

Article 7.0 Special Events

7.1. Purpose

The purpose of this section is to:

- 7.1.1. Provide for the temporary use of property for special events in all zoning districts,
- 7.1.2. Provide for the orderly control of special events by establishing appropriate permit requirements, regulations, laws and policies,
- 7.1.3. Ensure the promoter or sponsor of a special event is aware of any special circumstances that may have an impact on the success of their event, and
- 7.1.4. Minimize any significant effects of a special event on adjacent and nearby property owners, residents, and businesses or which would impact the prevailing site conditions, traffic and circulation patterns, land use characteristics or the nature of the proposed use.

7.2. Applicability and Exclusions

7.2.1. Applicability

This section shall apply to all special events, as defined in this Code, unless explicitly excluded under Section 7.2.2.

7.2.2. Exclusions

This section shall not apply to the following gatherings and uses:

- A. Permanent Assembly Uses and Existing Approvals:
 - 1. Gatherings on property subject to an existing, valid land use approval or documented legal nonconforming status that limits the number, type, and nature of assemblies (including, but not limited to, approved event centers, places of worship, stadiums, athletic fields, arenas, auditoriums, neighborhood community centers and pools, schools, public parks, and fairgrounds), provided such gatherings comply with the existing approval or established legal nonconforming use and are contained on the property.
 - 2. Properties with an existing approval or legal nonconforming assembly use may apply for a Special Event Permit to exceed their permitted allowance. A written request shall be submitted as part of the Special Event Permit application that addresses the need for the additional event.
- B. Community Events: Primarily indoor events within an approved or legal nonconforming community building, provided any outdoor activity is incidental to the primary indoor activity and does not displace required parking spaces.

Events involving significant outdoor gatherings or activities or those that displace required parking spaces require a Special Event Permit.

- C. Members-Only Club, Membership Clubs or Clubhouses: Primarily indoor events at an approved or nonconforming Members-Only Club, Membership Club or Clubhouse provided any outdoor activity is incidental to the primary indoor activity and does not displace required parking spaces. Events involving significant outdoor gatherings or activities or those that displace required parking spaces require a Special Event Permit.
- D. Personal Events: Personal events where the overall attendance does not exceed 100 people.
- E. Remembrance and Memorial Gatherings: Nonrecurring, one-time gatherings for funerals, memorials, or celebrations of life.
- F. Allowed Temporary Uses: Temporary uses identified in Article 3.5 (*Temporary Uses and Structures*) or listed within Section 3.2.9 (*Tables of Allowed Temporary Uses*).
- G. Temporary Agritourism: Temporary agritourism enterprises.
- H. Elections: Polling places for special or general elections.
- I. Sale or auction of agricultural lands or personal property.

7.2.3. Excluded Events and Maximum Number of Events Allowed

Events that are excluded from special event permit requirements under Section 7.2.2 shall not count toward the maximum number of allowable special events permitted for a property per calendar year.

7.2.4. Minimum Standards for all Events

Under all circumstances, events shall comply with the following standards, regardless of whether a special event permit is required under this Article:

- A. Attendance shall not exceed the building occupancy limit as determined by the Building Division, applicable Fire District and/or the Department of Health and Environment.
- B. The gathering shall comply with all other applicable County ordinances, resolutions, and regulations, including the provision of adequate parking, restrooms, and safety measures to accommodate anticipated peak attendance.
- C. A safety checklist may be required to ensure the event is safe and minimizes disruption to the neighboring area.

7.3. Permit Required

A special event permit shall be required for any special event that is not excluded per Section 7.2.2 and where:

- A. The anticipated overall attendance exceeds 40 people; or
- B. The event is a personal event, and the anticipated overall attendance exceeds 100 people. Overall attendance includes, but is not limited to, all attendees, participants, event organizers, security personnel, volunteers, caterers, waitstaff, bartenders, and photographers present at the event.

7.4. Review Criteria

To approve a special event permit, the decision maker shall consider the following review criteria and find that each criterion has been met or determined to be inapplicable:

7.4.1. The applicant has demonstrated that the special event will be compatible with existing and allowed land uses in the surrounding area.

7.4.2. The applicant has demonstrated that the special event complies with all applicable requirements of this Code.

7.4.3. The applicant has demonstrated that the special event will have no substantial adverse impacts on the surrounding area, including adjacent properties, nearby public lands, and environmentally sensitive features.

7.4.4. The special event can and will comply with all County regulations and conditions of approval provided by the reviewing agencies, including the provision of adequate parking, restrooms and safety measures for anticipated peak attendance.

7.4.5. The special event can and will comply with all applicable regulations, laws, policies, and the performance standards set forth in Section 7.6, Performance Standards.

7.5. Process and Submittal Requirements

7.5.1. Application Requirements

A. The application shall be submitted to the Community Development department on a form established by the Director.

B. The applicant bears the burden of ensuring that an application contains sufficient information to demonstrate compliance with application requirements.

C. Submittal requirements are specified in the Land Use Code Supplemental Materials.

7.5.2. Application Review

A. Upon review and determination that the special event permit application is complete, the Community Development Director or their designee will refer the application to other County or non-County departments, agencies, or officials whose consideration is deemed essential to a full and complete assessment.

B. For any private land event, within 10 days of when an application is deemed complete the County shall mail notice to property owners within 500 feet of the event location.

C. Review of the application will take into consideration:

1. The adequacy of the information provided.
2. The adequacy of the site to accommodate the special event proposed.
3. The degree to which the special event complies or will be able to comply with the requirements of reviewing agencies and the performance standards of Section 7.6, Performance Standards.
4. The preservation of the health, safety and welfare of the public and surrounding properties and uses.

D. The County may require a meeting with the applicant and all affected departments and agencies after initial submittal of the application.

E. Event organizers, planners or applicants advertising or promoting an event prior to the issuance of a special event permit, do so at their own risk. Previously advertised events or events which have registered participants prior to the issuance of a special event permit will not receive special consideration.

7.5.3. Action on Application

Upon completion of the review of the application, the Community Development Director or their designee will take one of the following actions:

A. Issue the permit with any conditions of approval deemed necessary to minimize potential adverse impacts and meet the intent and purpose of this Article,

B. Deny the permit if the proposed special event fails to conform to the applicable provisions, requirements, or standards of this Article. The Community Development Director's decision shall specify the reasons, in writing, for the denial citing specific requirements, provisions, and standards in this section or other applicable provisions, laws, rules or regulations that were not met, or

C. Schedule the application for a hearing before the Board of County Commissioners to determine if the special event permit application should be allowed or denied. Notice of said hearing shall be provided as required by 6.3.7, Scheduling and Notice of Hearings.

7.5.4. Appeals

A. Any decision by the Director to either grant or deny the special event permit may be appealed by the applicant or a community member to the Board of County Commissioners. Appeals must be received within five (5) business days following the date on which the Director issues their decision. The appeal must be in writing and must state specifically why the Director's decision is incorrect or inconsistent with the provisions, intent, or purpose of this Article.

B. The Board of County Commissioners will consider the appeal in a public hearing. The Board of County Commissioners may overturn or modify the Director's decision if they determine the Director's decision is incorrect or inconsistent with the provisions, intent, or purpose of this Article.

7.6. Performance Standards

The following standards establish minimum requirements for special events, to the extent that they are determined to be applicable by the Director. Additional requirements may be imposed based on the location, size, and nature of the event, as determined through a case-by-case evaluation and review by relevant County departments and external reviewing agencies to ensure a comprehensive assessment. The application shall meet the standard requirements set forth in the Land Use Code Supplemental Materials.

7.6.1. An adequate and safe water supply shall be provided for drinking water and other applicable amenities such as hand sinks, showers, etc., that meet the potability requirements set forth by the Colorado Water Quality Control Division and Larimer County Department of Health and Environment.

7.6.2. Sanitary facilities, including restrooms and handwashing facilities, shall be provided to meet Larimer County Department of Health and Environment requirements. The location of the restrooms shall be shown on the Site Plan.

7.6.3. A sanitary method for the storage, collection, and disposal of solid or liquid waste shall be provided to meet Larimer County Department of Health and Environment requirements. All waste shall be disposed of at a lawful facility and the event site and surrounding area shall be cleared of refuse within a timely manner as specified in subsection 7.9.

7.6.4. Event coordinators shall provide emergency medical services and a medical plan appropriate to the location, size, and nature of the event, to be reviewed by the relevant emergency services provider.

7.6.5. An on-site communications plan shall be provided that meets the requirements of the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment and Sheriff's Office.

7.6.6. If the special event is to occur during hours of darkness, adequate lighting shall be provided throughout the event site to illuminate all areas of the event including but not limited to stages, performers, presenters, restrooms, walking paths, and parking areas, to ensure safe access, visibility, and operations. Such lighting shall be arranged and directed so that it does not shine upward and does not unreasonably shine or reflect beyond the boundaries of the event location.

7.6.7. A parking plan shall be provided showing the parking area(s) for the event. Sufficient parking shall be provided to accommodate the maximum number of people allowed at any single time to attend the special event. In addition, there shall be a traffic circulation system sufficient to allow safe and efficient traffic and pedestrian circulation for the maximum number of people allowed at any single time to attend the special event.

7.6.8. No event shall interfere with scheduled public or school bus routes or scheduled public transit without the expressed written approval of the affected agency.

7.6.9. A plan for security and/or law enforcement support shall be provided. If applicable, the location of the security area shall be shown on the Site Plan:

7.6.10. The applicant shall provide a fire plan which includes information on energy sources, water available for fire protection, access points, location of fire extinguishers, any temporary fire or cooking devices, and other information required by the fire district(s) reviewing the application.

7.6.11. The event shall comply with the time-specified sound decibel limits established in the Larimer County Noise Ordinance. Sounds from the special event shall not carry unreasonably beyond the boundaries of the special event.

7.6.12. Overnight Camping: If the event includes overnight camping, camping facilities in compliance with all applicable state and local requirements must be provided. Such facilities shall be planned, located, and managed to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of participants and to reduce the impacts on surrounding properties, residents, wildlife, and natural resources.

7.6.13. The event shall implement best management practices for controlling dust and preventing nuisance conditions within and beyond the boundaries of the special event location.

7.6.14. If electrical systems are not self-supporting, electrical systems installation and maintenance must comply with minimum County and state electrical standards.

7.6.15. Food and beverage service at the event, including preparation, distribution, or sale, whether provided for free or for purchase, shall comply with all applicable requirements of the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment, including obtaining all required permits and approvals prior to operation.

7.6.16. Structures, facilities, and outdoor activities associated with a special event shall be designed and located on the property to ensure:

- A. Trees, underbrush, large rocks, and other natural features are left intact and undisturbed.
- B. Natural vegetative cover is retained, protected, and maintained so as to facilitate drainage, prevent erosion, and preserve scenic attributes.
- C. For any parking in vegetated areas, the grass shall be mowed prior to the event to mitigate fire risk.

7.6.17. For special events involving animals, including but not limited to circuses, carnivals, petting zoos, fairs, exhibitions, races, displays, educational seminars or performances, the Director may impose reasonable conditions of approval as necessary to protect the public health, safety and welfare. The Larimer County Department of Health and Environment may impose additional requirements based on the event type, animals involved, and potential for animal-borne disease.

7.7. Compliance with Other Regulations

7.7.1. Special events shall occur or operate in compliance with the provisions of this Article, all applicable provisions and regulations of Larimer County, and applicable state and federal statutes and regulations.

7.7.2. Issuance of a special event permit shall not relieve the property owner or applicant of the responsibility for securing other permits or approvals required by the Larimer County Community Development Department, Larimer County Department of Health and Environment, the Larimer County Clerk and Recorder (e.g., liquor license) the applicable fire district(s), other Larimer County departments, or other local, state or federal agencies.

7.8. Site Clean Up and Restoration

Within 48 hours of the conclusion of the event, the special event site, roads, streets, trails, parks, and open spaces associated with the event shall be returned to their previous condition, including removal of all temporary buildings and structures, trash, debris, signage, attention-attracting devices, or other evidence of the special event, unless additional time is requested and approved as part of the special event permit.

7.9. Post-Event Documentation

The applicant may be required to submit post-event documentation demonstrating compliance with all conditions of the permit, including the total number of attendees or participants, noise, lighting, parking, site clean-up, and documentation of any issues that arose.

7.10. Insurance

Insurance is required in an amount determined by the Larimer County Risk Management Department to be adequate and reasonable in light of the risks and hazards relating to the special event.

7.11. Collateral

A. Requirement and Purpose: An irrevocable letter of credit or cash deposit may be required, in an amount at the discretion of the Director or the Board of County Commissioners. The collateral is intended to cover the cost to the County of any required grading, site restoration, dismantling and removal of structures, response by County staff or law enforcement to violations, and clean-up following the special event.

B. Term and Release: The collateral must remain irrevocable for 60 days following the event. It shall be released upon County verification that the Special Event was conducted and concluded according to requirements of the permit and the site was sufficiently restored to pre-event conditions. If the County has not made a determination within 60 days following the event, the guarantee shall be returned to the applicant.

C. Forfeiture and Use of Funds: The collateral may be forfeited by failure to comply with the conditions of the Special Event approval. The County may use collateral funds to clean up the special event site, adjacent properties, roads, streets, trails, parks, and open spaces if the site is not returned to its previous condition within 48 hours of conclusion of the event.

7.12. Enforcement

7.12.1. Inspections

The County, its representatives, or special event permit review agencies may enter and inspect the special event site prior to, during, and immediately following the event to ensure compliance with the special event permit conditions and to enforce the provisions of this Article.

7.12.2. Permit Availability

A copy of the special event permit must be available for inspection during the times and dates approved for set-up and tear down of the event as well as the event itself.

7.12.3. Suspension and Revocation of Permit

The Director may suspend or revoke a special event permit for violation of any provision of this Article, conditions of approval, or any other applicable law, rule, regulation, or for the misrepresentation by the applicant, their agents, employees, or independent contractors under contract with the applicant. Depending on the reason for the revocation, the decision may be appealed to the Board of County Commissioners. No event shall occur while a suspension or revocation appeal is pending except as authorized by the Director. The Director or any of the reviewing agencies or departments may enter the special event site or location and cause the special event to be stopped upon suspension or revocation of the special event permit.

7.12.4. Collateral

Upon breach of the terms and conditions for which the irrevocable letter of credit or cash are provided pursuant to Section 7.11, the County may undertake to cure such breach, perform such condition, or cause such condition to be performed by another and may use the proceeds of the guarantee to recoup its costs.

7.12.5. Additional Remedies

Failure to comply with this Article or with the special event permit conditions is a violation of this Land Use Code for which the County is entitled to pursue and seek the remedies and penalties set out in §1.9, Enforcement, including the withholding or denial of future special event permits for the applicant and/or property owner.

7.13. Private Land Events

In addition to the standards and processes found in Sections 7.3-7.12, the following apply to events on privately-owned land that require a special event permit.

7.13.1. Number of Events: For residential properties, as defined in Section 7.16 Definitions, there shall be no more than three (3) special events allowed on a property in a calendar year. (Refer to Section 7.16 for definitions.) For all other properties, a maximum of six (6) special events are allowed on a property in a calendar year.

7.13.2. Number of Days: The combined number of days that special events can occur on a property cannot exceed thirty (30) days in a calendar year.

7.13.3. Multi-day events: Multi-day events shall be held on consecutive days unless otherwise approved by the Community Development Director or Board of County Commissioners. If an event is planned to occur on non-consecutive days, a written request shall be submitted with the application that addresses the need for the alternative schedule.

7.13.4 To ensure consistency and minimize neighborhood disruption, the Community Development Director will evaluate requests based on the following factors and any other relevant considerations:

- A. Nature of the Event: The applicant has indicated that the format or purpose of the event reasonably follows a non-consecutive schedule (e.g., a recurring weekend market, a concert series, a seasonal event that occurs only on weekends).
- B. Neighborhood Impact: The alternative schedule will not create a prolonged, unreasonable nuisance or extended adverse impact on adjacent properties—specifically regarding traffic, parking, noise, and lighting—compared to an event held on consecutive days.
- C. Past Compliance: The applicant and property owner have a demonstrated history of compliance with previous special event permits. A documented history of permit violations or unpermitted events may be grounds for denying an alternative schedule.
- D. Resource Availability: The non-consecutive schedule will not create an undue, ongoing burden on the availability of Larimer County law enforcement, emergency medical services, or traffic management personnel.

7.14. Road Events

In addition to the standards found in Sections 7.3-7.12, the following apply to road events requiring a special event permit.

7.14.1. Authority: Authority for the administration and enforcement of the Special Event Permit for Larimer County Roads is derived from Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.), Sections: 18-9-107, 42-4-104, 42-4-105, 42-4-107, 42-4-109, 41-4-410, 42-4-504, 42-4-507 and 42-4-508.

7.14.2. Applicability: This section shall apply to road events, as defined in Section 7.16.

7.14.3. General Conditions:

A. Any event organizer, planner, or applicant wishing to utilize any Larimer County road right-of-way or other County property for an event, must submit a complete application no later than 90 calendar days prior to the proposed event date.

B. An additional fee may be required for any full lane closures.

7.14.4. Application Requirements:

A. Route Map: A route map of the course(s) showing all the street or road names and/or trails as well as directional arrows indicating the direction of the course shall be provided.

B. Traffic Control Plan: A prepared traffic control plan shall be provided for any event that has a lane closure or any event deemed by the County to have potentially significant impacts to any County roads.

7.14.5. Lane Closure Requirements:

A. Lane closures will be subject to access by local traffic and emergency vehicles.

B. The exact date(s), time(s) and location(s) the lane or road will be closed to traffic shall be provided.

C. All necessary barricades, flashers and signs required by the Engineering Department, Sheriff's Office, Colorado Department of Transportation, Colorado State Patrol, or Department of Natural Resources shall be erected and maintained, at the event organizer, planner or applicant's expense, to ensure all necessary precautions for public safety and convenience are maintained.

D. Adequate law enforcement support, private security, or certified flaggers shall be provided to manage lane closures, traffic control, pedestrian crossing and parking.

7.14.6 Road Limitations:

- A. Special events are prohibited on local roads interior to a neighborhood or subdivision, unless the event is organized and held for the residents of that neighborhood.
- B. Full road closures are not allowed on any main County roadway, particularly in mountainous areas where detour routes are not readily available, unless approved by the County Engineer or Board of County Commissioners.
- C. No events shall be scheduled on County Road 23, County Road 42C or County Road 38E in the Horsetooth Reservoir vicinity between the Memorial Day weekend and the Labor Day weekend on the blackout dates determined by the Department of Natural Resources annually. These blackout dates include, but are not limited to, Memorial Day weekend, the Juneteenth Holiday, Father's Day weekend, 4th of July holiday, and Labor Day weekend.
- D. Road events may only occur on two weekends per calendar month in the Horsetooth Reservoir vicinity between the Memorial Day weekend and the Labor Day weekend.
- E. Only one event per available weekend will be allowed in the Horsetooth Reservoir vicinity between the Memorial Day weekend and the Labor Day weekend.
- F. No events are allowed on County Road 31, County Road 8E, or County Road 18E in the Carter Lake vicinity between the Memorial Day weekend and Labor Day weekend.

7.15 Events on County-Owned Natural Resources Properties

In addition to the standards found in Sections 7.3-7.12, the following apply to events on properties owned by the Larimer County Department of Natural Resources.

7.15.1 Department of Natural Resources Review: Events on or adjacent to Larimer County Department of Natural Resources properties shall be reviewed for consistency with the department's mission and evaluated based on the following standards:

- A. Environmental Impacts:** Potential effects on the natural environment, considering the season, timing, intensity, and duration of the event.
- B. Property User Impacts:** Potential impacts on other users of the property, including public safety, trailhead access, and potential recreational user conflicts.
- C. Facilities and Operations:** The availability of restroom, utility, and parking facilities, as well as County staff and equipment requirements.

D. Site Reclamation: Plans for the reclamation and restoration of any disturbed areas.

E. Neighborhood Compliance: Overall impacts on adjacent properties and general compliance with applicable regulations.

7.15.2. Action on Application

Upon completion of the review of the application, the Director of Natural Resources or their designee will take one of the following actions:

A. Issue the permit with any conditions of approval deemed necessary to minimize potential adverse impacts,

B. Deny the permit if the proposed special event fails to conform to the applicable provisions, requirements, or standards, or

C. Schedule the application for a hearing before the Board of County Commissioners to determine if the special event permit application should be allowed or denied.

7.16. Definitions

Community Building: A building on public property or property owned, operated, or maintained by a non-profit community organization or homeowners' association (HOA), where gatherings are held primarily for the benefit, recreation, or engagement of its members or the local community.

Community Event: A gathering held on public property or property owned, operated, or maintained by a recognized community organization or homeowners' association (HOA), that is conducted primarily for the benefit, recreation, or engagement of its members or the local community.

Road Event: A bicycle race or ride, foot race or walk, motored vehicle event, or any other event utilizing a Larimer County road or other County property that requires changing, restricting, or adapting the normal traffic of such road.

Personal Event: A private gathering, such as a family wedding, family reunion, parties (including but not limited to birthday or dinner parties and barbecues, etc.), that is hosted by the property owner, primary resident, or immediate family member of the owner or resident. Immediate family members include spouses, children, parents or siblings.

Residential Properties: A property shall be considered Residential for the purpose of special event regulations if it is located within a zoning district that allows Single-Unit Dwellings as a Use by Right.

Special Event: The temporary use of land, buildings, structures, roads, streets, trails, parks, open spaces, or bodies of water for a gathering of any size, at any location in unincorporated Larimer County regardless of what zoning district the property is situated in, for any purpose, unless excluded in Section 7.2 of this Code.

Revisions to other Sections in the Land Use Code:

3.5.3. Temporary Use Standards

A. Agritourism Enterprise, Temporary

A temporary agritourism enterprise may be approved by the Director if the following conditions exist:

1. The use does not cause nuisances or adverse impacts to adjacent properties.
2. Safe and adequate access and parking have been approved by the County Engineer;
and
3. Adequate sanitation facilities have been approved by the County Health Department;
and
4. A specific time frame is established for the use. The maximum length of time for a temporary agritourism enterprise use is four months;
5. The temporary recreational use is located on the site of an existing agricultural use;
6. The applicant submits and obtains approval of a site plan that adequately addresses all the requirements noted above.