



OFFICE OF SPECIAL EVENTS
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RESERVATION PROCEDURES MANUAL - POLICIES, RULES & PERMITS OVERVIEW

<http://www.austintexas.gov/parkevents>

The City of Austin's Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) Office of Special Events coordinates reservations at a number of [identified](#) facility and picnic sites within the City of Austin Parks System. **(NOTE: Reservations for [Athletic Fields, Recreation and Activity Centers](#) are made by contacting them directly to obtain information about availability and rates.)**

RESERVATION TIMING and LIMITS:

- PARC is unable to accept reservations **less than 14 days** from the desired event date.
 - PARC may consider late requests in extenuating circumstances such as for funeral or memorial service considered on a case by case basis.
- Only **1 reservation per site per day** is allowed.
- **Holiday Policy:** On a limited number of Federal Holidays and Observances the Parks and Recreation Department **does not accept reservations** due to heavy public use ("[observed holidays](#)").

RESERVATION PERIODS and METHODS:

There are two (2) ways to request a reservation. **(1.) [Early Reservation Lottery Process](#)**, or **(2.) the [General Booking Period](#)** beginning 6 months in advance of the desired date.

- 1. [Early Reservation Lottery \(10 months in advance\)](#).** Due to the popularity of PARC sites and facilities lottery form entries are accepted ten (10) months prior to the requested date. Forms must be received between the 1st and 20th day of the submittal month. Only 1 form/event/site will be accepted. Multiple submissions or "stuffing" will result in the removal of all suspected entries. A "random drawing" is conducted of received entries by the end of the submittal month. See [Reservation Period Reference Chart \(page 2\)](#).

Complete an [Early Reservation Lottery Request](#).

- 2. [General Booking Period \(6 months in advance\)](#).** Reservations may be made on a first-come first-served basis six (6) months in advance of the requested date. Reservations may be made by phone or walk in. Please have alternate sites and dates in mind when you make contact with the PARC-Office of Special Events to make your reservation. [Online Calendar](#) – select "facilities" - look ONLY for dates labeled "**OPEN**".

Reservation Periods at a Glance

Use the **month of your desired reservation** to determine which reservation method(s) are eligible to use. If the lottery month has passed, reservations are next available during the first-come first-served period.

Month of Desired Reservation ↓	LOTTERY Form must be received by between the 1 st and 20 th day of ↓...	FIRST-COME FIRST-SERVED RESERVATIONS After the lottery , the next booking period is by phone/walk-in ... ↓	
January	March only	July, for all dates until	January
February	April only	August, for all dates until	February
March	May only	September, for all dates until	March
April	June only	October, for all dates until	April
May	July only	November, for all dates until	May
June	August only	December, for all dates until	June
July	September only	January, for all dates until	July
August	October only	February, for all dates until	August
September	November only	March, for all dates until	September
October	December only	April, for all dates until	October
November	January only	May, for all dates until	November
December	February only	June, for all dates until	December

No reservations can be made less than 14 days prior to an event date.
[Online Calendar](#) – select “facilities” - look ONLY for dates labeled “**OPEN**”.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- See us – picnic sites [Google map of locations with park images!](#)
- See us – event buildings [Photo gallery of the sites](#)
- Book us! [Online calendar availability!](#) See dates labeled “**OPEN**”.
- Email us! reservations@austintexas.gov
- Read up! [Sound, moonwalk, and other permit information](#)

CONFIRMING RESERVATIONS, MAKING PAYMENT and CANCELLATION:

CONFIRMING TENTATIVE RESERVATIONS:

- A reservation must be made greater than 14 days in advance of a requested reservation date.
- **TENTATIVE HOLDS:** Until all payments, processing and documents are submitted the reservation is considered to be in a **TENTATIVE HOLD** status. Holds are in effect for **NO MORE THAN 14** days.
 - If a reservation is made 21-14 days in advance of the reservation date; all payments, processing and documents must be expedited and are due **7 days or less** in order to comply with regulation requiring CONFIRMED status of a reservation 14 days before the reservation date.
- **CONFIRMED RESERVATION:** All payments, processing and documents are required to be completed **no less than 14 days prior** to the reservation date, thus releasing the TENTATIVE HOLD status and moving the reservation to a **CONFIRMED** status.
- A reservation card will be placed at confirmed use sites the morning of the event.

PAYMENT TYPES ACCEPTED: ONLINE, CASH, CHECK OR MONEY ORDER

- **Anytime:** [Online \(see online payment guide\)](#), Cash, or Money Order
- **14 days or more from the permit/use date:** Checks
 - A service charge will be assessed for all returned checks.

PAYMENT DEADLINES and NON-PAYMENT CANCELLATIONS:

- Payments are due no later than 14 days from the day the site(s) was first scheduled.
 - *If you book a site or facility today (for example), full payment is due within 14 days.*
- Payments are due IMMEDIATELY for bookings made at the 14 day cut off.
- **AUTOMATIC CANCELLATION:** If payment is NOT received within 14 days, the tentative reservation is automatically cancelled without notice.
 - If a reservation has been cancelled for non-payment and eligible/available for rebooking prior to the cut off period, immediate payment is required at the time or rebooking.
- Payments are required BEFORE permits are released.
- **NOTE:** Make sure to sign and email, enclose or mail the Signature Sheet with the payment.
- **NOTE:** If paying a fee 14 days or less from the event date, payment is accepted by **CASH ONLY**.

PAYMENT METHODS FOR CHECKS, CASH, OR MONEY ORDERS:

1. In person: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday (excluding Holidays)
2. By mail to: Austin Parks and Recreation Department,
ATTN: Office of Special Events,
200 South Lamar, Austin, Texas, 78704.
Please include the name, date, and park in the “note” line on check.

DAMAGE DEPOSITS: Deposits are refunded, after parks staff have inspected the area reserved. Reservations that qualify for a full or partial deposit refund will receive a payment from the City of Austin within 30-45 days after the event. If the deposit does not cover the cost of damages, a bill will be issued for the remaining balance. Failure to pay additional costs within a 30-day period will result in the denial of future reservation requests and referral of account for legal collection. Leaving the property late, any glass on site, and/or noise complaints are grounds for immediate loss of the full deposit.

CANCELLATION POLICY:

- Cancellations received greater than 14 days from the reservation date are fully refunded without penalty.
- Cancellations received less than 14 days from the reservation date are subject to a charge of one-half (1/2) of the use fee.
- “No shows” do not receive a refund of fees.
- Cancellations due to rain/weather will be fully refunded without penalty.

INSURANCE:

Minimally, [Standard Insurance](#) is required for all public events. Liquor liability is additionally required for all permitted public events with alcohol on site.

PUBLIC EVENT: An event is considered public if any of the following apply:

- a - there is NOT a finite and/or limited guest list;
- b - a person of the public may purchase or acquire a ticket for entrance or participation;
- c - a person of the public may attend the event; or
- d – is advertised by website, email, print or radio media to the public.

PRIVATE EVENT: Events are considered private where a limited and finite count of guests is expected. An example would be a wedding, or birthday party, or private reception, which are NOT open to the public.

OVERVIEW of COMMON POLICIES, PARK RULES, and PERMITS

The following policies, rules and permits apply to all properties. The property may be subject to additional restrictions and/or requirements which are noted in the informational packet for each property.

Please read all information carefully.

Event Organizer and Responsible Party: The company/ organization, or person (for private party) booking the property is considered the event organizer and responsible person and financially responsible party for the event. **A Resident:** Is anyone within the corporate city limits or who receives Austin Energy electrical services. **A Non-resident:** Is anyone not within the corporate city limits or who do not receive Austin Energy electrical services. **Commercial events:** Any event presented by a commercial entity to the public, which seeks to promote, advertise, introduce a product, corporation, company or other commercial entity to the general public or to a portion of the general public (non-private event).

Bills are issued to the event owner/company, or host, who is legally responsible for the event.

Arrival and Departure Time Policy: Use periods include both set up and take down/clean up time, and are made for your arrival and departure time. Plan accordingly. Use beyond, and/or requiring Parks staff having to remain on property past departure time will result in additional charges.

Most Reservation periods, unless otherwise noted, are limited to 10 a.m. - 10 p.m.

Curfew: By City Code, park curfew is between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. daily, and is strictly enforced. Special permission must be requested in writing, and granted by the Director in advance (14 days) to remain on site during park curfew hours. A special request form is available online to assist you with making curfew extension requests where need is clearly demonstrated. Find the form in the "forms" section online.

Park Rules and Conduct: The person or organization reserving City property IS responsible for the enforcement of the Parks and Recreation Department Rules and City Code (City Code Chapter 8) during the reservation, and in addition, is responsible for the conduct and behavior of their guests. Park Rules and Code may be found online: <http://www.austintexas.gov/>. Violation or disregard for Park Rules and policies may result in the following consequences: ineligibility to make future reservations, removal, fine, arrest or legal action, cancellation of reservation, and/or forfeiture of all fees and deposit

Miniature Trains, Petting Zoos, Carnival Rides, Water/splash slides, Water Balloons, Balloon Releases, and Bubble Soccer are NOT permitted at any time.

Wish Lanterns are NOT allowed as they pose severe fire risk.

Glass and Styrofoam Policy: Glass and Styrofoam are NOT allowed in any City of Austin parks. In favor of our environment, use of paper, aluminum and other recyclable materials is encouraged.

Clean Up and Recycling General Policy: Grounds are required to be cleaned and returned to their original condition. Hard surfaces are required to be wiped and cleaned of loose materials which should be placed in trash receptacles (trash, litter, food waste, etc). Failure to make any attempt to clean up may result in denial of future reservations and/or loss of deposit. Recycling and use of recyclable materials is strongly encouraged. When recycling, remember that recyclable materials **MAY NOT** be cross contaminated with food products. Help support citywide greening efforts by dropping your event recycling into your household recycling bin.

Damages, and/or Extra Time Policy: Damages to amenities, sprinkler and water lines, time and usage not approved at the time of reservation, extra time taken to depart, or “out of the ordinary” maintenance required after the reservation is completed, will be deducted from your deposit. If the deposit does not cover the cost, a bill will be issued for the balance.

Alcohol Policy: By City Code, the possession, sale and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited in swimming pool enclosures, recreation centers and adjacent grounds, athletic field playing boundaries, school parks, wildlife preserves, and other areas administratively designated by the Director. In addition, as adopted by Park Rules by the Director, certain Parks and Recreation Facilities are alcohol prohibited; a full listing is available [online](#). There is a downloadable listing of reservation sites where alcohol may be consumed WITH a confirmed (paid) reservation. **Glass and Styrofoam are restricted at ALL TIMES.**

If you intend to **consume, sell and/or distribute alcohol**, you should consult with the PARD Department and T.A.B.C. in advance to ensure compliance with applicable regulations and eligibility.

Parking and Parking Fees: Parking is available at most sites on a first-come first-served basis, fees for parking apply at some sites. Zilker Park, weekends March-September, and holidays, \$5/car. Emma Long and Walter Long, Monday - Thursday, \$5/car, Friday-Sunday AND HOLIDAYS, \$10/car.

Tent Policy: In general, tents over 400 square feet (with sides), or 700 square feet (without sides – canopy only) must be reviewed by the Austin Fire Department Fire Prevention Division of the City. **ALL commercial, rental tents require coordination with the Parks Site Manager in advance.** Pop-up style tents are allowed directly on the RENTED site. **STAKING is prohibited.** Weighting may be done by sand bag or water barrel ONLY. Find tent information in the “policies” section [online](#).

Water and Electricity Availability: Where available, water and electricity will be made available if requested IN ADVANCE at the time of reservation. See site information packets for availability.

Hike and Bike Trails Policy: NO portion of the trail system may be blocked or used at any time for events.

Barbequing/Grilling: Fires may only be lit in a device provided for such activities. Portable camp stoves or portable barbecue grills of metal construction may be used in designated campsites or picnic areas, AND shall be attended at all times by an adult until fully extinguished. All coals, ash and grilling related debris must be removed from the site by the renter/user at their own expense, and may NOT be disposed of on park property. **Burn Bans** may be enacted at any time due to existing drought conditions. During burn bans, grilling is allowed by PROPANE ONLY.

Public Notice Policy: ANY event that receives a permit or permission to close an area open to the public MUST post public notice signs a minimum of 14 days in advance of the event. At a minimum, in high contrast color and plain font, signage MUST contain, event name, event date, event start/stop time, and contact information.

Holiday Policy: There are a limited number of Federal Holidays and Observances on which the Parks and Recreation Department does not accept reservations due to heavy public use ("observed holidays"). Find the list in the "booking periods" section [online](#).

Smoking (Code): By City Code, smoking/vaping are NOT permitted in any City of Austin Buildings or parks.

PERMITS:

(As issued by the Parks and Recreation Department)

Permits are issued to and payable by the applicant or organization hosting the event.

Sound Permits

Commercial/Advertising Purposes (\$30), Private Party (\$20), Public Interest, Political or Non-Profit (\$10)

10 a.m. – 10 p.m. maximum per park curfew. When allowed, all amplified sound requires a sound permit. Examples of amplified sound include boom boxes, DJ's, bands, speakers connected to cell phones, etc. **By City Code**, the parks sound ordinance is limited to 85 db, as measured at the lesser of 100 feet, or the boundary of the park in front of the source. Sound is **NOT permitted** within 100 feet of residentially zoned property. **Restrictions** apply to sound between 100 feet-600 feet of residential property: 8 p.m. limits Sunday through Thursday, and 10 p.m. limits Friday and Saturday. At all times possible, amplification devices/speakers should be oriented in a fashion as to direct sound away from adjacent reservations and area neighborhoods.

Permits are ONLY issued to confirmed (paid) reservations for the DIRECT RENTED SITE.

Sound permits are NOT issued for vehicles in parks.

Moonwalk, Inflatables, and Rock Wall Permits (\$10, \$50 water for dunking booths): Permits for moonwalks, rock walls, and dunking booths are issued to **PAID** reservations at **ALLOWABLE SITES**. Please note your intent at the time the reservation is made. Companies must have on file or provide the City with required insurance and be inspected/certified by the State of Texas. Information is INCLUDED with picnic packets or find the list in the “policies” section [online](#). Vending without a permit subjects user and/or company to suspension from permitting eligibility.

Miniature Trains, Petting Zoos, Carnival Rides, Water/splash slides, Wish lanterns, water balloons, and balloon releases are NOT permitted at any time.

PARD Alcohol Sales Permit Application Fee and State Issued TABC Permit (\$30): Permits for any event requesting permission sell alcohol, or that require a [TABC permit](#). Due at the time of submission of TABC permit application to the City for signature. With prior PARD approval, alcohol sales require hiring of licensed peace officers, liquor liability insurance and alcohol service in a building or fenced park site with monitored event doors/gates. In general, alcohol is considered a “sale” if funds are required for purchase, alcohol comes with a ticket required for admission, or where the price of “attending” includes alcohol.

Health Catering and Concessions Permits: Must be approved by the Parks Department and is subject to approval and permitting by the [Austin Travis County Health and Human Services Department](#).

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Public Events at Picnic Sites/Facilities/Parks, Events over 500 People, OR Special Events (1000+ persons) may trigger additional permits or requirements.

Ask for “Additional Requirements” information for these events. All events **over 1000** are considered Special Events, and require a contract, considerable advance planning, and trigger additional requirements. Please contact the Office of Special Events to coordinate a meeting if your event is over 1000 persons.

Special Requirements: At ANY time, the Office of Special Events reserves the right to request additional requirements from the renter dependent upon place, time and manner of the event. Presenting the most detailed information on your event will ensure your event’s success.