

A	SPECIAL EVENTS GENERALLY
<p>This section provides general information on the County’s regulation of special events and minor commercial public assembly activities including when events and activities are regulated by the County Zoning Ordinance and when they are regulated under the County Code Special Events Ordinance.</p>	
<p><u>Contacts:</u></p> <p><u>For Special Event Permits:</u> Catherine Marsten Office of the County Administrator Berryville-Clarke County Government Center, 101 Chalmers Court, Second Floor (540) 955-5175, cmarsten@clarkecounty.gov</p> <p><u>For Minor Commercial Public Assembly or Other Similar Businesses:</u> Jeremy Camp, Senior Planner/Zoning Administrator Clarke County Department of Planning Berryville-Clarke County Government Center, 101 Chalmers Court, Second Floor (540) 955-5131, jcamp@clarkecounty.gov</p>	

Overview

Special events commonly held or proposed in Clarke County come in different forms. Special events can be temporary or seasonal in nature and can be conducted by individuals, non-profit organizations, and for-profit businesses. Examples include festivals, concerts, exhibitions, and similar activities for the general public. Special events can also be operated as a permanent business (commercial public assembly use) such as wedding venues and conference centers.

The holding of temporary special events and commercial public assembly activities are regulated by two separate bodies of law in Clarke County – [Code of Clarke County Special Events Ordinance \(Chapter 57\)](#) and the [Clarke County Zoning Ordinance](#). Whether your event or activity is regulated by one process or another depends on several factors:

- Whether the events or activities are to be held on property located in the County, in either the Towns of Berryville or Boyce, or in the Berryville Annexation Area
- The frequency of the events or activities (number of event days per calendar year)
- Whether the events or activities are held in a temporary structure (such as a tent), a permanent structure, outdoors, or a combination of all three
- Whether the public is invited or admitted to attend either through general admission, purchase of a ticket, or similar means

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- Whether the property owner or event operator is receiving compensation for the event or activity – can be in the form of direct payment or donations from attendees
- The maximum number of persons on the property at any one time including guests, employees, caterers, and other attendees
- The size of the property on which the event or activity will be held
- The maximum occupancy of any temporary or permanent structure (for indoor events and activities) as approved by the Building Department
- Whether the property is privately owned or owned by an entity of Federal, State, or local government

Special Event Permits

Temporary or infrequent special events are typically regulated by [Code of Clarke County Special Events Ordinance \(Chapter 57\)](#). A “special event” is any assembly, attraction, ceremony, event, festival, gathering, circus, carnival, or show at which rides, games, competitions, attractions, music, dance, or other performing arts that are engaged in by participants or provided as entertainment by professional or amateur performers or by prerecorded means which:

- Involves the raising, charging, donating or re-couping of funds;
- Is not held on property owned by Federal, State, or local government;
- Is not held in a permanent enclosed structure;
- The public is invited or admitted to attend, AND
- Does not occur in the Town of Berryville, the Berryville annexation area, or the Town of Boyce.

Special events do not include demonstrations, parades, rallies, marches, or picketing activities. Special events regulated by [Code of Clarke County Chapter 57](#) require issuance of a special event permit by the Board of Supervisors. This permitting process is managed by the Office of the County Administrator and involves detailed review by a number of agencies and departments that may regulate different aspects of an event. Special events are limited to a maximum of five (5) event days per calendar year. Review requirements are based on the anticipated event attendance and have minimum lot size requirements:

- **Small Event:**
 - 150-499 participants
 - Minimum lot size of six (6) acres or adjoining parcels under the same ownership totaling six (6) acres or more
 - Maximum of five (5) event days per calendar year

- **Medium Event:**
 - 500-999 participants
 - Minimum lot size of 25 acres or adjoining parcels under the same ownership totaling 25 acres or more
 - Maximum of five (5) event days per calendar year

- **Large Event:**
 - 1,000 or more participants
 - Minimum lot size of 50 acres or adjoining parcels under the same ownership totaling 50 acres or more
 - Maximum of five (5) event days per calendar year

Special event applications of all sizes are reviewed and acted on by the Board of Supervisors at one of their regular monthly meetings. Prior to filing an application, applicants are required to schedule an on-site review meeting with County Administration to discuss their event and regulatory requirements with representatives from various State and County departments. After the application is filed, County Administration staff will notify adjoining property owners of the pending application and also post a public notice sign at the event site. The Board of Supervisors may receive and consider public comments when deliberating special event applications.

Applications are reviewed for the following elements to protect the health and safety of participants and to mitigate potential impacts to neighbors:

- Event hours
- Attendance and how admission will be regulated
- Water supply and toilet/laundry facilities
- Waste management
- Provision of medical facilities and fire protection
- Traffic and parking control
- Security
- Provision of food and beverages
- Lighting and noise
- Use of temporary structures
- Methods of communication
- Liability insurance
- Setbacks from property lines
- Camping
- Compliance with other laws and regulations

Minor Commercial Public Assembly Special Use Permit

Special events operated as a business and which exceed the scope of the special event permit process will likely require zoning approval for a “**minor commercial public assembly use**” or other similar use per the [Clarke County Zoning Ordinance, Section B \(Zoning Regulations for Public Assembly Activities\)](#) discusses the regulations and review process for commercial public assembly activities.

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Events that are entirely private in nature and are not being held for compensation or donations, such as private parties and social gatherings, typically do not require special event permit approval or zoning approval. If you are unsure whether your event or activity requires County approval, you are strongly encouraged to contact County Staff listed above with questions.