

## READY TO TRY YOUR OWN POP UP?

Here are some things you should know...

There are two ways to approach a temporary event, by the book or on the fly. It's best to have the property owners' permission, all city permits, liability insurance, and private security, but getting all this can be time-consuming and expensive. Instead, you might do whatever you think you can get away with and deal with the consequences after the fact, as long as you don't hurt anyone or break anything. There is also a third way, the almost legitimate approach. You do your best to follow all the rules and keep everything by the book, but you make compromises and take short-cuts when absolutely necessary. Whatever approach you choose, remember to be safe and responsible.

**PERMITS AND APPROVALS** You can't fight city hall, so make friends there instead. Specific approvals will vary depending on the event, but assume that you are going to need some kind of permit. It's best to have a friend on the inside to help guide you through the approvals process. Start early. Very early. In Cleveland, some permits you may need include:

**TENT PERMIT:** You'll need a permit if your tent(s) are larger than 10-foot square. Stick with small tents and avoid the permit process.

**STAGE PERMIT:** A permit is required for stages or platforms that are more than 12 inches high. Go with a lower stage whenever possible.

**TEMPORARY OCCUPANCY PERMIT:** If you're using a vacant building for your event, you will need a temporary occupancy permit. To apply for a permit, you must have a floor plan and a site plan.

**SPECIAL EVENT APPROVAL:** The City of Cleveland has a special events committee that has representatives from all the city departments you will ever need to talk to. You may be required to meet with this committee. If so, you need to submit your application well in advance of your event. The committee meets monthly. See below for contact information.

**FIRE:** In Cleveland, a bonfire requires an open burn permit. You need to get the permit form from the Health Department. Fill it out and take it to the Fire Department for their approval. Then back to the Health Department where they issue the actual permit. Only clean, dry wood can be burned—no wood with paint or varnish, or treated wood, or garbage, or any kind of plastic, rubber, etc. Limit your fire to no larger than five feet wide by five feet tall. Permits for larger fires are harder to get. Remember to have fire extinguishers on hand. Marshmallows are also important.

**WATER:** Fire hydrants are everywhere, but you need a permit from the Water Department to tap a hydrant. They will ask you to estimate the amount of water you plan to use and pay for it in advance. If you need to use a lot of water over an extended period of time, the Water Department may decide to meter your usage. But for most events, your estimate will suffice. To tap a fire hydrant, you need a big lug wrench. Righty-tighty, lefty loosey. If you plan to transport water some distance from the hydrant to your site, you will need a fire hose. A garden hose will not work. Many building contractors also have fire hoses, so see if someone will lend you one.

**ELECTRICITY:** If possible, get your power for sound equipment and lighting from nearby buildings. But don't go crazy with extension cords, because this is dangerous. You can rent a generator, although they are noisy and will require an electrical permit from the Building Department. Only a registered electrician can pull an electrical permit. If you only need a little electricity, you can get a power inverter and use your car battery.

**FOOD AND DRINK:** Local restaurants make great event partners. Invite them to set up a stand and sell things at your event. Food vendors need a permit from the Health Department. Alcohol adds to the fun, but it makes everything more complicated. Selling alcohol requires a liquor permit. Even if you give drinks away, your liability insurance premium will be higher and you may need additional security.

**SUPPLIES** The world is full of free stuff. Check the tree lawns in your neighborhood for all kinds of things that can enhance your event. Befriend someone with a truck.

**WEATHER** You can't control the weather so stop worrying about it. Everything will be alright. Really.

**SPONSORS** Know your audience. If you have clear objectives and a pure heart, people will help you and support your event. Corporate sponsorships can be useful. Red Bull, Pabst Blue Ribbon, Glaceau Vitamin Water, and Starbucks seem especially willing to give their products away. Some sponsors will even give you cash if you ask nicely.

**TRASH** For small events, you can haul away the trash yourself. But if you're expecting lots of people, you should have a trash dumpster on site. There are many private waste haulers, but the City of Cleveland's waste service is the most affordable and efficient. The city will deliver and pick up a small dumpster for around \$200.

**RESTROOMS** You can rent portable restrooms for about \$100 per unit per day. Rent at least two, even if you're expecting a small crowd, because you'll want to have a back-up if one malfunctions. Or see if you can find a nearby restaurant with a friendly owner. Offer to buy food from the restaurant in exchange for use of their restrooms during the event.

**ROOFTOPS** are great locations for temporary events, but the logistics can be tricky. Make sure your roof has a parapet wall or a high railing around the perimeter. Open roof edges are dangerous and you will run into problems with the Building Department unless you can secure the edge in a code-conforming way. Your roof will need at least two means of egress (two ways to get up and down from the roof). Don't forget about accessibility—people with limited mobility may want to attend your event. Plan early, not at the last minute.

**PROMOTION** Print ads and radio spots can be a big expense, but sometimes newspapers and radio stations will provide free advertising in exchange for being the “official sponsor” of an event. MySpace, YouTube, and E-Vite.com are useful for getting the word out. Even better are local blogs and websites. Our favorites in Cleveland include:

- coolcleveland.com
- iheartcleveland.com
- stonecoldbikini.com
- toistudio.com
- pluggedincleveland.com
- 10000littleideas.com
- gcbi.org
- culdc.kent.edu/blog
- downtownclevelandalliance.com
- historicgateway.org
- warehousedistrict.org
- pluggedincleveland.com
- freetimes.com
- cleveland.com
- positivelycleveland.com

**INSURANCE** Ask the property owner(s) if their existing liability coverage includes special events. It probably doesn't, but they may be willing to get a rider to their policy that will cover your event. Or, you can purchase special event insurance—there are a number of national agencies that provide event insurance. Most have websites where you can fill out an online application. Your insurer will need to know the details of the event, how many people you expect, how much coverage you need, and whether you plan to serve alcohol. Rates are based on how many people attend the event. For example, a typical policy (\$2 million general aggregate, \$1 million per occurrence, \$1 million personal injury, \$300,000 damage to premises and \$5,000 medical) might cost \$500 for a small event, \$1,500 or more for a large event. Alcohol, live music, and other factors will increase the insurance premium. Use a high estimate for attendance figures because if more people turn up than you estimated, your insurance will be invalid.

The property owner, the event organizer, major sponsors, the City of Cleveland, and other partners may need to be listed as “additional insured” on your policy. Your insurer should issue certificates of insurance for each insured party. If your event includes sports or risky activities, get all participants to sign a liability waiver.

**SECURITY** Consider hiring off duty police officers to keep an eye on things. The cost varies, but expect to pay around \$30 per hour per officer.

**SAFETY** If adventurous activities are planned, consider having an EMS crew and an ambulance on site during your event. The cost will depend on the length of the event and the size of the EMS crew, but expect to pay \$200-300.

**CLEVELAND CONTACTS:**

**WATER DEPARTMENT** (Hydrant permit) 216.664.2444 x7513

**FIRE DEPARTMENT** (Open burn permit, other approvals) 216.664.6664

**PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT, DIVISION OF AIR QUALITY** (Open burn permit) 216.664.4607

**DIVISION OF ASSESSMENTS & LICENSES** (Food vendor permits) 216.664.2260

**BUILDING DEPARTMENT** (Building, electrical, and temporary occupancy permits) 216.664.2282

**PLANNING DEPARTMENT** (Zoning approvals and moral support) 216.664.2210

**OFFICE OF SPECIAL EVENTS** (Scheduling a meeting with the Special Events Committee) 216.664.2012

**WASTE** (Dumpster delivery and pick-up) 216.664.3772

**EMS** (On-site emergency crew) 216.664.2001

**POP UP CITY:**

Have a question or need advice?  
216.357.3426 or info@popupcleveland.com



**TEMPORARY USE  
ADVICE & CONTACTS**

