



# Arts Events in Toronto Parks

## A Handbook for Arts Organizations

**This handbook has been compiled to make it easier for artists and arts organizations to program arts events in Toronto parks.**

Toronto residents, community groups and neighbourhoods benefit from the excellent, engaging and entertaining arts programming presented in the city's parks. City Council and Toronto Cultural Services and Parks staff encourage programming in the parks and recognize that such programming helps to make Toronto an exciting community to live, work and visit. Community programs in City parks are arranged through obtaining a permit from the Management Services Branch, Customer Service unit of the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division. These permits are issued according to the "Special Event Policies and Procedures for City Parklands."

This handbook was developed as a result of consultations between Toronto arts organizations, Toronto Arts Council, Toronto's Parks and Environment Committee, and the Divisions of Economic Development and Culture and Parks, Forestry and Recreation. It reflects the city's customer-based service approach to permits. The handbook is intended specifically for non-profit arts groups planning to present arts events in city parks and does not replace the Toronto Special Events Planning Guide ([http://www.toronto.ca/special\\_events/event-support/](http://www.toronto.ca/special_events/event-support/)). It will be essential to refer to the guide if your event includes alcohol, food service, street closures or sales permits.

Special thanks to Councillor Paula Fletcher for her leadership in creating relationships between City Parks and the arts community, to Pam Jackson and Jaime McCaig, City Parks, Forestry & Recreation Division, to Susan Kohler, Economic Development & Culture and to Susan Serran in Councillor Fletcher's office. In particular, thanks are due to the many artists and arts administrators who attended meetings, completed surveys and volunteered time and advice on how the parks permit process could be improved for arts groups.

# Arts Events in Toronto Parks

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	3
Step by Step Instructions .....	4
Application Requirements for Every Arts Event.....	5
Additional Requirements for Some Events.....	6
Troubleshooting .....	8
Arts Permit Checklist.....	9

Clay and Paper Theatre in Dufferin Grove Park – photo courtesy of Clay and Paper Theatre



## Introduction

**SPECIAL NOTE:** This handbook was originally published in 2011 following consultation with arts organizations and city staff to reduce difficulties and concerns with permitting parks for arts events. In addition to providing information about the best procedures, the following changes were made to arts permitting requirements:

- 1) Renewing arts events – those events which are planned for the same date in the same park as the previous year - are given first right of refusal for renewal. **Conditional approvals for these events will be issued within 30 days of the parks permit application being made** to allow arts organizations to plan and promote their events. These conditional approvals will note all requirements that are outstanding and must be fulfilled prior to the issuance of the permit.
- 2) For arts events that are requesting permits for different dates or in different parks; or for first time arts events: **Conditional approvals for these events will be given 30 days following receipt of the application, but not before March 31 of each year.** These conditional approvals will note all requirements that are outstanding and must be fulfilled prior to the issuance of the permit.
- 3) If you are planning more than one event in more than one park, please contact Stacy Babb, Customer Service, Parks, Forestry & Recreation, 416-338-2609 or [sbabb@toronto.ca](mailto:sbabb@toronto.ca) who will liaise with the appropriate Permit Officers and Park Supervisors.

Dusk Dances at Withrow Park - Joseph Michael Photography



## Step By Step Instructions for Permitting Arts Events In Toronto Parks

**Eligibility:** Parks, Forestry and Recreation policy stipulates that you must be a non-profit or registered charitable organization to apply for a parks permit. If you are an individual artist wanting a park permit, you must collaborate with a non-profit or charitable organization to make an application.

**Step 1:** Read this handbook in its entirety to be sure you understand all the potential requirements for your event. If you are planning an event that will include food or alcohol, street closures or artwork sales, also read the [City's special events planning guide](#).

**Step 2:** Make sure you know the kind of event you are planning (dates, which park(s), what type of art exhibition or performance event, and your anticipated audience and numbers of participants).

**Step 3:** The minimum deadline for receipt of a permit application is 6 weeks before the first day of the event. However, many events, especially those including alcohol, food and road closures, will require additional time. **It is recommended that all permit applications be made 12 weeks in advance of the event.**

**Step 4:** Contact the City Parks Permit Officer.

- Find out if desired park is available on desired date
- If it is available, alert them that you will be submitting an application; if it is not available on the desired date, find out alternative dates and/or parks
- City Parks Permit Officers Contact Information:

### By City District:

Toronto Downtown - Jaime McCaig 416-338-2614 [jmcaig@toronto.ca](mailto:jmcaig@toronto.ca)

North York - Gloria Peters 416-338-2572 [gpeters@toronto.ca](mailto:gpeters@toronto.ca)

Etobicoke/York - Gloria Peters 416-338-2572 [gpeters@toronto.ca](mailto:gpeters@toronto.ca)

Scarborough/East York - Special Events Permit Officer 416-338-3294

### If more than one event, in more than one district:

Stacy Babb, 416-338-2609 [sbabb@toronto.ca](mailto:sbabb@toronto.ca)

Once you have a Permit Officer assigned to your event, this person will be your primary contact and will act as a liaison between you and the Park Supervisor.

**Step 5:** Complete all necessary applications; see next page.



## Application Requirements for Every Arts Event Held in Any City Park

- 1) [Special Event in a City Park or Facility Application](#); a site drawing is required as part of the application
- 2) Waste Diversion Plan will be required before permit is issued. You are responsible for the cleanup and removal of garbage and debris and to restore the area to its original condition. For information on waste diversion, [see here](#). You are required to complete and follow a [Waste Diversion Plan](#).
- 3) Insurance – comprehensive liability insurance is required to get a permit. If your organization does not have an insurance policy, consider making the parks permit application in partnership with an arts organization or other eligible non-profit organization that does have insurance. If your organization has Comprehensive Liability Insurance, your insurance company or broker can provide the required Certificate of Insurance. Generally, this insurance will include:
  - Liability coverage – \$2,000,000 coverage limit is generally required but that may be revised based on the format and content of your Event;
  - The City of Toronto named as an additional insured;
  - A cross liability/severability of interest clause.
- 4) Payment of Permit Fee will be required before permit is issued

### Special Event Permit Fees

<u>Estimated Attendance</u>	<u>Permit Fee (includes HST)</u>
Up to 200	\$87.95
201-300	\$144.64
301-400	\$179.17
401-500	\$257.08
501-800	\$323.81
801+	\$460.24

*Fees based on per area, per facility and per day, are subject to change.*

**Fees are per area, per day.** Note however that if you are getting a permit for a number of days, including set up days, different fee amounts can apply to different days. For example, the set up and tear down day would each be charged the minimum fee and the fee based on attendance would only apply to public performance/event days. Fees will not be waived or reduced for any organization receiving a grant from TAC or the City.

## Additional Requirements Depending Upon Nature of Event

- 1) Washrooms – Washrooms in city parks are normally open from May to October. Check specific dates for the park in question with your Park Supervisor. (Ask your Permit Officer for contact information for the relevant Park Supervisor). Speak to your Park Supervisor to make sure that the washrooms in the relevant park will not be under construction or closed for any other reason during your event dates; you are also required to provide portable washroom facilities if alcohol is being served or if the event is large.
- 2) Large Events - Damage Deposit (range \$1,000 - \$5,000)
- 3) Exemption to the City Noise By-Law: this will be required in the case of amplified sound or performance in proximity to residential areas, or if the Event runs past 11PM. **You will be informed if your permit is conditional on provision of a noise by-law exemption.** Speakers used for sound amplification must face into the park and are not to be directed on to the street.
  - Apply for a Noise By-law Exemption if required, *at least 2 weeks before your event*; payment will be required; \$100 fee as of Nov 2010.
  - Download an [Application for a Noise Exemption Permit](#); or contact a City Municipal Licensing & Standards District Office by area and request a Noise Exemption Application

### ***Toronto and East York District (Main)***

Toronto City Hall  
100 Queen Street West  
Tel: 416-392-6940

Red Pepper Theatre – photo courtesy of Red Pepper Spectacle

### ***Toronto and East York District (West)***

2238 Dundas Street West  
Tel: 416-338-0800

### ***Toronto and East York District (North)***

666 Eglinton Avenue West  
Tel: 416-338-0711

### ***Scarborough District***

Scarborough Civic Centre  
150 Borough Drive  
Tel: 416-396-7071

### ***North York District***

North York Civic Centre  
5100 Yonge Street  
Tel: 416-395-7011

### ***Etobicoke York District***

2 Civic Centre Court  
Tel: 416-394-2535

- 4) Electricity – All parks do not have access to



electrical power. It is very likely that you will need to provide your own power packs or generators for the event. All portable generators must be enclosed (barricade or snow fencing). Specific requirements may be discussed with your Park Supervisor.

- 5) Parking – There is no guaranteed parking. In some parks, it is possible to request additional information from the Parks Supervisor regarding parking at the specific park.
- 6) Serving or Selling Liquor – there are many additional requirements if your arts event is planning to serve or sell alcohol – see the [Special Events Planning Guide](#)
- 7) Serving or Selling Food – there are many additional requirements if your arts event is planning to serve or sell food – see the [Special Events Planning Guide](#)
- 8) Sales – if your event includes sales ie. of artwork, vendor permits are required. See the [Special Events Planning Guide](#)
- 9) Police, fire and EMS services – essential if you are serving alcohol, if you are closing roads, if you are holding a large event requiring security, crowd control see the [Special Events Planning Guide](#)
- 10) Street closures – there are many additional requirements if you would like to close a street adjacent to the park for your event. See the [Special Events Planning Guide](#)

MAYBELLEarts in Maybelle Park - photo Katherine Fleitas



## Troubleshooting

If you have questions regarding permits, requirements, approvals etc, your first stop is to arrange a meeting with your Permit Officer. Contact information on page 3 of this handbook.

For further information, please contact:

### **City Parks**

Jaime McCaig, Parks Permit Officer  
416-338-2614  
[jmcaig@toronto.ca](mailto:jmcaig@toronto.ca)

### **Toronto Arts Council**

Susan Wright, Director of Operations  
416-392-6802 x211  
[susan@torontoartscouncil.org](mailto:susan@torontoartscouncil.org)

### **Toronto Cultural Services**

Nadira Pattison, Manager, Arts Services  
416-338-1263  
[npattis1@toronto.ca](mailto:npattis1@toronto.ca)

Day of Delight Dufferin Grove Park – photo courtesy of Clay and Paper Theatre





## Arts In the Parks Permit Checklist

If your event includes food, alcohol or street closures – refer to the City’s

[Special Events Planning Guide](#)

Yes, I have:

- Read this Handbook
- Contacted my Parks Permit Officer
- Completed the Special Event in a City Park Application
- Prepared the Site Drawing for the Application
- Completed a Waste Diversion Plan
- Provided proof of Insurance
- Paid the Permit Fee
- Checked with my Park Supervisor if washrooms will be open during your event
- Checked to see if I need to bring in portable power generation
- Checked to see if I need to arrange for parking

Dusk Dances in Withrow Park – photo by Joseph Michael Photography

