



City of Phoenix

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Rules and Procedures for the Issuance of Medical Treatment and Food Distribution Parks Services Permits

Adopted by the Director of Parks and Recreation Pursuant to Phoenix City Code Section 24-45(E)(2)

[Effective Date: July 10, 2026]

I. Purpose and Authority

These Rules and Procedures are adopted by the Director of the City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department (the “Director”) pursuant to Phoenix City Code Section 24-45(E)(2). Consistent with that section, these Rules and Procedures are designed to minimize disruption to other park uses, ensure the safety of park guests, and maintain parks in a clean and sanitary condition.

The City of Phoenix endeavors to promote programs, events, and activities within the Parks and Recreation system that foster a positive, safe, and rewarding environment for the youth and adults of our community. The Department considers organizations providing medical treatment or food distribution services as partners. The Department’s goal is to work together with applicants and permit holders to ensure that facilities remain safe and in the best condition possible and that the City’s parks can be enjoyed by all residents.

These Rules and Procedures, together with the Parks Services Permit application, are publicly available on the City of Phoenix website at phoenix.gov/parks/servicespermit.

II. Overview: How to Get a Permit

This section provides a high-level summary of the Parks Services Permit process. The detailed rules follow in subsequent sections.

1. Who needs a permit? Any individual or organization that wants to provide medical treatment services or hold a food distribution event at an eligible City park must obtain a Parks Services Permit. As detailed below, many activities—including private gatherings, medical treatment for family members, distribution of water or electrolyte beverages, and outreach or education activities—do not require a Parks Services Permit.

2. How do I apply? Complete the Parks Services Permit Request Application (available at phoenix.gov/parks/servicespermit) and email it, along with required documentation, to pks.servicespermit@phoenix.gov. There is no fee to apply. Applications are accepted during published allocation windows and on a rolling basis thereafter for the currently open allocation period.

3. Will my application be approved? Yes. All applicants who submit a properly completed application that complies with the Phoenix City Code, these Rules and Procedures, and the Parks Code of Conduct will receive a permit, subject only to limited exceptions specified in these Rules and Procedures.

4. What are the only reasons a permit can be denied? An application may be denied only if: (a) two permits have already been issued for the requested park in the requested calendar month; (b) there are competing requests for the same park on the same date that cannot both be accommodated or there is another previously-approved event at the same park on the same date and both events cannot be accommodated; (c) the requested date is a designated citywide Blackout Date or a Park Site Closure date; (d) the requested park is not an Eligible Park; (e) the application is materially incomplete or lacks required documentation; or (f) the applicant is subject to an in-effect Activity Restriction Notice or is otherwise ineligible under the Parks Code of Conduct or City Code.

5. What if my preferred park or date is unavailable? The Director will work with you to find an alternative. If a particular park has reached its monthly limit, or if there are competing requests, the Department will offer you a permit at an alternative eligible park or on an alternative available date. No qualified applicant will be denied a permit altogether when alternative parks and dates are available. There are currently 105 eligible parks across the City.

6. Will I receive a written explanation if my request cannot be granted as submitted? Yes. If your application is denied or modified, you will receive a written communication identifying the specific reason(s) for the decision and, where applicable, identifying available alternatives. You also have the right to request reconsideration in writing within fourteen (14) calendar days.

7. Where can I get help? The Department is here to assist you. Contact us at pks.servicespermit@phoenix.gov or (602) 262-6862 with any questions about the application process, required documentation, or available parks and dates.

III. Definitions

For purposes of these Rules and Procedures, the following terms shall have the meanings set forth below:

“Allocation Period” means the defined period for which Parks Services Permits may be requested. The Director will establish three allocation periods per year.

“Applicant” means any individual or organization that submits a Parks Services Permit application to the Director’s Office.

“Blackout Dates” means citywide dates on which the Parks Department does not issue any Parks Services Permits due to high park usage. Blackout dates include: New Year’s Day, Easter, Independence Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year’s Eve.

“Department” means the City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department.

“Director” means the Director of the City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department, or the Director’s designee.

“Eligible Park” means a neighborhood park with a parking lot, a community park, or a regional park (excluding sports complexes) that is listed on the current Eligible Parks List maintained by the Department. There are currently 105 eligible parks.

“Food Distribution Event” means a gathering conducted by a private individual or organization, for charitable or similar humanitarian purposes, at a park, that is planned, organized, or conducted to distribute food to any member of the general public at no cost or for a nominal charge, as further defined in Phoenix City Code Section 24-45.

“Medical Treatment” means any act in a park that involves the use of needles, syringes, other medical sharps, or produces medical waste, as further defined in Phoenix City Code Section 24-45.

“Organization Representative” means an individual designated as the representative for an organization who must be available during the permitted event, must have a current and valid Services Permit on hand, and must ensure park policies and regulations are being followed during the permitted event.

“Parks Code of Conduct” means the code of conduct adopted by the Parks and Recreation Department, as may be amended from time to time.

“Parks Services Permit” or **“Permit”** means the authorization issued by the Director’s Office allowing an individual or organization to conduct a food distribution event or provide medical treatment at an eligible park.

“Services Permit Allocation Committee” means the committee designated by the Director to review permit applications and make permit allocations during each allocation period and on a rolling basis thereafter for the currently open allocation period.

IV. Activities Requiring a Permit

A Parks Services Permit is required when any individual or organization seeks to provide medical treatment as defined by Phoenix City Code Section 24-45, or to distribute food to the general public for free or for a nominal charge as defined by Phoenix City Code Section 24-45, at an eligible City park, unless an exemption applies.

V. Exemptions

Generally. The permit requirement does not apply to outreach and education activities, or activities involving connection and transportation to services.

Food Distribution. The permit requirement does not apply to:

- A. Private gatherings, including family events such as celebrations, weddings, meals, or reunions, or informal gatherings of family or family friends, where food is served to participants rather than to the general public.
- B. Events that are not open to the general public or events to which the general public is not invited.
- C. The distribution of water or electrolyte beverages.

Medical Treatment. The permit requirement does not apply to:

- A. First responders, including firefighters, law enforcement officers, paramedics, emergency medical technicians, or other individuals who, in the course of their professional duties, respond to law enforcement, fire, medical, hazardous material, or other similar emergencies.
- B. Any person rendering aid to another person experiencing a sudden injury or emergency.
- C. Licensed professionals acting within the scope of their licenses and at an otherwise City-permitted event (for example, a sporting competition, tournament, fun run, or special activity).
- D. The distribution of intranasal naloxone in nonemergency or emergency situations.
- E. The provision of medical care by needle, syringe, or other medical sharp to oneself, one's family member, or a person for whom one is a caregiver where such medication is currently and validly prescribed to the recipient.
- F. Any employee, volunteer, or participant of a program established pursuant to A.R.S. § 36-798.51 who possesses a needle or syringe and who provides verification that the needle or syringe was obtained from an overdose and disease prevention program established pursuant to A.R.S. § 36-798.51.

VI. Application Process

A. Allocation Periods and Timelines

The Director shall establish allocation periods on a seasonal or periodic basis and shall publish the application timelines on the Department's website. Each allocation period announcement shall specify:

1. The dates covered by the allocation period;
2. The dates during which applications will be accepted for initial allocation review;
3. The date by which the Services Permit Allocation Committee will complete its review; and
4. The date by which applicants will be notified of their application status.

B. Rolling Applications

Applications for Parks Services Permits are accepted on a rolling basis for the currently open allocation period, even after the initial application window has closed. Rolling applications will be evaluated for availability based on the criteria set forth in Section VII below.

C. How to Apply

Applicants shall submit a complete Parks Services Permit Request Application, together with all required documentation, to the Director's Office by email at pbs.servicespermit@phoenix.gov. The application and all required forms are available on the Department's website at phoenix.gov/parks/servicespermit.

D. Required Application Information

Each Parks Services Permit Request Application shall include the following:

1. Organization name, address, and contact information for a primary and secondary point of contact.
2. For each requested event: a name and description; the requested date; whether the request is for medical treatment or food distribution; if for medical treatment, information regarding the enclosure(s) that will be used (e.g., medical tents or mobile medical treatment vehicles); the potential number of participants (which may be a reasonable estimate); identification of any additional permits needed; the preferred park location and up to two alternate locations; the requested time; and a signature from an authorized representative.
3. If requesting multiple events, the applicant shall list the event dates in order of priority.

E. Required Documentation

The following documentation must be submitted with the Parks Services Permit Request Application or, if not available at the time of application, no later than one week prior to each event to finalize the permit:

1. **Certificate of Insurance** (for medical treatment permits only). A certificate of general liability insurance with a minimum of \$2,000,000 in coverage, naming the City of Phoenix as both "Additional Insured" and "Certificate Holder," in accordance with the Certificate of Insurance Requirements published by the Department.
2. **Medical Licensure** (for medical treatment permits only). All medical treatment must be provided under the care of a licensed provider acting within the scope of their licensure during the entire event. A copy of each license must be submitted, including, where applicable: CMS Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendment (CLIA) ID number; laboratory name and address of CLIA certificate; and AZDHS license number.
3. **Signed Acknowledgement Form**. The organization representative must sign and return the Medical Treatment/Food Distribution Parks Services Permit Acknowledgement Form.

F. No Fee

There are no fees associated with Parks Services Permits for medical treatment and food distribution.

VII. Review Criteria and Permit Issuance

A. Objective Review Standard

Applications are reviewed by the Director's Office for compliance with Phoenix City Code Section 24-45, these Rules and Procedures, and the Parks Code of Conduct. In evaluating applications, the Department looks only at the objective criteria set forth in the Phoenix City Code, these Rules and Procedures, and the Parks Services Permit Request Application and supporting documentation. The Department makes no judgments about, and extends no preferences or priority to, applicants based on their identity, affiliation, viewpoint, religion, or the content of any speech in which they might engage during their event. The Department's goal is to accommodate all applicants consistent with the Phoenix City Code and the process described herein.

B. General Rule: Approval of Properly Completed Applications

All applicants who submit an application that comports with the Phoenix City Code, these Rules and Procedures, and the Parks Code of Conduct will receive a permit, subject only to the limited exceptions set forth in Section VII(C) immediately below.

C. Exceptions to Approval

An application may be denied, in whole or in part, only if one or more of the following circumstances apply:

1. **Competing Requests or Events.** There are competing requests from two or more applicants for the same eligible park on the same date or there is another previously-approved event at the same park on the same date and both events cannot be accommodated.
2. **Monthly Permit Limit.** Two Parks Services Permits have already been approved for the requested eligible park in the requested calendar month. No more than two Parks Services Permits shall be issued for the same eligible park in any calendar month.
3. **Blackout Dates or Park Site Closures.** The requested date is one of the designated Blackout Dates on which the Parks Department does not issue any permits, or is a date on which the requested park will be closed for regular maintenance, park construction projects, or emergency situations.
4. **Ineligible Park.** The requested park is not an Eligible Park.
5. **Incomplete Application.** The application is materially incomplete, noncompliant, or does not include required documentation. In such cases, the applicant will be notified of the deficiency.
6. **Parks Code of Conduct.** The applicant or organization is subject to an in-effect Activity Restriction Notice or is otherwise ineligible under the Parks Code of Conduct or applicable City Code.

D. Resolution of Competing Requests

The Director shall award Permits on a first-come, first-served basis. When two or more applicants request the same eligible park on the same date and both events cannot be accommodated or only

one permit remains available for that park in the applicable calendar month, the Director shall offer the applicant whose application was not received first a permit at an alternative eligible park or on an alternative available date at the requested park. A first-in-time incomplete application will not take priority over a later-in-time complete application. No applicant shall be denied a permit altogether if the applicant has submitted a properly completed application and an alternative eligible park and/or date is available.

VIII. Notification of Application Status

A. Notification

The Director's Office shall notify each applicant in writing (by email or letter) of the status of their application, including whether the application has been approved, approved with modifications, or denied. Such notification shall be provided within 14 days after the application window has closed or, for applications submitted outside of an application window, within 14 days of the application being submitted

B. Approved Applications

For approved applications, the notification shall include the approved park locations, dates, and times, along with instructions for confirming acceptance and submitting any remaining required documentation. Official permits will be issued 72 hours prior to each approved Parks Services Permitted Event. If acceptance is not received within the timeframe specified in the notification, the allocation may be canceled and reassigned.

C. Denial or Modification—Written Explanation

If an application is denied or modified, the Director shall provide the applicant with a written communication that:

1. Identifies the specific reason(s) for the denial or modification, referencing any applicable provision(s) of these Rules and Procedures, the Phoenix City Code, or the Parks Code of Conduct;
2. If the denial is due to competing requests or the monthly permit limit, identifies the alternative eligible parks and dates that are available; and
3. Provides contact information for the Director's Office so that the applicant may discuss the decision and explore available alternatives.

D. Right to Request Reconsideration

An applicant whose application or Parks Services Permit has been denied or canceled may submit a written request for reconsideration to the Director's Office within fourteen (14) calendar days of receipt of the denial notification. The request for reconsideration shall state the grounds on which the applicant believes the denial was in error or identify changed circumstances that warrant reconsideration. The Director shall respond in writing to any request for reconsideration within fourteen (14) calendar days of receipt. The Director's response shall explain the basis for the

decision on reconsideration. An applicant who fails to submit a timely written request for reconsideration has no right to appeal as set forth below.

Requests for reconsideration should be submitted by email to pks.servicespermit@phoenix.gov.

E. Right to Appeal

An applicant whose application or Parks Services Permit remains denied or canceled after reconsideration may submit a written appeal to the City Manager within seven (7) calendar days of the date of the Director's reconsideration response. Appeals received after this period will not be considered, absent good cause. The appeal shall state the grounds on which the applicant believes the Director's denial was in error. The scope of an appeal may not extend beyond the scope of the written request for reconsideration. The City Manager will issue a final decision in writing within a reasonable period of time not to exceed thirty (30) calendar days. The final decision shall identify and explain the basis of the City Manager's determination. The City Manager's decision is final and is not subject to further appeal.

Appeals should be submitted by email to the Director's Office at pks.servicespermit@phoenix.gov. The Director shall promptly transmit all such appeals to the City Manager.

IX. Permit Requirements and Conditions

A. Event Duration and Timing

Parks Services Permit events are allotted for a two-hour service period, plus a 30-minute setup period and a 30-minute teardown period. Events may be scheduled between 8:00 a.m. (or park opening, whichever is later) and 10:00 p.m. (or park closing, if earlier than 10:00 p.m.). Users may not set up or leave private equipment in the park prior to or after the stated permit time.

B. Permitted Locations for Medical Treatment Events Within Parks

Medical Treatment Events are permitted in parking lot areas or other hardscape areas designated by the Department, excluding sports courts, designated picnic areas, sidewalks, perimeter walks, and roadways, or similar dedicated park amenity spaces.

C. Equipment

1. **Medical Treatment Events:** Approved equipment includes medical tents or similar temporary structures with a roof, all opaque sides, and a tarp or other impermeable floor to ensure patient privacy and containment of waste; and medical vehicles (ambulances, RVs, or mobile medical treatment vehicles) that are equipped and intended for mobile medical treatment within the enclosed space of the vehicle.
2. **Food Distribution Events:** Approved equipment includes tables, chairs, open-air popup tents, and trash receptacles.
3. No vehicles are allowed on non-designated parking areas found in the park. Violation of this requirement will result in cancellation of the permit.

D. Display of Permit and Signage

1. The approved Parks Services Permit must be displayed at each service event. The permit holder and all personnel covered by the permit shall abide by all stipulations of use set forth in the permit.
2. Each service event must be posted with signage identifying the services provider.

E. Waste Removal

Each permitted service organization or organizer is responsible for cleaning up all debris generated from any medical treatment or food distribution event, including cups, water bottles, wrappers, and similar items. Each organizer must haul away any waste that does not fit within, or cannot lawfully be disposed in, existing trash receptacles in the area of the event.

F. Parks Code of Conduct

All permit holders and event participants must comply with the Parks Code of Conduct and all applicable Phoenix City Code provisions.

G. Insurance

The certificate of insurance must remain valid through the organization's service allocation period. Organizations are required to submit a new certificate prior to any expiration date.

H. Neighborhood Etiquette

Permitted users must not negatively affect surrounding neighborhoods through excessive vehicle parking (legal or illegal), trash left on streets, loud noise, or similar disturbances. Violations may result in park site cancellations and schedule modifications.

X. Permit Transfers, Cancellations, and Modifications

A. No Transfers

Parks Services Permits are not transferrable. Permit holders may not assign their scheduled Services Permit time to other groups or resell their event time. Any such action will result in the loss of future allocation privileges.

B. Cancellation and Modification Requests

Permit holders must contact their park site representative a minimum of two business days prior to any cancellation or modification. Early notification allows the Department to open times for other organizations that may be seeking event times.

C. No-Shows

Recognizing the high demand for park use, organizations should only request eligible sites they intend to use. More than three no-shows may result in cancellation of any then-existing future permits from the requestor.

XI. Prohibited Activities

The following activities are prohibited in parks, with or without a Parks Services Permit:

- A. The sale, distribution, or exchange of syringes or needles.
- B. Needle-exchange programs.
- C. The distribution of needle or intramuscular naloxone (except as permitted in emergency situations).
- D. Vending without prior approval from the Director (for one vendor) or the Parks and Recreation Board (for multiple vendors).
- E. Service of alcoholic beverages at medical treatment or food distribution service events. Beer permits will not be issued in conjunction with Parks Services Permits.

XII. Progressive Enforcement

A. Enforcement Framework

Violations of Phoenix City Code Section 24-45 are subject to progressive enforcement as follows:

1. **First Violation:** Education, documented warning, and a letter of violation from the Director.
2. **Second Violation:** Citation, 120-day trespass notice from all City parks, 120-day Activity Restriction Notice for providing services requiring a Parks Services Permit at all City parks, and forfeiture of existing approved permits.
3. **Third Violation:** Second citation, one-year trespass notice from all City parks, one-year Activity Restriction Notice, and forfeiture of existing approved permits.
4. **Fourth Violation:** Third citation, additional one-year trespass notice from all City parks, and indefinite forfeiture of eligibility to apply for Parks Services Permits.

B. First-Violation Procedures

For a first violation where no prior notices exist, staff will educate the permit holder, request compliance, take a photograph, document the warning, and notify the Director's Office to complete a letter of violation for the Director's signature. Depending upon the nature of the noncompliance, the event may proceed if all other permit requirements are met. Food distribution events without a permit and with no prior notices may continue, unless safety hazards are present or there are other violations of the Code of Conduct or Phoenix City Code. Medical treatment events without a permit must stop immediately.

C. Violation of Phoenix City Code Section 24-45

Violation of Phoenix City Code Section 24-45 is a Class 1 Misdemeanor.

XIII. Park Conditions and Maintenance

Any concerns with the condition of an assigned park area should be reported immediately to the park site representative listed on the approved Parks Services Permit. Prior to beginning an event, the organization should inspect the area to ensure it is in acceptable condition for the scheduled activity. If at any time a designated park space becomes unsafe or dangerous for public use, the area will be shut down until it is deemed safe again for use. Staff will make every effort to reschedule but cannot guarantee availability. Organizations are not to make any repairs, modifications, alterations, or adjustments to any portion of the designated space.

XIV. Contact Information

For questions, additional assistance, or to submit applications, permit holders and prospective applicants may contact the Director's Office at:

- **Email:** pks.servicespermit@phoenix.gov
- **Phone:** (602) 262-6862
- **Code of Conduct Violation Line:** (602) 495-5458

The Parks Services Permit application and all related materials are available at phoenix.gov/parks/servicespermit.

XV. Amendments

The Director, with the written approval of the City Manager, may amend these Rules and Procedures from time to time as necessary to carry out the purposes of Phoenix City Code Section 24-45. Any amendments shall be published on the Department's website and shall take effect on the date specified therein.

Signed and Adopted by the Director of the City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department on July 10, 2026.


Martin Whitfield, Parks and Recreation Director

Signed and Approved by the City Manager on July 10, 2026.


Ed Zuercher, City Manager