event size, requested location, and availability.
- G. Police officers are permitted to separate special events when two or more antagonistic or counter groups plan to gather at the same time and/or location in order to protect the safety of the participants and the public.
- H. All event organizers are responsible for the payment of all necessary fees and obtaining permits relating to food and beverage service, signage, tent erection, fire codes, business licenses, itinerant vendor fees, the collection of local and state taxes, and the payment of any delinquent fines or fees owed to the Town.
- I. If a special event is held without submitting an application and obtaining permission, the event organizer will be responsible for all appropriate fees incurred by the Town, and use of its services. Exceptions include funeral processions, government activities, and spontaneous gatherings, which are defined as having no organizer.
- J. Participants shall not trespass on private property.
- K. Participants shall not engage in disorderly conduct. See Town Code, Title XIII, § 135.10 as amended.
- L. Participants shall not create an unlawful assembly or riot. See Town Code, Title XIII, § 135.20 as amended.
- M. If the Events Director has reasonable and credible information that an organizer intends to incite imminent violence during a special event or small or spontaneous gathering, the Events Director has the right to deny the application or terminate the special event.
- N. Any application may be denied or the event may be terminated if there exists an imminent threat of any civil commotion or disturbance in the nature of a riot which constitutes a clear and present danger.
- O. The organizer of a special event may appeal the decision of any denied application within seven (7) business days of being informed of the decision.
- P. The following activities and items are prohibited during all special events and any violation may result in the immediate termination of the special event:
  - a. Glass bottles, jars, or glass containers of any kind in Town parks;

- b. Alcohol is prohibited unless event sponsor has an approved ABC license for the special event;
- c. Carrying or discharging of weapons, explosive or inflammable substances;
- d. Carrying bricks, stones, rocks, pieces of asphalt and/or concrete;
- e. Open flame burning. "Open flame" means fire whose flame is supported by a wick, oil or other slow-burning means to sustain itself. "Open flame" includes, but is not limited to, flame producing devices such as candles, torches, and juggling or other fire artist equipment; provided, however, that "open burning and open fire" and "open flame" shall not include handheld candles when used for ceremonial purposes, provided that they are not held or used in an intimidating, threatening, dangerous or harmful manner.
- f. Staking signs or posts in grounds without pre-approval from the Town. Staking anything (signs, tents, etc) in River Mill Park is prohibited;
- g. No walkways, park stage or Town buildings may be chalked or painted;
- h. Nothing may be left behind; facilities must be left in the same or better condition than prior to the event.

## VIII. RIVER MILL PARK GUIDELINES

### A. Park Rules

- a. Park is open daily from dawn to dusk.
- b. Fishing is prohibited from anywhere inside the park.
- c. Standing and climbing on railings and fencing is strictly prohibited.
- d. Trespassing onto Fairfax Water property beyond the bounds of the park is strictly prohibited.
- e. Equipment must be secured through the use of weights; the use of stakes or other in-ground measures is prohibited. This includes the use of signage or other materials that penetrate the ground.
- f. Glass containers are not permitted in the park.
- g. No person is allowed to bathe, swim, wade, or boat in any body of water in or adjacent to the park, including the Occoquan River.
- h. No motorized vehicles are permitted except as required by law.
- i. No non-motorized or wheeled vehicles are allowed except for mobility assistance devices for the disabled. This prohibition applies to skateboards, rollerblades, roller skates, and bicycles.
- j. No loud sounds such as from concerts or fireworks are permitted without an approved Special Event Application.
- k. All decorations used on the Town's "LOVE SIGN" must be removed

promptly. Do not use glue, nails, tacks, screws, staples or other fasteners that may scratch or damage the sign.

#### **B. Town Events**

- a. The Town's workhorse vehicle can be used to move performer's equipment. Only town employees may drive the vehicle. All equipment must be properly secured by the performer; town staff not responsible for loading/unloading equipment.
- b. Performer is responsible for set up and cleanup of stage area.
- c. A town employee must be present at Town events. Volunteers may also be used to support the event.

#### **C. Emergency Shelter**

- a. The Town of Occoquan does not have specific emergency shelter facilities. Town Hall, 314 Mill Street, may be used for sheltering in place, but may not have the capacity to shelter all persons that would need shelter. In the event inclement weather necessitates an evacuation of the park, all participants will be directed to seek shelter in a building that is open, or their own vehicles. Communications will be by word of mouth, and general announcement if a sound system is functioning. All visitor's and participants are also asked to use their own judgment as it pertains to their personal safety.
- b. On-site staff will monitor weather forecasts and provide information as available.

#### **D. Electrical and Specifications**

- a. Two sets of four outlets at River Mill Park, for a total of 8. Each box of 4 is on its own breaker. 40 amps total. The event pavilion stage space measures 30' x 45.'

### **IX. ENFORCEMENT**

- A. Any person or group violating this Special Events policy is subject to penalty listed in the Town Code, Title XIII, § 135.99 or § 131.99 as amended.

### **X. IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION**

- A. To check availability, contact Town Hall at (703) 491-1918, e-mail [townclerk@occoquanva.gov](mailto:townclerk@occoquanva.gov) or stop by Town Hall at 314 Mill Street, Occoquan, VA 22125, Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
- B. For specific events questions or on-the-day issues contact Julie Little, Events Director at [jlittle@occoquanva.gov](mailto:jlittle@occoquanva.gov) or call 703-491-2168.

- C. The Police Department is located at 124 Commerce Street, Occoquan, VA 22125. The office is not staffed 24/7; in case of an emergency, dial 9-1-1.
  - a. Town Police Phone: (571) 492-7274
  - b. In an Emergency: Dial 9-1-1