



# Festivals & Events Reference Guide



SMITHS FALLS  
RISE AT THE FALLS



## We Are Here To Help

The Town of Smiths Falls believes that special events are essential to providing opportunities for social connection that contribute to a sense of identity, place, and community vibrancy.

This guide was developed as a tool to assist organizers planning events in our community. Getting your event approved is easy and starts by reading this guide and filling out a Special Event Application. **IT'S FREE** to apply and we are here to help you along the way.

### ONE POINT OF CONTACT

The Economic Development & Tourism Department acts as your point of contact to navigate the [Festivals & Events Policy](#) and guide you through the permit approvals process for all events. Please email [jcrowder@smithsfalls.ca](mailto:jcrowder@smithsfalls.ca) or call 613-203-4124 x 1107 at any time throughout the permit process if you need help.

## What Is A Special Event?

A Special Event is defined as a one-time or reoccurring activity, which gathers people on Town owned lands such as parks, roads or sidewalks for the purposes of organized recreation, celebrations, or selling products and services.

Events in the Town of Smiths Falls fall under two categories:

### Major Event (may involve some or all elements)

- Will Block or restrict the use of Town land.
- Will have 250 or more participants/visitors.
- Serves alcohol.
- Held at multiple locations.
- Requires road closures/traffic control.
- Uses fireworks, open flame or inflatables.

These events require multiple approvals (i.e. road closure, building/fire inspections, health Unit, AGCO) and take longer to review and process.

Please refer to the [Major Events Application Form](#).

### General Event (may involve some or all elements)

- Will block or restrict the use Town land.
- Will have less than 250 but more than 50 participants/visitors.
- Does not serve alcohol.
- Has minimal impact on municipal services.

Smaller community events have a separate streamlined process to reflect these types of events.

Please refer to the [General Events Application Form](#).

## Do I Need a Special Event Permit?

Likely YES. Any outdoor event on Town property (parks, streets, etc.) or events on private property that are funded by the Town require a permit.

Events which fall under the following categories **do not require a permit** but may require other approvals:

- Events held on Private property (not funded by the Town).
- Street Tolls.
- Events of 50 people or less, where no alcohol is served or consumed on site.
- Sporting event for regular league play and exhibitions.

Organizers are required to adhere to municipal, provincial and national by-laws and laws regardless if a Special Event Permit is required.



## Application Process and Timelines

Special Event Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis throughout the year and provide the Town with all the basic details of your proposed event.

Economic Development & Tourism staff will help you coordinate your event and will walk you through the application process. The roles and responsibilities of Town staff include:

- Liaison with the event organizer to support and information the application process.
- Create customized special event checklist and provide all appropriate Town information/forms.
- Coordinate on-site visits prior to the event to discuss layout (if applicable).
- Process applications and coordinate applicable inspections and approvals.

**Major Event** organizers must submit their Special Event Applications for approval, **not less than 60 days before the event.**

**General Event** organizers must submit their Special Event Applications for approval, **not less than 30 days before the event.**

**Availability of Town property and resources are on a first-come, first-served basis.** This includes, space rentals (parks, streets), equipment (tents, picnic tables, etc.), staff availability as well as grants and funding opportunities. Submitting your application early will ensure you have the location and resources needed for your event.

Submit your Applications to: [jcrowder@smithsfalls.ca](mailto:jcrowder@smithsfalls.ca)

**STEP #1 “Intake”** - Once your application is received, the Town will contact you to review the information and take an opportunity to ask questions if additional information is required. Major Events may require a pre-event meeting and walk-about.

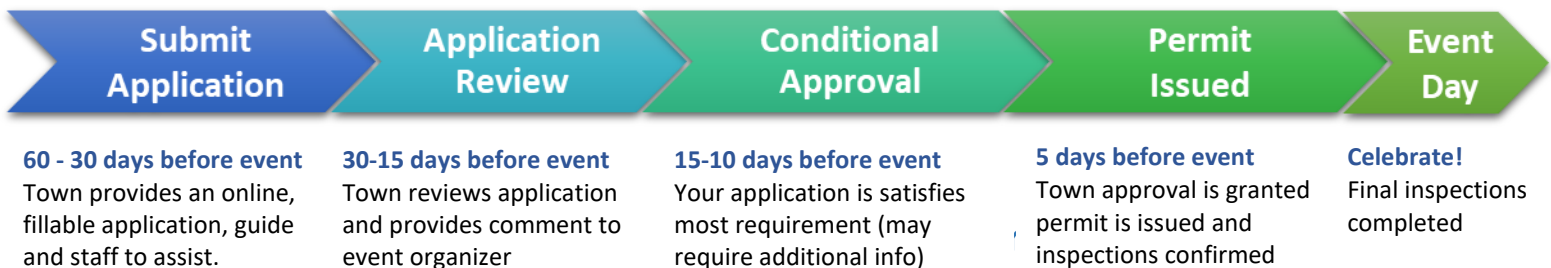
A site map and signed indemnification form must be included in your application to be deemed complete and ready for review. Including Health Unit approvals, AGCO Application, liability insurance, etc., with your application is recommended.

**STEP #2 “Review”** – The Town identifies legislative and safety requirements, permits, and additional information that may be required for your event. Outside agencies approvals may need to be secured at the event organizer’s expense (Health Unit, AGCO, TSSA, Parks Canada).

**STEP #3 “Conditional Approval”** - The Town requires that most conditions are met at least 15 days prior to the scheduled event. Once the application is reviewed and comments/recommendations from Town Staff are provided to the event organizers, the application will be deemed conditionally approved. It is the responsibility of the event organizer to make any changes/submit additional information as requested by the Town with the required timeline.

**STEP #4 “Approval”** – Once all planning, safety, and legislative requirements, permits, and supplementary information has been submitted to the Town, a permit will be issued and applicable inspections scheduled.

**STEP #5 “Celebrate”** – Congrats, your hard work has paid off, celebrate the great event you planned!



All special events applications require a site plan. Site plans are important as they help clarify and organize activities and help the Town to understand the event layout and needs. The site plan **does not** need to be prepared by a professional (e.g. architect, engineer).

Use the [Event Location Maps](#) to plan your event area.

Site plans typically include the following:

- Location of permanent or temporary buildings/structures (tents, stage, portables)
- Location of first aid station
- Location of vendors
- Proposed route and layout of race, walk-a-thon or road closure
- Access routes for emergency vehicles
- Location of any barricades/fencing used to block off parking, roadways or sections
- Location of licensed area
- Location of portable toilets and hand wash stations
- Location of garbage/recycling stations
- Utility locates

It is the responsibility of the event organizer to contact “Ontario One Call” before any digging, staking, or ground disturbance occurs. Please visit their website at [ontarioonecall.ca](http://ontarioonecall.ca) or call 1-800-400-2255.

Site plans **MUST** be approved before set up can occur. Event organizers are reminded that the issuing of a *Special Event Permit* is based on the site plan and failure to comply can result in the revoking of the Permit.

## Grants

The Town of Smiths Falls offers support to event organizers through the [Community Grants – Festival Stream](#). Event organizers can apply for 50% up to a maximum amount based on your organizational type, to create or expand a local event. Applications are accepted in November prior to the new event year.

Event organizers are encouraged to review the [Grants Ontario](#) website for other funding opportunities.

## Facility and Equipment Rentals & Fees

The Town charges a nominal fee of \$75 per day to rent park spaces. Rental approvals are received through the Community Services department and fees must be paid prior to issuing of your Events Permit. An invoice will be provided upon conditional approval.

Payment of any permit fees can be received in Cash, Cheque, Debit or online (Credit Card or PayPal) through the online ecommerce portal on the Town’s website [www.justinter.net/eBill/ebill.asp?c=2994](http://www.justinter.net/eBill/ebill.asp?c=2994)

The Town also provides access to event equipment such as picnic tables, garbage cans, stage, tent, etc. for a small fee. These items can be requested as part of your Special Events Permit Application.

**Event organizers may offset these costs by applying for a Community Grant and including the costs in your application.**

## Pre and Post Inspections

The Town will work with you to arrange a date and time for the inspections. On-site inspections will occur the day of the event to ensure set up is in line with site map and other safety management plans.

Event organizers are asked to keep their *Special Event Permit* on hand as well as their site plan during the event and set-up. **Event organizers must notify the Town of any changes. A Permit is approved based on the materials submitted.**

A post-inspection may also be required. There is no charge for inspections, however should a post-inspection identify damages, or additional clean up, the costs to repair or return the site to original form will be charged back to the event organizer.





## Insurance

The Town of Smiths Falls requires all special events to have liability insurance. Event organizers are responsible for covering all insurance needs. The Town requires a minimum of \$5 million in liability insurance for Major Events and \$2 million in liability insurance for General Events. The Town must be named as an “Additional Insured”.

It is the event organizer’s responsibility to ensure that alcohol service areas, vendors, entertainers, vendors, attractions, etc., have the required insurance and is submitted as part of the application.

## Vendors / Food At Events

Event organizers are permitted to have commercial vendors at an event. It is the responsibility of all event organizers to maintain a sense of quality at festivals and events held in our community.

Event that have food vendors are required to submit a [Special Event Notification Form](#) to Lanark Leeds and Grenville Health Unit at least 15 days in advance of the event. Food Vendors will be required to submit a [Food Vendor Application](#) and provide a copy of the permit to YOU the event organizer. You can also contact [protection@healthunit.org](mailto:protection@healthunit.org) for more info.

Refreshment Vehicles or vendors cooking using propane at events must adhere to the Town’s [Refreshment Vehicle By-law](#) and will also require inspection from the Fire Department.

A multi-refreshment vehicle license costs \$200.00 per event. A list of vendors should be submitted with your application.



## Security / Emergency Services

Protecting the health and safety of all participants, vendors and visitors at an event is important. Smiths Falls Police and Fire Services will be included in the review of *Special Event Applications* and will indicate specific safety guidelines required.

An Emergency Plan is essential. Based on the size and scope of the event, the requirements may differ regarding the amount of information required in your plan. Producing an Emergency Plan has a number of benefits that will help your organization deliver a safe and successful event:

- It assists in identifying risks or potential risks.
- It assists in identifying what measures need to be put in place for the protection and well-being of those attending your event.
- It reduces the risk of loss of life and property.
- It identifies roles and responsibilities.

Depending on the event, medical services may be required to support your guests and participants. St. John Ambulance provides first aid coverage for local community events. For more information, please contact Lanark County Paramedic Services directly [info@lcps.care](mailto:info@lcps.care) or call (613) 205-1021.

## Community Notifications

Once an event is conditionally approved, appropriate community notification is required to residents and businesses in the affected neighbourhoods, a minimum of 15 days notice prior to your event is required.

It is mandatory that all road closures and amplified sound notifications be included in all community notifications. Depending on the complexity of your event, the Town may require you to use some specific communication tools such as message boards, neighbour letters or other signage, and will provide that information to you, if required.

As part of the Town’s service, we will notify residents through Social Media about events. Add your event online [Smithsfalls.ca/AddMyEvent](https://Smithsfalls.ca/AddMyEvent)

## Alcohol / Liquor Licenses

All events serving alcoholic beverages held must adhere to regulations set out by the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO). Please review the [AGCO's Planning Special Events Information](#).

A Special Occasions Permit (SOP) from the AGCO is required and a copy must be provided to the Town. The Town will provide a letter deeming your event municipally significant to accompany your AGCO application upon receipt of your Event Application.

## Gaming / Gambling

Fundraising activities such as raffles, bingo, lottery gaming for eligible charitable and religious organizations must follow the rules and regulations defined under the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO) [License for Lottery and Gaming requirements](#). The Town of Smiths Falls issues Lottery Licences through the Clerks Department. Consultation with Clerk's for first time applicants is highly recommended at least 60 days prior to your application submission to confirm eligibility and for assistance filling out the application. Please contact the Clerks Department at 613-283-4124 ext 1102.

## Waste Management

It is the responsibility of the event organizer to respect Town property by maintaining a clean and garbage-free event space and by returning the event space to its original state immediately following the event. This includes removing any items used for event setup including cable ties, ropes, securing items, fencing, posts and stakes.

The Town of Smiths Falls provides waste receptacles on most Town property locations; however events requiring additional garbage cans and recycling containers are required to provide a Waste Management Plan with their *Special Event Application*.

## Fireworks / Open Flame

The lighting of fireworks must be done by a professional and requires approval from the Smiths Falls Fire Department as outlined in the Town's [Fireworks By-law](#) at least 21 days prior to the event.

Standard requirements for fireworks are:

- Site plan specific to the activity
- List of products and firing schedule
- Copy of Fire Technicians Card
- Copy of Liability Insurance (minimum 5 Million)

Any open flame (fire pits, cooking with gas) must be

Special Permits Staff, in coordination with Fire Services will guide you through the approval process.

## Washrooms & Washing Stations

Several of the Town's parks and properties feature washroom buildings or facilities that may be used by event participants. If access to public washrooms is required for an event. It is the responsibility of the event organizers to provide an adequate number of washrooms for the anticipated event patrons.

A general rule of thumb is to provide at least one portable restroom per 50-75 people over 4-5 hr event, were food or alcohol is being served and guests are staying for the full duration. An event where people stay for a shorter period of time 1-2 hrs, generally requires one for every 150-250 people. A hand washing station is required for every 2-4 portable washrooms.



## Noise Exemption

Event organizers may apply for a noise exemption as part of their Special Permit Applications if activities are expected to exceed the permitted noise/sound levels or if it will be occurring outside of the allowed time frame of 11:00 p.m. as per the [Town's Noise Bylaw](#).

If you require an exemption on the Noise Bylaw, please indicate on the Application Form. Your request will be reviewed by the Clerk's Department, and must be approved by Council, so it is important you allow enough time for the approval process.

## Signage and Advertising

Event organizers may place temporary promotional signs with date, time, and location of the event on Town land as outline in the Town's Sign Bylaw. **A Sign Permit is not required.** Temporary signage can be set up for a maximum of 30 days a must be removed after the event concludes.

Town logos, graphics or images may NOT be used on event promotional material or signage without written consent from the Town.

Any advertising or promotion of your event prior to the Town's approval and receipt of your permit is at the sole discretion of the event organizer. Event organizers who choose to promote their event prior to permit approval do so at their own risk and the Town assumes no responsibility for promoted events that are not approved.

Additional conditions:

- Banners or signs cannot impede visibility for pedestrians or motor vehicles.
- Signs must not be affixed to any Town signage, including traffic signage.
- Signage must not be attached to trees or other vegetation.
- The number of signs may be restricted if deemed excessive or redundant.
- Market your Event on the Towns online Events Calendar for Free! [Smithsfalls.ca/AddMyEvent](https://smithsfalls.ca/AddMyEvent)

## Parking

Parking is permitted in designated parking areas. Should your event require additional parking outside the normal day to day requirement, relaxation of parking on roads or streets may be permitted under certain conditions and pending the following requirements are met at the event organizer's expense.

- Trained flag personnel must be on site during the event and at least one hour prior to the event starting and one hour after the event ends.
- Barriers may be required based on recommendations from the Town's internal review team.
- Appropriate signage may be required, such as stop signs, reduced speed limit signs etc. The event organizer will be advised if signage is needed.
- Parking in business locations must not impact the operation of the business, unless written permission is received by the affected business owners.
- Temporary parking may be permitted on Town lands under special circumstances.

## Temporary Structures

As per the Ontario Building Code, tents, stages and bleachers, portable washrooms, etc. are considered temporary structures. Any tent larger than 20 ft. x 32 ft. or multiple tents a total 646 sqft. or more requires a [building permit](#) and inspection. Structures higher than 1.2 m (4 ft.) above the ground will require a building permit and inspection. The cost of a Building Permit is \$154.49. All structures must conform to Ontario regulations.

## Parks Canada

Any events along the Rideau Canal waterway must be approved by [application](#) to Parks Canada. For details contact: Dominic Peladeau at 613-283-7199 ext 204 or by email at [dominic.peladeau@pc.gc.ca](mailto:dominic.peladeau@pc.gc.ca)