



Using and Leasing University Outdoor Space: Twin Cities

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Questions?

Please use the contact section below.

Policy Statement

The University intends its property to be used in the pursuit of its mission and for the benefit of the University community. The University also recognizes the importance of fostering diversity, serving the greater community, and acting as a marketplace for ideas. This policy serves those goals while promoting the safety of all persons on campus and preserving the physical integrity of University property. The University welcomes the use of its outdoor space consistent with this policy.

All users of University outdoor space must refrain from damaging University property and avoid posing a risk to health and safety. Outdoor events must not interfere with other University operations, including scheduled events, classes, programs, and meetings. The University maintains the right, in the event of interference, to require that the program be altered in time, place, or manner. These provisions apply to all events, with or without a permit.

Assemblies

Rallies, demonstrations, or other gatherings of a similar nature of fewer than 100 participants are allowed without a permit in the following outdoor spaces or immediately adjacent to these spaces and buildings:

- Coffman Memorial Union Plaza
- Gateway Plaza at McNamara Alumni Center
- Northrop Plaza
- St Paul Student Center Plaza
- West Bank Plaza

With the exception of rallies, demonstrations, or other gatherings of a similar nature, any gathering by non-University persons or entities (regardless of number of participants) must follow Administrative Policy: [Use and Lease of Real Estate](#).

Use of Sound Amplification

Individuals or groups may use handheld, battery-operated amplification (e.g. bullhorn) without a permit at the locations listed above, with a maximum of one amplified device per gathering.

Individuals or groups who wish to use loudspeakers or other powered sound amplification must have an approved permit. . In addition, such sound amplification is only allowed on campus from noon to 1:00 p.m. on weekdays, 5:00-9:00 p.m. on Fridays, and noon-9:00 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. In such instances, the sound level at 50 feet from the source must not exceed 90 decibels. Sound measured off the property where the equipment is allowed under the permit must never be more than fifteen (15) dB(A) above the ambient noise level.

University Services retains the right to control all volume levels if sound interferes with regular University business.

Outdoor Recreation

Hammocks are permitted if they are temporary in nature and are removed immediately after use. No hardware may be driven into trees. Hammocks cannot be fastened to trees under 12" in diameter and require a protective fabric between the cording and the tree's bark. Protective fabric may include a nylon or leather cambium saver or webbing that is used to protect the trees being used. The use of tree boats is prohibited.

Slacklines are permitted between sunrise and sunset. Lines require a protective fabric between the line and the tree's bark, and cannot be fastened to trees under 12" in diameter, buildings, bike racks, handrails, light poles or any other objects besides trees. The line may not be higher than three feet in the center, and it cannot exceed 40 feet in length. Slacklines may only be used in areas that are free of foot or bicycle traffic, and clear of objects which may injure users in the event of a fall. They may not be used in special event zones . University Services may remove equipment deemed to be unsafe or harmful. Lines must be removed immediately after use.

Permit Required

A permit is required for any of the following uses of University outdoor space:

- An event involving 100 or more participants;
- The use of displays, structures, tents, contact tables, or grills, sound amplification, or food service;
- An event likely to require police, traffic management, or other personnel to appropriately manage the event;
- An event requiring University service such as rentals, sanitation, additional trash bins, etc.; or
- Overnight outdoor stays, including camping.

Permit Process

University Departments, Registered Student Groups, and Outside organizations must obtain permits from the appropriate University department prior to the event, following the attached procedures.

- University departments and Registered Student Groups: Administrative Procedure: [Use and Lease by University Departments and Registered Student Groups.](#)
- Outside organizations: Administrative Procedure: [Use and Lease of University Real Estate by Non-University Entities](#), and its associated Administrative Policy, [Use and Lease of Real Estate.](#)

Housing and Residential Life, Recreational Sports, Parking and Transportation Services, and Intercollegiate Athletics manage the outdoor space connected with their departments. Organizations or persons seeking use of outdoor space managed by those departments must contact those departments directly.

University Services will review all requests for outdoor space on football home game days, including those connected with Housing and Residential Life, Recreational Sports, Parking and Transportation Services, and Intercollegiate Athletics. The permit process above must still be followed.

Exclusions

This policy applies only to the Twin Cities campus.

Reason for Policy

To ensure the use of University property supports the University's mission, avoids inappropriate use, clarifies relationships and liability, and protects the physical integrity of the property.

Procedures

- [Permit Application and Space Reservation by University Entities – Individuals, Departments, and Registered Student Groups](#)

Forms/Instructions

Permit applications are located at the [Outdoor Space website](#).

Appendices

- [Rules and Parameters for Events Requiring a Permit](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What happens if our assembly, gathering, or event unexpectedly grows beyond 100 people?

Outdoor events must not interfere with other University operations, including scheduled events, classes, programs, and meetings. The University maintains the right, in the event of interference, to require that the program be altered in time, place, or manner. These provisions apply to all events, with or without a permit.

If there is a chance that an event will exceed 100 people, you should apply for a permit.

2. I'm an instructor and want to hold class activities outside. Do I need a permit?

Outdoor course-related activities led by a University of Minnesota instructor do not require a permit.

Contacts

Subject	Contact	Phone	Fax/Email
Primary Contact(s) - Coordination and Registered Student Group Permits	Student Unions and Activities	612-626-6919	odspace@umn.edu
Real Estate - Outside organization Permits	Real Estate Office	612-625-5345	reo@umn.edu 612-624-6345
Facilities Management - University Departmental Permits	Landcare	612-625-7361	landcare@umn.edu

Responsible Individuals

Responsible Officer	Policy Owner	Primary Contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vice President for University Services • Vice President for Student Affairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associate Vice President - Facilities Management • Director - Student Unions and Activities • Director of Leasing and Property Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Hill

Definitions

Event

A gathering of people on University property for a specified purpose.

Outdoor Space

Open-air parts of the Twin Cities campus.

University Department

Any official University department or group sponsored by a University department covered by the University's liability insurance.

Registered Student Group

Any student group registered with Student Unions and Activities.

Outside Organization

Any person or group not defined as a University Department or a Registered Student Group.

Responsibilities

There are no specified responsibilities associated with this policy.

Related Information

- Administrative Policy: [Use and Lease of Real Estate](#)
- [Policy for Serving Food or Refreshments on University Property in Association With Meetings, Social Gatherings, and Special Events](#)

History

Amended:

March 2021 - Comprehensive Review, Minor Revisions. Corrected outdated links and language clarification changes. Focus of Rules and Parameters for Events Requiring a Permit appendix is now on Event Permits instead of Space Rental. The difference between Outdoor Events and Outdoor Contact Tables was also clarified and redundant information was noted.

Amended:

July 2016 - Comprehensive Review, Minor Revision. 1. Raises the number of people allowed at an assembly or gathering without a permit to 100. 2. Permits use of a single, handheld, battery-operated amplification device (e.g., a bullhorn) at an assembly. (No permit required)

Amended:

September 2009 - Added language concerning the outdoor football stadium.

Amended:

December 2008 - Tightened up language in Policy Statement - "Assembly Without a Permit". This change is for clarification only, and does not affect meaning.

Amended:

November 2008 - Specifies when permits are required to use University Outdoor Space. Provides criteria for granting approval. Outlines general use restrictions. Policy is no longer interim.

Effective:

August 2008

