



Plaza Use Policy: Public Event Permits

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the use of Downtown Public Plaza Spaces for scheduled events and performances; to minimize conflict between individual and group Plaza users, and to minimize safety risks to Plaza users and the general public. In addition, securing a Public Plaza Use Permit assists staff with planning and prevents conflicting performances and scheduling.

Scope

This policy applies to uses of the Plaza(s) for a special event intended to attract an audience or convene a group of participants, except events for which a Special Event Lease Agreement is required under the City's Special Events Policy.

All events, scheduled or impromptu, on the Plaza shall not impede pedestrian traffic flow, block, or otherwise obstruct entrances or exits at designated points of egress or endanger the public in any way. Events or gatherings that attract more than 75 participants (Evans Street Breezeway) or more than 150 participants are subject to closure by the City of Florence Police Department. All events inside the designated Plaza spaces are subject to all provisions of the City of Florence Municipal Code.

Permit

Groups or individuals wishing to use a Plaza space for a scheduled event shall obtain a Plaza use permit. Permits are required for events such as performances, vigils, ceremonies, etc. Permit applications can be obtained through the City of Florence Downtown Development Office or by calling 843-678-5912. A plaza permit application must be submitted at least seven (7) days in advance of the proposed event. Once the permit is approved by the City Manager and the Chief of Police, the applicant will be notified and may pick up the approved permit from the Downtown Development Office, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

A Plaza Permit does not grant exclusive use of the plaza. A Plaza Permit is not required for events that have secured or are required to secure a Public Space Lease Agreement.

Fees

There shall be no fees for a Plaza Permit.

Time

Performance-type events are limited to a maximum of two hours, exclusive of set-up and break-down time. Events such as ceremonies, remembrances, vigils, candlelight ceremonies, or other similar types of events are not limited to two hours and are generally approved for the length of time requested in the permit application.

Frequency Limit

No applicant can obtain a Plaza Permit for repeat (or essentially the same) activity or event more than two times per month. However, if a Plaza is available (a permit has not been issued to another applicant)

for the repeat activity applicant's preferred day of the week within seven days of the activity, the applicant may request the preferred date and the existing permit will be modified.

Use of Canopies, Tables, Staging, and Podiums

The City of Florence does not provide canopies/tents, stages, tables, or podiums. Applicants are responsible for bringing in any needed set-up materials. Applicants must ensure that all canopies set up in the space are sufficiently weighted by water barrels or commercially available weights. The use of ground stakes in Plaza spaces is strictly prohibited.

Amplification

The City of Florence does not provide sound amplification equipment. The use of amplifying equipment is subject to all City of Florence noise ordinances for the Downtown Historic District.

Selling Merchandise

Commercial activity such as selling merchandise for private profit is prohibited in Plaza spaces.

Sanitation

Permit holders shall dispose of and, if possible, recycle all debris from the event. Failure to remove any trash created by the permitted use will incur a cleaning fee of \$100 charged to the permit holder.

Other Prohibited Activities

- Cooking/Open Flame (exception for candlelight vigils, but LED lights preferred)
- Use of/or service of alcohol
- Commercial activity of any kind

Criteria for Approval/Denial of Permitted Use Application

In issuing a permit for Plaza use, the City considers whether:

- The application indicates the requirements above have been or appear reasonably likely to be met;
- Another event is scheduled for the same time and day/weekend;
- The event is reasonably likely to cause injury to persons or property;
- The event will substantially interfere with the safe and orderly movement of pedestrians; and
- The Plaza is adequate for the size and nature of the event
- The application shows the applicant has rectified any problems that arose under a previous Plaza permit

Non-Compliance

Any event inside a Plaza, whether scheduled or unscheduled, that unreasonably impedes pedestrian flow, blocks traffic on surrounding streets or violates the provisions of this policy may be subject to immediate closure by the City of Florence Police Department.

Insurance

Proof of liability insurance naming the City of Florence and Florence Downtown Development Corp. must be provided prior to the approved permitted use date of a Downtown Public Plaza. This liability coverage must also indicate the location of the event on the Certificate of Insurance.