

Special Event Venues Frequently Asked Questions



**Chicago Park District
Department of Park Services**

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If I am interested in hosting an event at one of the Chicago Park District's Special Event Venues, what is the process of booking a venue for my event?

First, choose which facilities you are interested in. You can begin finding information by visiting our Special Event Venues homepage. Once you have decided which spaces you are interested in, you can call the appropriate contact for availability. To secure a date and location, you will need to submit the Special Event Venue Application and a non-refundable Reservation Fee of 50% of the appropriate rental fee and a \$35 Processing/Application Fee. You will be required to sign a contract. The remaining fees are due 6 months prior to your date, and the necessary documentation (insurance documents, site plan, timeline of event, etc.) must be provided to the Park District designee at least 30 days prior to the event. You will be required to provide the Chicago Park District designee with the final guest count at least 14 days prior.

Wedding Ceremonies

I have seen couples getting married in the park. How can I have my Wedding Ceremony at one of the Park District locations?

If you are interested in having a ceremony in one of our outdoor garden spaces or on our beaches, you need to apply for a Commemorative Permit (Special Event Application). Our most popular locations for wedding ceremonies are: the Lincoln Park Conservatory Gardens, the Grant Park North Rose Gardens, the new Tiffany & Co. Foundation Celebration Garden, and the Cancer Survivor's Garden. Applications for wedding ceremonies at any other locations along the Lakefront will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

There are four different levels of Commemorative Permit for our gardens. Levels 3 & 4 are specifically for the Tiffany Celebration Garden; Levels 1 & 2 are for all other gardens and beaches. Level 1 allows you two hours (including set-up and tear-down), and it allows you bring in chairs and a trellis. Level 2 allows you four hours (including set-up and tear-down), and it allows you to have amplified sound, a small tent (15x15' or smaller) and risers in addition to chairs and a trellis, if desired. However, we require Liability Insurance with Level 2. More information including the fees can be found in the Special Event Application.

For the Tiffany Garden, Level 3 allows you two hours (including set-up and tear-down), and Level 4 allows you four hours (including set-up and tear-down). Event features allowed for *both* Levels 3 & 4 are chairs, 1 trellis, amplified sound, a small tent (15'x15' or smaller) and risers, but no food or beverage is allowed. General Liability Insurance is required for both levels.

We do not give out availability for Commemorative Events; applications are processed in the order received, and you will be contacted within 14 days regarding if your time/date/location is available and what fees/documents/etc are required in order to secure a permit.

We only accept applications for Commemorative Permits starting in January of the year of your event, so, for example, 2011 applications will not be accepted until January 2011.

Commemorative Permits are a rain or shine policy, and no food or beverage is allowed.

Caterers

For my event, can I choose any caterer I want, or do you have a list I must choose from?

We have an exclusive vendor list for you to choose from for your event. For more information, please visit our Preferred Professional Listing. You should feel free to contact any of them individually with any questions you may have.

Tenting

What are your requirements for tenting, and how do I go about finding a tent provider?

All tenting needs to be contracted through our Preferred Professionals, and you should feel free to contact them with questions or to get a proposal. In most cases, if you are interesting in having tent or canopies set-up at a Special Event Venue or the surrounding area, the Park District will need to perform a "locate" to identify any and all underground electrical and plumbing lines. Therefore, we will need to know the exact location and dimensions of each tent. Please note that any tent or canopy over 240 square feet will require a building permit from the City of Chicago Department of Construction and Permits (DCAP): (312) 744-3449. The rental companies should be able to answer any questions you may have regarding the process for securing any required building permits.

Alcohol

Am I permitted to serve alcohol at my event?

Yes, alcohol service is allowed at our Special Event Venues (except at Commemorative Events). As the host of the event, you will NOT be permitted to provide the alcohol. Alcohol must be purchased through and served by one of the caterers on our exclusive list.

Insurance

What are your insurance requirements and how can I obtain the necessary certificate?

When renting one of our facilities, we require that you obtain a Certificate of General Liability Insurance naming the Chicago Park District as "Additional Insured" and the endorsement issued by the Insurance Carrier. If you intend on serving alcohol, you must have Host Liquor Liability as well. We require that each of the certificates carry a minimum of \$1,000,000 coverage. You may obtain this insurance from any insurance company of your choosing, or contact us for a recommendation.

Deposits

Do you require a Security Deposit, and if so how much will it be? When can I expect to receive my deposit back?

We require that you pay a Security Deposit to cover any possible damage and to insure that the Park District policies and procedures are being adhered to. The Security Deposit is due no later than six months prior to the event and can range from \$500-\$2,000 depending on the size, nature, and location of the event. The Security Deposit will be returned approximately 30 business days after your event via check as long as all the rules and regulations have been followed, and there is no property damage. Violations which will result in partial or entire withholding of your Security Deposit includes but not limited to: deliveries/pick-ups occurring outside of reservation time, entering/exiting outside of reservation time, and unauthorized vehicles on-site and/or on the grass. Please note that the Reservation Deposit/Fee (to secure the space) and the Security Deposit (to cover any possible damages) are not the same.

Security

How can I ensure that my event remains private? Do I need to hire security officers?

We require each event to hire security to ensure privacy and safety. Our offices will determine the number of security officers you will need based on the size, nature, and location of the event. In most cases, the Chicago Park District Designee will arrange Chicago Park District Officers at a rate of \$30/hour (four hour minimum). If you are approved to contract another security company, the firm must be licensed and bonded.

Park Hours

What time does my event have to end? Is there an additional fee to remain in the park later than 11:00pm?

All Chicago Park District property closes at 11:00pm every day. It is a requirement that every event conclude at this time.

Park Access

If I have equipment or certain materials that need to be dropped off for the event, how will I be able to access the park?

Parking or driving vehicles on grass or athletic fields is strictly prohibited. If event staff and supply vehicles need to be driven to the site to unload equipment or supplies, the Park District may consider granting a Park District Vehicle Pass so that vehicles may access service roads, subject to Park District approval. If you feel this privilege is necessary for your event, please contact the event facilitator. The Park District will need prior notice of the number and type of vehicles you request permission to operate on Park District Property.

City of Chicago Venues

Do Chicago Park District and City of Chicago the same policies and procedures for their venues?

No. Although the Chicago Park District and the City of Chicago are both government agencies, they are different organizations with different policies and procedures. The following venues are NOT under the jurisdiction of the Park District, so their policies and procedures do not apply to the Chicago Park District Special Event Venues: Chicago Cultural Center, Maxim's, Millennium Park, Harold Washington Library.