

Special Event Rules & Regulations

The City of Harrisonburg supports special events that provide enjoyable opportunities for residents and visitors, and help to create a vibrant, livable and sustainable city.

A number of City departments are involved in the logistics necessary to produce a safe and successful community event. In an effort to simplify the application process for community organizations and event planners, the City of Harrisonburg has provided the guidelines below. These guidelines must be met in order to ensure a positive experience for the community.

Application Process At-a-Glance:

Every event must submit an application, whether a new or annual event.

1. Complete and return the application at least 90 days prior to the event.
2. Application will be reviewed only if it is completed and all supporting documents are included.
3. Organizers may be requested to meet with City representatives to review event plans, layout and all other event logistics.
4. If the application is reviewed and approved by the City Departments, the application will be presented to the Harrisonburg City Council for their approval, if required.
5. After the City Council meeting, the applicant will be informed of Council's decision.

Rules & Regulations:

- Special Events requesting the following dates January 2nd – March 19th, Memorial Day Weekend, James Madison University Commencement, the weekend before and after July 4th, Labor Day weekend, Veterans Day (Except in the event Veterans Day falls on a Sunday), Thanksgiving Day, Day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day may not be approved or may incur additional charges from City departments.
- It is the responsibility of event organizers to notify all surrounding churches, businesses, and neighbors of the scheduled special events and the date the application is due to appear in front of City Council. This is to ensure citizens have the opportunity to share their concerns or support of the event before Council's vote on approval or denial of the application. Applicants must notify any businesses or residences that may be affected as a result of street closing or event activities.
- Event planners will need to provide extra trash receptacles for their event. All trash must be removed from the event site; trash removal is the responsibility of the event organizer, if arrangements have not been made with Harrisonburg City Department of Public Works.
- Events must take into consideration the placement of all vendors and activities:
 - Restrooms are not to be placed near restaurants or food vendors
 - Vendors must not be placed near competing merchants/businesses
 - A 20' Fire Lane must be maintained at all times. This must be continuous in nature and include sufficient turning radii for Fire Department apparatus to navigate.
 - Activities and vendors must not block any Fire Hydrant or any Fire Department connections (standpipe, sprinkler, etc.)
- Events anticipating a large amount of attendees must supply an appropriate amount of portable restrooms. Portable restrooms may not be rinsed on site.
- Any tent greater than 900 square feet or accommodating more than 50 people requires a building permit. Any tent greater than 400 square feet requires a Fire Department inspection upon installation. More information can be found at www.harrisonburgva.gov/permits
- Health and licensing requirements apply to all food/beverage sales. Food vendors must adhere to the regulations of the Virginia Department of Health (VDH). For information, call the Health Department directly at 540-574-5200.
- All vendors except those selling unprocessed food products must have a current business license. Contact the Commissioner of Revenue at 540-432-7704 for details. The collection of applicable taxes will be the responsibility of the individual vendor.
- Food vendors are not allowed to drain grease onto the property or leave grease at the site.

FAILURE TO OBTAIN PROPER APPROVALS CAN RESULT IN THE CANCELLATION OF YOUR EVENT.

