

# Outdoor Special Event Rules & Requirements



COMMUNITY  
ARTS & CULTURE

## **ACTIVITIES FOR PROFIT:**

Admission may **not** be charged for entrance into Town-owned or controlled areas and facilities by private individuals and/or for profit organizations. Special exemptions may be made when entering into a cooperative agreement with the Town. The applicant must submit evidence to the Town Manager, or his designee, that the event constitutes a community service.

## **A NOTE ON FREE SPEECH:**

The Town of Chapel Hill encourages free expression of ideas. No permit is required for non-commercial speech activities, but notification of Town officials and reservation of Town facilities is **required** to avoid conflict with other events. Any of the above stated activities that relate to free speech issues including picketing are specifically covered by other parts of the Town Code, and are subject to different requirements. If you have any questions about a particular event or activity, whether a permit is required, or what type of permit is required, please contact: Community Arts & Culture, [artsandculture@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:artsandculture@townofchapelhill.org).

## **CONTENTS:**

1. Town Parks
2. Noise
3. Security
4. Public Safety
5. Site Plan/Route Plan
6. Accessibility Plan
7. Parking / Shuttle Plan
8. Parades / Runs / Walks
9. Block Parties
10. Tents & Other Structures
11. Street, Lane, and Sidewalk Closures
12. Mitigation of Impact Requirements
13. Electricity
14. Vending
15. Food Sales
16. Alcoholic Beverage Sales & Consumption
17. Portable Toilets
18. Sanitation
19. Insurance & Liability
20. Marketing & PR
21. Fireworks

## 1. TOWN PARKS

The Town Park Fees are duly noted in the Chapel Hill Parks & Recreation Department User Fee Policy. Any Special Event utilizing a Town Park and/or accessing a portion of a Town Park is subject to the Town Park User Fee. Parking on the grass in any Town Park is strictly prohibited. Violators will be towed at the owner's expense. This includes Event Organizers and producers. All Town Parks have sundown curfew unless authorized for extended hours by the Director of Parks and Recreation. *(Soccer and softball ball fields and other special facilities may require additional fees.)*

## 2. NOISE

Permission to include music or amplified sound, including megaphones, as part of a special event may be given, provided that compliance with the Town's noise ordinance is assured (see Article III, Section 11-39 on Maximum permitted steady-state sound levels and Article III, Section 11-39.1 Nuisance Noise). **\*([Application for Permit to Exceed Sound Limits](#))** Event Organizers should be sensitive to local businesses when preparing sound equipment for special events and are highly encouraged to perform sound checks and other same type activities after business operating hours **(5:00pm)**. The Town reserves the right to limit the sound amplification equipment so that it will not unreasonably disturb non-participating persons around the event. **Complaints of loud, disturbing, or unnecessary noise will result in the immediate revocation of the permit by the Town of Chapel Hill Police Department.**

## 3. SECURITY

As an Event Organizer, you are required to provide a safe and secure environment for your event. This is accomplished through detail preplanning by anticipating potential problems and concerns related to the event activities and surrounding environment. The size, type, time of day and location of your event, as well as the overall activities are all areas that need to be analyzed in depth and addressed through your security plan.

A representative of your event should make preliminary recommendations to rectify the concerns and/or potential problems and recommend the number of private security guards needed at your event.

If the Host Organization fails to meet security requirements for the event, or if security provided proves inadequate, the Chapel Hill Police Department maintains the right to shut down any or all components of the event and/or to provide additional police services that will be billed directly to the Host Organization at a minimum rate of \$30.00 per hour with a minimum of 3 hours per officer.

Many events will require the employment of a minimum of (2) two off-duty Chapel Hill Police Department officers for the event. **Contact the Chapel Hill Police Department at (919) 968-2760 for more information**

#### 4. PUBLIC SAFETY

In compliance with the North Carolina State Fire Prevention Code, the Chapel Hill Fire Department requires any event with expected attendance over 300 persons to develop an Emergency Action Plan for provision of safety services, both for the participants of the event and for persons directly or indirectly affected by the event.

An Emergency Action Plan, or EAP, defines the coordination of necessary actions by the Host Organization and the responsible municipal, county, and State officials to provide for timely notification, warning, and evacuation in the event of an emergency.

Your EAP must be tailored to site-specific conditions as required by the Chapel Hill Fire Department before a permit can be issued. The deadline for submission of an EAP is no later than 14 days in advance of the event. The EAP outline should adhere to the following standard rules of order:

1. General Summary Paragraph
2. Purpose of Emergency Action Plan
3. Assumptions of Emergency Action Plan
4. Basic Plan
  - a. Event Director Contact: Name & Number
  - b. Emergency Notification Procedure
  - c. Severe Weather Every EAP must include reference to the “30/30 Rule for Lightning” (when length of time in seconds between a lightning flash and its subsequent thunder is 30 seconds or less, remain under cover until 30 minutes after the final clap of thunder).
  - d. Fire
  - e. Medical Emergencies
  - f. Law Enforcement
  - g. Emergency Vehicle Access
  - h. Evacuation or Egress
5. Event Emergency Contact Information (Primary, Secondary, Police, Fire & Rescue)
6. Event Area Map

In an effort to help you determine the appropriate medical services for your event, see on the next page, a matrix of Emergency Medical Services Resources & Fire Rescue to be provided.

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PUBLIC SAFETY RESOURCE MATRIX

In an effort to help you determine the appropriate medical services for your event, the following matrix of Emergency Medical Services Resources & Fire Rescue is provided. **Contact the Chapel Hill Fire Department at 919-968-2781 for additional information.**

Event Type	Anticipated Crowd Size	Knowledge of 911 Access and CPR	Basic First Aid Stations	First Aid Stations Including EMT	First Aid Stations Including Paramedic	Ambulances	Mobile Teams	Fire Rescue	Fire Marshall
Concert Music Festival Block-Party Street-Fair Outside Venue	Less than 1,000	R	R	S					
	1,000 to 3,000	R		R		S			
	3,000 to 12,000	R		R	S	R	R	S	
	Over 12,000	R			R	R	R	R	R
Athletic-or Sporting Event	Less than 1,000	R		R					
	1,000 to 3,000	R	R	R	S	S	S	S	
	3,000 to 12,000	R			R	R	R	R	
	Over 12,000	R			R	R	R	R	S
Parade	Less than 1,000	R			S				
	1,000 to 3,000	R	R	S		S	S	S	
	3,000 to 12,000	R	R	R	S	R	R	R	
	Over 12,000	R		R	R	R	R	R	S
R = Required Resource. (Multiple resources should be considered depending on boundaries of event or size of crowd.) S = Suggested Resource (Suggested resource intended to ensure safety of participants.)									

**5. SITE PLAN/ROUTE MAP**

To ensure appropriate review of your event, a site plan should be included in your special event application. It is preferred that you submit computer assisted drawings (CAD) of your event site. If CAD plans are not possible, your site plan should be produced in a clear and legible manner. Site plans should be submitted in an 8 ½" x 11" or 8 ½" x 14" standard format. Site plans/route maps should include location of all barricades, tents, portable/prefabricated and site built structures such as stages, platforms and bleachers, vendor booths, portable restroom facilities, electrical supply points, generators and key equipment locations, emergency egress and evacuation routes which are integral to the production of the event.

Based on your event plan and components, Chapel Hill Fire Department may require an inspection of your event site before and/or during the event

## 6. ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

As an Event Organizer, you are required to comply with all Town, County, State and Federal Disability Access Requirements applicable to your event.

All temporary venues, related structures, and outdoor sites for special events shall be accessible to persons with disabilities. If a portion of the area cannot be made accessible, an alternate area shall be provided with the same activities that are in the inaccessible areas. It cannot, however, be offered only to patrons with disabilities.

Disability access may include parking, restrooms, and telephones, clear paths of travel, transportation, signage, accessible vendors and booths. If all areas are not accessible, a map or program must be provided to attendees indicating the accessible restrooms, parking, telephones, drinking fountains, etc.

## 7. PARKING AND SHUTTLE PLAN

It is strongly suggested that you have a plan in place for the safe arrival and departure of event attendees, participants and vendors. As an Event Organizer you should develop a parking and/or shuttle plan that is suitable for the environment in which your event will take place and remember that parking, traffic congestion and environmental pollution are all factors of concern with events. Parking Services reviews all large events taking place downtown to determine if it is appropriate to institute special event rates. Any event estimating over 1,000 in participation may justify special event parking increases within Town parking decks. This increased parking rate helps to supplement lost meter revenue for downtown street closures. You should include the use of carpools, public transportation and alternate modes of nonpolluting transportation whenever possible. You must always include wheelchair accessible parking and/or access in your event plan.

## 8. PARADES/RUNS/WALKS

Groups or organizations wishing to hold a parade, run or walk that will impede the flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic must secure a parade/run permit. Please complete the Application for Parade / Run Permit. \*[\(Chapel Hill Police Department Application for Parade/Run\)](#)

## 9. BLOCK PARTY

Residents of the Town of Chapel Hill may apply for a street closure for the purpose of holding block parties. Along with the [Outdoor Special Event Application](#), the event coordinator must provide a traffic plan and/or site map showing the re-direction of traffic flow around the requested closure, locations of all directional/detour signage, location of barricades, and a signed petition by the homeowners that will be affected by the closure. The petition must state the date, time, and location of the block party.

Block party petitions will be approved subject to the following conditions:

- All residents in the block must be contacted.
- At least 60% of the households must sign the petition. All petitioners must be at least 21 years of age.
- One or more individuals accept responsibility for clean-up of litter at the completion of the block party
- One or more individuals accept responsibility for receiving directives from the Police Department, Fire Department, or other Departments.
- No residents' vehicles will be denied access to or from their homes during the hours of the block party.
- The street closing not affect fixed route public transportation
- Fire, police and rescue vehicles must be permitted access at all times during the block party.
- All barricades must be manned during full hours of closure.
- The block party is subject to the Town Noise Ordinance.
- The petitioners agree to a hold harmless agreement.

To receive a permit for a block party please complete the [Outdoor Special Event Application](#).

**Contact the Chapel Hill Police Department at (919) 968-2760 for more information.**

## **10. TENTS & OTHER STRUCTURES**

The North Carolina State Building and Fire Codes regulate the construction and placement of any structure, including tents, canopies, and shelters constructed of canvas or other pliable materials no matter how supported. Erecting tents without the required Fire prevention permits may result in fines, orders to remove the structures, and other possible penalties. Tents with cooking or open flame shall be required to have an attached label indicating flame resistance by NFPA, North Carolina State Fire Marshall, or other approved testing agency, regardless of size.

Organizers of Special Events that take place in the Town of Chapel Hill must be aware of the permitting process for tent structures as indicated above. This applies to all Events regardless of their sponsorship status. Organizers are responsible for making sure that permits are applied for and in place prior to the Event date. The Organizer must have a copy of the approved Fire Permits (as applicable) on site during the course of the event.

The [Town of Chapel Hill Fire Department Tent Permit Application](#) must be accompanied by a site plan.

### **Requirements for tents include:**

- No tents may be staked into asphalt.
- All tents must be secured or weighted down at all corners.
- No tent may be erected in front of a building used as a place of public assembly, within fifteen feet (15 feet) of a fire hydrant, or in any way obstructing any building exit or doorway.

- Tents may not block streets. A minimum of 20 feet clearance must be maintained on all streets.

- All tents must be inspected and approved before occupancy or use by the public. All tents large than 200 square feet, or canopies in excess of 400 square feet will require a permit \*([Town of Chapel Hill Fire Department Tent Permit Application](#))

At least one UL rated 2A: 10B:C extinguisher shall be provided for all tents exceeding 400 square feet or any size tent where there is cooking. Additional extinguishers may be required after the inspection. (Continued on pg. 12) LP Gas use shall be restricted to cylinders no larger than 125 gallons water capacity (100 pounds of gas). Cylinders shall be adequately secured to prevent over turning. Cylinders may not be secured to items such as fire hydrants, temporary electric poles or barricades. Cylinders may be secured to the grill, a tent post, a table placed in a container with a flat bottom such as a plastic carton, a signpost or permanent electric pole.

**For more information call the Chapel Hill Fire Department at (919) 968-2781 in advance of the event**

## **11. TOWN STREET, LANE & SIDEWALK CLOSURES**

If your event involves street or sidewalk closures, you will be required to obtain traffic and/or pedestrian safety equipment as well as proper detour signage at approaching intersections and crosswalks. Depending upon the type of event, you may need barricades, traffic cones, directional signage, etc. It is your responsibility to obtain and properly place this equipment prior to the beginning of your event. Street/Sidewalk closings require the use of traffic control devices as set forth in the MANUAL ON UNIFORM TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES (<http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov>)

Along with the Outdoor Special Event application, the Event Organizer must complete the [Town of Chapel Hill Engineering Departments Permission Request Form for Street/Lane/Sidewalk Closure Permit Application](#) and provide a traffic plan and/or site map showing the re-direction of traffic flow around the requested closure, locations of all directional/detour signage and location of barricades, egress and evacuation routes. Separate diagrams maybe required with regards to set up and break down intervals. Additional charges may apply to a Street/Lane/ Sidewalk Closure as determined by Traffic Engineering, including the cost of closing parking meters, renting barricades, cones or for other town resources.

No posters, signs or similar materials may be attached to or placed on barricades. For emergency purposes barricades shall not be blocked in any manner and must be monitored by an assigned representative at all times. Vehicles obstructing barricades or fire lanes will be cited for a violation of the fire code and may be towed and stored at the owner's expense. Sidewalks are to be used for public refuge and pedestrian traffic only and must remain clear and unobstructed in case of emergency (unless the closure permit specifically states that the sidewalk is to be closed, or if the sidewalk is within the festival boundary area where streets are closed for a special event). Event Organizer must maintain a twenty (20) foot lane on all blocked streets/roads for emergency vehicle access.

**For more information call Chapel Hill Engineering at (919) 968-2833 in advance of the event.**



## **12. MITIGATION OF IMPACT**

As an Event Organizer, you are required to develop mitigating measures to accommodate the negative impact your event may have on entities that may be affected by your activities. Most neighborhoods and business districts are represented by a number of community groups that are officially recognized by the Town of Chapel Hill. These groups include; Home owners Association, Community Planning Groups, Town Councils, Business Improvement Districts, and Recreation Councils. If your event venue is in an area that is governed by one or more of these groups, you must present your event concept to these organizations for their support or endorsement.

For any event of significant impact, the Town of Chapel Hill requires that notices be mailed or hand delivered 30 days in advance of the event to all entities impacted by the event activities. A copy of this notice should be included with your event application. Information in this notice should include, but not be limited to, the date(s), day(s), time(s), location(s) and types of activities taking place during your event. The notice must also give detour or alternate route information if regular access is affected or if transportation systems are impacted. The notice also must include a telephone number where members of the public can contact your organization if they have concerns or issues that need to be addressed both prior and during the event.

The Town of Chapel Hill may also require you to provide advisory signs placed a minimum of two weeks prior to your event if the event impacts a major use roadway. Advisory signs are intended to provide advanced notice to the regular users of a roadway of the scheduled closure.

## **13. ELECTRICITY**

A licensed electrician contracted by the Event Organizer must provide for any and all electrical requirements beyond those, which already exist at the proposed event location. Any and all additional electrical work installed at the proposed event location must be inspected and approved by the Town of Chapel Hill Inspections Department. Specific requirements for the use of electricity must be submitted and approved at the time of application for a special event permit. All portable generators must be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If grounding is required or recommended by the manufacturer, a licensed electrician will be required. Power provided by extension cords from a building shall not pass through doorways or windows but shall be supplied by an exterior outlet, which is protected by a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI). Extension cords shall be grounded and shall not be placed over walking surfaces without proper covering devices. Proper fire extinguishers must be supplied.

**Contact the Inspections Department to discuss electrical requirements at (919) 968-2718.**

## 14. VENDING

The Event Organizer is responsible for procuring vendors for the event. All vendors may be identified with uniform identification indicating that they are a part of the event. Event Organizers are to assure all vendors selling merchandise (including food vendors), to secure Specialty Market Privilege License with the Town of Chapel Hill. Vendors must provide copies of their privilege license to the event organizer to be submitted with Outdoor Special Event Application. [See Vending at Special Events – Check List.](#)

## 15. FOOD SALES

Health Department inspections are now required for the sale of all food at all events. It is the responsibility of the event organizer to contact the Orange County Health Department four weeks prior to the event and advise them of your food vendor participation. **Contact the Orange County Health Department with any questions regarding health inspections at (919) 245-2360.**

The Event Organizer should understand the following:

- The Event Organizer is responsible for attaining a TFE Application (Temporary Food Establishment) form the Orange County Health Department and distributing to any and all food vendors participating in your event.
- Event Organizer is responsible for following all rules and regulations regarding any food preparation and service as established by the Orange County Health Department.
- A fee may be required per booth per event.
- Inspectors have the right to close booths operating outside of health regulations.
- All permits must be clearly displayed.
- Beverages must be served in paper or plastic cups.
- Event Organizer is responsible for all clean-up including grease removal.

## 16. ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE SALE & CONSUMPTION

TOWN CODE, Chapter 3, Sec. 3-5: **Possession and consumption of malt beverages and unfortified wines at special events in municipal parking lots and on the top level of the Wallace Parking Plaza.**

Notwithstanding the provisions of sections 3-2, 3-3, and 3-4, of this Code, the sale, purchase, and possession of malt beverages and unfortified wines, the possession of open containers of malt beverages and unfortified wines and their consumption shall be lawful on the Rosemary/Columbia lot and on the top level of the Wallace Parking Plaza when approved as part of a special event approved by the town council. The council shall by resolution establish rules and regulations for those events.

Both the Town of Chapel Hill by Ordinance and North Carolina by State Law regulate the possession, sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages. Special permits and licensing are unconditionally required for the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages at an Outdoor Special Event held in the Town of Chapel Hill. Any event that includes the possession of alcohol is required to have a minimum of two (2) CHPD officers at coordinators expense in attendance.

If your event includes the use of alcohol on town property, Liquor Liability Coverage must be included on your certificate of insurance. The Event Organizer is responsible for filing for and obtaining all required permits and special licenses.

The four-part approval process includes:

- Step 1 – Approval by Chapel Hill Town Council
- Step 2 – Approval by the North Carolina Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission
- Step 3 – Liquor Liability Coverage (see Insurance & Liability)
- Step 4 – Hiring of Chapel Hill Police Department

## **17. PORTABLE TOILETS**

It is the responsibility of the Event Organizer to provide adequate on-site toilets to facilitate the specific needs of their event. It is recommended that you provide one (1) chemical or portable toilet for every 250 people, or portion thereof who attends your event. Ten percent (10%) of these facilities must be ADA accessible. This figure is based upon the maximum number of attendees at your event during peak time. The location and delivery schedule for portable restrooms must be approved in advance by Chapel Hill Parks & Recreation. All portable toilets must be maintained daily if contracted for a multiple day event. **For more information contact the Orange County Health Department at (919) 245-2360.**

## **18. SANITATION**

As an Event Organizer, you must properly dispose of waste and garbage throughout the term of your event and immediately upon conclusion of the event the area must be returned to a clean condition. If you, as an Event Organizer set a standard of leaving the venue better than you found it, you can have a highly beneficial impact on the Chapel Hill community. If domesticated animals are allowed to be present during the event, the Event Organizer will be fully responsible for the collection and proper disposal of all waste generated from the animals. Farm animals and undomesticated animals are restricted in proximity to residences and businesses.

Sanitation reserves the right to require a clean-up deposit in the amount of \$250.00 for any special event on Town or public property. Should you fail to perform adequate cleanup or damage occurs to city property and facilities due to your event, you will be billed at full cost recovery rates plus overhead for cleanup and repair. In addition, such failure may result in denial of future approval for an Outdoor

Special Event permit or the requirement of an increased cash deposit or surety bond for future events. The city does not provide street sweeping services for special events, so please plan accordingly.

It is recommended that the Event Organizer bring extra trash receptacle liners to replace full bags in permanent town receptacles. If Sanitation services are supported through a co-sponsorship agreement by the Town of Chapel Hill, all trash should be bagged, secured and placed in a central location for pickup. If additional trash barrels are provided within this agreement, trash barrels should be emptied and stacked in the area they were delivered.

**Regarding responsibility for proper disposal of cooking oil and grease:**

- The Event Organizer is responsible for arranging for the proper disposal of cooking oil, grease, tar, paper, food service matting and other similar waste, with a specialized private service agency.
- Improper disposal or spills may be classified as a hazardous waste and result in fine

**19. INSURANCE AND LIABILITY**

The Event Organizer must furnish a fully paid liability damage insurance policy procured from a company licensed to conduct business in North Carolina listing the Town of Chapel Hill as the Certificate Holder as well as Additional Insured. Remember that this must be listed as:

Town of Chapel Hill

405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd

Chapel Hill, NC 27514

All Event Organizers with co-sponsorship status are required to provide documentation of General Liability, Workers Compensation, Automobile Liability and if event includes alcohol, Liquor Liability Coverage. General Liability and Liquor Liability Certificates must list the Town of Chapel Hill as the Certificate Holder, as well as Additional Insured.

All food vendors participating in a cosponsored event by the Town of Chapel Hill must also adhere to these insurance requirements and will not be permitted to participate without satisfying the Town of Chapel Hill to this regard.

These policies must protect the Town of Chapel Hill, its officers, officials, employees and agents from any and all claims for damages to property and/or bodily injury which may result from or in connection with any of the operations carried on by the permittee of the Festival or Special Event. The Town of Chapel Hill must receive a copy of all policies before the Outdoor Special Event permit will be issued.

**Insurance requirements are as follows:**

Commercial General Liability:

Per Occurrence \$1,000,000

Personal & Advertising Injury \$1,000,000

Products/Completed Ops. \$1,000,000

General Aggregate Limits vary depending on size, location and type of event. Minimum limits for this coverage will be \$1,000,000

In addition to these minimum requirements, co-sponsored events by the Town of Chapel Hill require additional coverage, based upon the type of event, up to the following limits:

Automobile Liability – Including Owned, Hired and Non-Owned Vehicles

Combined Single Limit Per Accident \$1,000,000

(Bodily Injury and Property Damage)

Workers' Compensation – Statutory

Employer' Liability

Each Accident \$100,000

Disease - Policy Limit \$500,000

Disease – Each Employee \$100,000

Liquor Liability

Limits Vary Depending on Size, Location and Type of Event

Minimum Limits for This Coverage Will Be \$2,000,000

*The Town of Chapel Hill at its discretion may waive the insurance requirements for small events.*

## **20. MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Please ensure that you have conditional approval of your event before you begin to promote market or advertise the event. Conditional approval may be made after your Outdoor Special Event Application has been submitted to the Town of Chapel Hill and initially screened by the Outdoor Special Events Team. Acceptance of your Special Event Application by the town is not a guarantee of the date and location, or an automatic approval of your event. The Event Organizer must complete the application requirements entirely before the Town of Chapel Hill will issue a Special Event Permit.

Due to the many changing components of an event, most Special Event Permits are issued only a few days in advance of the event date.

If you anticipate distribution of promotional materials within the event area, it is important that you consider a limit to the placement and/or distribution of flyers, stickers and signage. Items of particular concern are those that may damage public and private property, violate city sign code ordinances, or which may be difficult to clean or remove from the area.

### 5.14.3 Signs Exempt from Regulation:

Public event announcements by public or non-profit organizations of special events or activities of interest to the general public provided such signs do not exceed one sign per site of such events or activities nor twelve (12) square feet in area per display surface, and are removed within fourteen (14) days of erection.

Banners may be hung in conjunction with a permitted festival and/or special event in accordance with the following:

#### Allowed

Banners on freestanding polls

Banners on the side walls of buildings (w/permission of the owner)

Banners on tents

#### Not Allowed

Banners across or over streets or overpasses

Banners on light poles or utility poles

Banners on barricades

Banners on awnings or decks

## 21. FIREWORKS

There are limited locations within the Town of Chapel Hill that can be used to launch fireworks. A fireworks permit (\$300.00) is required to display fireworks in Chapel Hill. ([Chapel Hill Fire Department Application for Pyrotechnic Display](#)) Fireworks require Fire Department unit standby on site. This permit and fee are in addition to any other permits and fees required by State Law and Local Ordinance, including any applicable requirements for permits contained in Chapter 14, Article 54, of the North Carolina General Statute. Application must be made in writing to the **Town of Chapel Hill Fire Department (919) 968-2781** not less than sixty (30) days prior to the date of the proposed display of fireworks. A copy of general liability insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000 listing the Town of Chapel Hill as the certificate holder and as additional insured must accompany the application. Once the application is received along with payment for the permit, a code enforcement officer will conduct a pre-show set up and a walk through inspection. **Contact the Town of Chapel Hill Fire Department (919) 968-2781**