



City of Boston Permitting Requirements for Outdoor Events

Anyone hosting an outdoor event on public or private property needs to submit a Special Event application. An application is required whether the event is free or ticketed, open to the public or invitation only. To hold a special event, HMS Room Scheduling may need to get permitted through several departments at the city, as a result the minimum requirement for submission of permitting is 4-6 weeks depending on the level of need. (Source: [COB Permitting](#))

HMS' embedded dining vendor, Restaurant Associates will take care of the catering and beer/wine permitting requirements on your behalf in instances where you cater through them. For outdoor events you are required to use Restaurant Associates for beer/wine service related to the complexity of the requirements.

In all below instances, HMS Room Scheduling will coordinate the required applications and materials on the reserving party's behalf and submit to the City of Boston who prefers to have a single point of contact at the school. The reserving party will be responsible for obtaining required documentation from outside vendors. For these reasons, time limits noted below are strict.

Common event inclusions that require permitting or licensure at the city level:

- Outside caterer (not Restaurant Associates) requires a Health Permit (can be part of entertainment license or standalone) – caterer must be approved through City of Boston and supply the following to HMS Room Scheduling:
 - Health certificate
 - Caterer's license
- Beer/wine service requires a special one-day alcohol license* (\$75) – Notice = 30 days unless combined with an entertainment license then 6 weeks
 - Application
 - Site plan or floor plan indicating alcohol service and consumption area
 - Security and Operations Plan
 - HMS Certificate of Insurance (supplied by Room Scheduling)
 - HMS Evidence of Insurance letter (supplied by Room Scheduling)
 - HMS Workers Comp letter (supplied by Room Scheduling)

**If your caterer holds a State of Massachusetts [12C Caterer's License](#) AND your event is NOT open to the public, the event is exempt from the special one-day license process and your caterer holds responsibility for written notice to the local police chief and Local Licensing Authority 48 hours before the event. You are required to send a copy of the license to room_scheduling@hms.harvard.edu to have on file.*



- Amplified sound requires short form permit (\$45) – Notice = 30 days unless combined with an entertainment license then 6 weeks
- AV rigging or visual component, live amplified music, stage (under 18” high, **over 18” not permitted**), food trucks (need to select trucks already approved by city of Boston, cityofboston.gov/foodtrucks), carnivals, live animals requires an Entertainment License (\$75) - Notice = 6 weeks
 - Application
 - Site plan or floor plan indicating location of all elements
 - HMS Certificate of Insurance (supplied by Room Scheduling)
 - HMS Evidence of Insurance letter (supplied by Room Scheduling)
 - HMS Workers Comp letter (supplied by Room Scheduling)
 - Health Certificates and fire insurance for all food trucks/purveyors/vendors

Other items that may force an entertainment license for consideration:

- Tents over 10’x10’ or 10x10’ groupings
- Lawn games
- Athletics
- Dancing/performers
- Karaoke
- MMA
- Projectors or TVs
- Generators
- DJs
- Carnival style games
- Enclosed spaces with fencing or gates

Pricing for all permitting is dictated by the City of Boston and subject to change at their discretion. HMS Room Scheduling will chargeback the reserving department accordingly.

With questions, please reach out to the [Outdoor Events Coordinator](#) who will liaise with [Devonne Countryman-Monteiro](#), Campus Services Manager and the City of Boston event permitting liaison at HMS.