



City of Ojai Special Events Policy

Introduction

Special events are important gatherings that remind us of Ojai's rich heritage. They strengthen community pride, offer local entertainment opportunities, and support the efforts of businesses and non-profit organizations. It is the City's goal to support safe and successful events while protecting the character of our community and minimizing adverse effects on residents and neighborhoods. As interest in local events and crowds grow, the City will continue to gauge the impact on the local community and may consider adjusting the number or placement of events throughout the year.

Types of Events

- Concerts and Shows
- Community Festivals*
- Smaller Public Gatherings
- Races, Rides and Parades
- Events on Private or Commercial Property

Effective July 2022, the City is not accepting applications for new festivals at Libbey Park.

Per City ordinance, tour bus parking is not allowed on residential streets

Primary Event Sites

Libbey Bowl

The renovated Libbey Bowl Amphitheater hosts both commercial and nonprofit events. It offers fixed seating for 973 and lawn space for an additional 200. The City contracts through 2024 with regional promoter Sterling Venue Ventures to bring 10 to 24 events to Libbey Bowl annually. Nonprofit organizations may also rent the Bowl at a discounted rate, resulting in regular use by local schools, houses of worship, and community groups. The City also offers a limited number of fee waivers for local nonprofit groups.

The City allows amplified sound at the Bowl only between 10 a.m. and 10 p.m. **Sound is monitored onsite, and staff alerted if levels surpass 70 dB.** The [Libbey Bowl Policy](#) provides additional detailed rules regarding sound levels, public art and tree protection, and security requirements. Not following these guidelines may result in a shutdown of the event and denial of future use. As Libbey Bowl is a community-facing venue, private events are discouraged and require special permission from the City Manager.



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Primary Event Sites

Libbey Park

Libbey Park is home to the City's five legacy festivals: The Ojai Tennis Tournament, Art in the Park, The Ojai Music Festival, Lavender Festival, and Ojai Day. Public agencies, non-profit, educational and service groups may also rent Libbey Park for events of less than 150 people. **All Libbey Park festivals are limited to 75 exhibitors.** Rental areas include the Bandstand/Gazebo, the Fountain, and adjacent lawn, as well as the Oak Tree Grove connecting these areas. Users must follow the tree protection guidelines outlined in the application packet. The playground/picnic table area is not available to rent and must remain accessible at all times. The City allows amplified sound at Libbey Park only between 10 a.m. and 10 p.m. Libbey Park rentals are limited to not-for-profit groups. Effective July 2022, **no new large festivals expecting over 150 people will be allowed at Libbey Park.** Legacy festivals are excluded.

Public Right-of-Way

Parades, bike rides, and marathons may request permits allowing their event to take place in or impact the public right-of-way, which includes streets, sidewalks, and public parking lots. Festivals and concerts may also use the right-of-way for site preparation, parking, or event activities. As Ojai Avenue is a continuation of State Route 150, right-of-way events may fall under both City and State jurisdiction and may require a separate Caltrans permit.

Sarzotti Park

Sarzotti Park, at the Ojai Recreation Center site, rents individual picnic shelters with space for 50-100 to gather for private or public events. The lawn area and several rooms at the Recreation Center are also available to rent for private or public activities. The site does not allow amplified music.

Kent Hall

Kent Hall is available to rent for gatherings of up to 75 people. The room is located on the second floor of Little House on the City Hall Campus and is wheelchair accessible by ramp. The City gives priority to educational, civic, cultural, and service groups and organizations. Kent Hall is not available for commercial meetings unless authorized by the City of Ojai. Facility rental applications are online at ojai.ca.gov/kenthall

Commercial and Residential Sites

While facility rentals are managed by the City Manager's Office or the Recreation Department, Commercial and residential events fall under the Community Development Department. Commercial or residential events drawing fewer than 1,000 people may require a Temporary Use Permit from Community Development. Commercial/residential events drawing more than 1,000 people at a given time must apply for a Special Event Permit and the City Manager's Office will determine if a permit can be issued. All commercial and residential events must abide by the City's noise standards (Ojai Municipal Code §5- 11).



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Permitting of Events

1. All events that use City parks or facilities will require a City of Ojai **Facilities Use Permit** or a contract with the event organizer. (*Ojai Municipal Code §4-3.401*). Organizers agree to follow all permit rules, including a **limit of 75 exhibitors for Libbey Park festivals**.
2. Events that impact the public right of way: including City sidewalks, bike paths, driveways, or street areas, require a City of Ojai **Encroachment Permit**. Non-City right-of-ways, such as Ojai Avenue (State Hwy 150) and parts of the Ojai Bike path may require a second permit from Ventura County or Caltrans. This includes bike rides, marathons, and parades on City streets. (*Ojai Municipal Code §7-1.103*)
3. Additional **permits from outside agencies** may be required for food or alcohol service or closure of State Hwy 150/Ojai Avenue. While the City may advise the applicant if outside permits appear to be required, understanding and acquiring outside permits is the responsibility of the applicant. The City requires proof of all required outside permits before the event.
4. Events and event overflow parking at Commercial sites may require a **Temporary Use Permit**. (*Ojai Municipal Code §10-2.2202*)
5. City **Special Event Permits** are limited to large outdoor events drawing over 1,000 people at a single time and not on public or government property. (*Ojai Municipal Code § 4-17.201*)
6. Permit Fees are determined by the **City of Ojai Fee Schedule** and all permits must be paid, with proof of compliance submitted to the City of Ojai before the event. (*Ojai Municipal Code §9-1.204*)
7. Vendors at weekend community festivals affiliated with a non-profit group are not required to acquire a City of Ojai business license. (*Ojai Municipal Code §6-1.102*)
8. Libbey Bowl events must abide by the Libbey Bowl Policy. **This includes sound limits of 95dB at the soundboard and 70dB at the perimeter of the Bowl as measured by the City's sound monitor. The monitor alerts staff when perimeter measurements surpass the limit.**

Why the City Might Not Authorize an Event

Ojai Municipal Code §4-3.403 defines the following situations where the City Manager may choose to disallow an event on City property or the City's right of way.

- The activity interferes or detracts from public enjoyment of a park.
- The activity impacts the promotion of public health, welfare, safety and recreation.
- The activity is reasonably anticipated to incite violence, crime, or disorderly conduct
- The activity will entail unusual, extraordinary, or burdensome expense or security operation by the City.
- The facilities desired have been reserved for other purposes.



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The Application Process

The City's centralized online application process aims to provide a streamlined customer experience and reduce waste while ensuring key departments have easy access to event documents. The City will take phone applications or provide paper copies to those without computer access.

1. Except for Sarzotti Park, which is managed by the Recreation Department, and commercial events, which are managed by Community Development, all public event requests use a single, online application, found at ojai.ca.gov/events. The City Manager's Office, Public Works, Ojai Police, and Finance will each have the opportunity to review each application. Applications must be submitted 90 days before the event date.
2. The City will review the application to determine which internal permits are required and coordinate the process. The City will also advise the applicant if it looks like external permits for food, alcohol, or Caltrans encroachment are required. However, acquiring external permits is the applicant's responsibility.
3. The City will notify the applicant regarding time and space availability, required permits, and security needs. The Finance department will also send an invoice for outstanding deposits, facility fees, and any estimated police hours, payable before the event date.
4. If requested by the applicant or recommended by the City, City staff may conduct a pre-event walk-through.
5. Before final event authorization, the applicant must pay all fees and provide an insurance waiver, proof of required City, County, and State permits, and any other requested documents, which may include maps and security plans.
6. Following the event, staff will conduct a post-event walk-through before returning any security deposit.

*About Free Speech Events

- The principal purpose of a free speech event is the expression of free speech rights as protected by the First Amendment of the US Constitution or by Article, 1, Section 2 of the California Constitution. Examples include handing out leaflets, gathering signatures, informally speaking to a group at a public park.
- Events must comply the City's Noise Standards and Regulations. *Ojai Municipal Code §5- 11*
- No interference with traffic or obstruction of ingress or egress.
- No use of structure or equipment that require a health and safety inspection.