

Who uses group picnic permits?

Families, schools, community organizations and work groups depend on permits in parks across the city to reserve space for their planned events, which include birthday parties, reunions, baby showers, retirement celebrations, wedding receptions and engagement parties.

In 2015, we issued nearly 7,000 group picnic permits, of which:

- 82% were for family events (children's parties, weddings, family gatherings)
- 6% were for school gatherings
- 5% were for non-profit and community group events
- 4% were for work-related events

A permit is not required for groups of fewer than 25 people.

Why do we have a permit system?

Large picnic groups want assurance that space will be available at a specific location for their event. A first-come, first-serve policy without a specific destination is not feasible or desirable.

Permits are necessary for groups of 25 or more people or for groups needing special setup because they have the potential for greater impact on our parks. Permits help:

- Avoid user conflict
- Provide increased accountability for cleanup and potential damage to our parks
- Ensure that parks are accessible for low-cost picnics celebrating life events
- Provide a tool for park maintenance staff to better manage and steward open space

A history of large, unpermitted events happening in our parks that have left significant damage and trash cleanup, including:

- 4/20 in Golden Gate Park (\$50K for cleanup; 22,000 pounds of trash; cost of \$100K citywide)
- Valentine's Day Pillow Fight at Justin Herman Plaza
- Large group gatherings at Dolores Park



How does the permit system work?

Group picnic permits can be arranged by phone, online or in person at our Permits and Reservations Office. Translation services available in multiple languages.

What is the cost for a group picnic permit?

Permits are not required for groups of fewer than 25 people.

Group picnic fees for families and non-profits cost \$33 for up to 50 people. Picnic fees for work-related events cost \$260 for up to 200 people. In 2015, we issued 700 group picnic permits to SFUSD schools for no fee at all.

As an additional point of comparison, a wedding reception at San Francisco's City Hall ranges from \$500 per hour in the North or South Light Court, to \$5,000 for an afternoon and evening.

Where does the revenue from permits go?

Revenue from group picnic permits in 2015 was \$362,000, which helped to offset the \$1.96 million annual cost of trash removal from our parks. \$362,000 is equal to the cost of two gardeners and two custodians.

Why are there designated lawn spaces for group picnics in addition to picnic tables?

Large groups can not fit around a picnic table. Large group picnics, such as those listed in [Appendix I](#) or the 6/5/2016 SFUSD Family Welcome Day Picnic in Golden Gate Park, often need adjacent lawn space to accommodate a greater number of guests and field activities.

Designated lawn areas for group picnics are needed to accommodate the nearly 7,000 group picnic requests the Department receives each year. These areas are chosen thoughtfully to avoid user conflict.

Providing permits in designated lawn areas is a standard practice in park systems across the country.

Do other park systems permit group picnics in lawn areas?

Yes. A survey of park districts across the city, the Bay Area and the nation shows that virtually every park district utilizes a group picnic reservation system for lawn areas.

Agency/City	Lawn Permits	For Groups of	Fee
GGNRA	YES	50+	\$50
Presidio	YES	50+	Varies
Mission Bay (OCII)	YES	50+	Varies
Yerba Buena (OCII)	YES	25+	Varies
East Bay Regional Parks	YES	--	\$60-\$420
San Jose	YES	--	\$100-\$400
San Mateo County	YES	--	\$50-\$300
Marin County	YES	20+	\$75-\$225
New York	YES	20-50	\$25
Los Angeles	YES	1-50	\$100
Chicago	YES	1-100	\$180
Houston	YES	1-125	\$83
Philadelphia	YES	1-49	\$35

Are permits and reservations new?

No. Permits have been addressed in both the City Charter and the Park Code for decades.

City Charter, Section 4.113

The Department shall issue permits for the use of all property under the (Recreation and Park) Commission's control, pursuant to the policies established by the Commission.

Park Code, Section 7.01

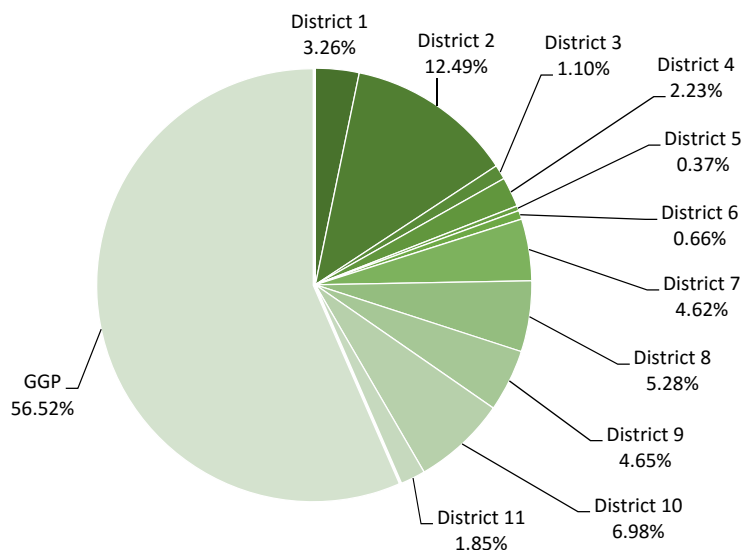
Although the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and Article 1, Section 9 of the California Constitution guarantee freedom of speech and association, the City and County of San Francisco is authorized to impose reasonable restrictions on the time, place and manner of such expression. In accordance with this right, the City requires permits for certain activities which occur on park property in order (1) to coordinate activities planned by different groups so that as many people as possible can use and enjoy the park at the same time; (2) to learn the details of the proposed activity in order to establish rules aimed at preventing inconvenience or harm to the public or the park; (3) to require appropriate insurance in order to relieve the City of liability from any harm that occurs; and (4) to insure that recreational facilities most suited for the activity are used. (Added by Ord. 603-81, App. 12/18/81)

Also, in 2003, the Board of Supervisors approved an ordinance amending the Park Code to require a cleaning deposit and reimbursement of costs for the use of park facilities, and to increase the fees charged for the use of Recreation and Park facilities for weddings, events, picnics and other permit uses. (Approved by Supervisors Ammiano, Daly, Dufty, Gonzalez, Hall, Ma, Maxwell, McGoldrick, Newsom, Peskin and Sandoval)

(Specific fees are addressed in Article 12 of the Park Code)

Where are permits being issued?

RPD Group Picnic Permits by District, 2010-2015 (not including Mission Bay, Yerba Buena, or GGNRA)



- ❖ See **Appendix I** for a list of groups applying for and receiving permits in 2015.
- ❖ See **Appendix II** for a breakdown of permits by type for each district, 2010-2015.

Are group picnic permits a new practice at Dolores Park?

No. Dolores Park picnic tables and designated lawn areas have been reserved for group picnics and celebrations for decades. Prior to the renovation, nine different spaces were used for these purposes (including four lawn areas). There are currently seven (including three lawn areas). The picnic table areas at Dolores Park are primarily used for small group children and family parties.

In 2010 Dolores Park was the second most permitted park (based on total hours), compared to Golden Gate Park. This long-standing reservation policy has provided certainty about the availability of space for large group picnics while ensuring accountability to our taxpayers for any damage and trash.

The only things that are different about our picnic reservations at Dolores since the renovation are:

- Reduction of number of sites from 9 to 7 given reconfiguration of the park
- Park ambassadors to provide information and education
- Love Dolores stewardship campaign to reduce trash impact
- Picnics on weekends limited to 50 people

❖ See **Appendix III** for a map of current and former group picnic areas at Dolores Park.

What are the impacts of a park system without permits or reservations on lawn areas?

It would be more difficult for families, schools, community organizations and work groups to properly plan for their events.

On a weekend, virtually all picnic tables are booked. If lawn areas were removed from the system, the number of available sites would drop significantly and the Department could not honor the nearly 7,000 group picnic requests it issues every year. Significantly, SFUSD schools and other community-based organizations could not reserve lawn space for field day activities.

Without permits, the Recreation and Park Department would also anticipate an increase in user conflict and a diminished ability for park maintenance staff to manage open space.

Appendix I: Groups and Organizations Applying for and Receiving Picnic Permits

Non-Profit and Community-Based Organizations

African Advocacy Network	Jewish Community Center of San Francisco
ARC of San Francisco	Kaiser Foundation Hospitals
Asian Women's Resource Center	Kokkari
California Academy of Sciences	Korean American Association of SF
Center for Learning and Retirement	La Piccola Scoula Italiana
Central City Hospitality House	La Raza Centro Legal
Chinatown Community Development Center	Language in Action
Chinatown YMCA	Lesbian Gay Freedom Band
Chinese Newcomers Service Center	Mission Graduates
Chinese Progressive Association	Mo' Magic
Consulate General of Korea	On Lok
Cub Scouts Troop 29	Our Family Coalition
Dahlia Society of California	Outward Bound
Discovery Bound	Portola Family Connection
Donaldina Cameron House	Project Open Hand
Filipino American Development Foundation	SEIU 1021
Friends of Lafayette Park	SF Food Bank
Girl Scouts of Northern California	SF Nature Education
Girls to Women	SF YouthWorks
Glide Memorial Church	Shambhala Meditation Center
Golden Gate Mother's Group	Shanti Project
Habitat for Humanity Greater SF	Sierra Club
Heritage on the Marina	Stonestown YMCA
Homeless Children's Network	Sunset Neighborhood Beacon Center
Institute on Aging	Tenants Together (Non-profit) Tenderloin Housing Clinic
Instituto Familia de la Raza	The First Tee of San Francisco
Irish Immigration Pastoral Center	Transport Workers Union Local 250A Wu
Jamestown Community Center	Yee Children's Services
Japanese Community Council (JCYC)	

Schools

Advanced English Academy	Cornerstone Academy
Alamo Elementary	Creative Arts Charter School
Alice Fong Yu Elementary	Crystal Springs Upland School
Alta Vista School	Dianne Feinstein Elementary School
AltSchool SOMA	Dr. William L Cobb Elementary
Alvarado Elementary School	English Language Institute
Alvarado PTA	Everett Middle School
Argonne Early Education Center	Francis Scott Key Elementary School
Bowdoin College	French American and International School
Brandeis Hillel Day School	Gateway Middle School
Carondelet High School	George Peabody Elementary School
Cathedral School for Boys	George Washington High School
Chibi Chan Preschool	Helen's Day School
Chinese American International School	Hillcrest Elementary School
Chinese Immersion Elementary School	Holy Names School
City Arts and Technology High School	Ida B Wells High School
City College of San Francisco	Jefferson Elementary School
Claire Lilienthal Alternative School	Kaplan International
Clarendon Elementary School	Katherine Delmar Burke School

Kittredge School
Lakeshore Elementary School SFUSD
Lick Wilmerding High School
Lincoln High School
Lowell High School
Malcolm X Academy
McKinley Elementary School PTA
Mills College
Miraloma Elementary School
Mission High School
Monroe Elementary School
Moscone Elementary School
Nihonmachi Little Friends
Nueva School
Pacific Primary School
Paul Revere K-8 School
Potrero Kids Preschool
Public Policy Institute
Robert Louis Stevenson School
Rooftop Alternative School PTA
San Francisco Conservatory of Music

SF Day School
SF International HS
SF State University
St. Anne School
St. Mary's School
St. Monica School
St. Thomas the Apostle School
Star of the Sea School
Stuart Hall for Boys
Sunnyside Elementary School
Sunset Elementary School
Sunset Elementary School
Swarthmore College
The San Francisco School
Thurgood Marshall High School
UCSF
Ulloa Elementary School
USF
Visitacion Valley Middle School
West Portal Lutheran School
Willie Brown Middle School

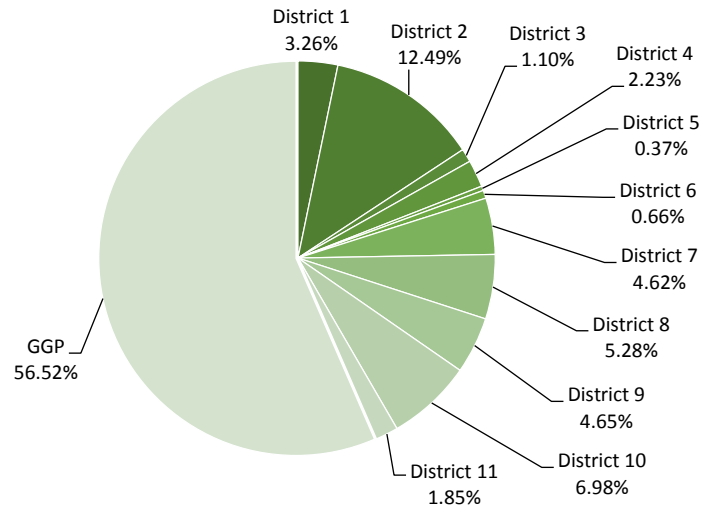
Religious Organizations

Bayview Church of Christ
Bethel Christian Church
Calvary Presbyterian Church
Central Peninsula Church
Christ United Presbyterian Church
Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints
City Church of San Francisco
City Mission Gospel Ministry
Congregation Beth Shallom
Congregation Chevra Thilin
Cumberland Presbyterian Chinese Church
Dolores Park Church
Emmanuel Mongolian Church
Evergreen Baptist Church
Full Gospel Church
Glad Tidings Church

Glide Memorial Church
Golden Gate Christian Reformed Church
Good News Presbyterian Church
Lifelight Church
Lincoln Park Presbyterian Church
Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit
Notre Dame Des Victories
Pine United Methodist Church
Presbyterian Church in Chinatown
Radiance Christian Church
S.F. Mercy Vietnamese Baptist Church
San Francisco Chinese Baptist Church
SF Senior Mission Church
St. Thomas' Church
Temple Emanuel
Temple Lily of the Valley

Group & Picnic Reservations (2010 to Present)

District 1	958
District 2	3,673
District 3	323
District 4	655
District 5	108
District 6	193
District 7	1,359
District 8	1,554
District 9	1,369
District 10	2,054
District 11	544
GGP	16,627
Total	29,417.00



Citywide by Type

Individual Birthdays & Celebrations	25,803	87.71%
Non-Profit & Community	1,549	5.27%
School	1,114	3.79%
Work-Related	951	3.23%
Total	29,417	

Districtwide by Type

District 1

Individual Birthdays & Celebrations	897	93.63%
Non-Profit & Community	26	2.71%
School	35	3.65%
Work-Related	0	0.00%
Total	958	

District 2

Individual Birthdays & Celebrations	3,358	91.42%
Non-Profit & Community	105	2.86%
School	148	4.03%
Work-Related	62	1.69%
Total	3,673	

District 3

Individual Birthdays & Celebrations	295	91.33%
Non-Profit & Community	13	4.02%
School	13	4.02%
Work-Related	2	0.62%
Total	323	

District 4

Individual Birthdays & Celebrations	526	80.31%
Non-Profit & Community	74	11.30%
School	50	7.63%
Work-Related	5	0.76%
Total	655	

District 5

Individual Birthdays & Celebrations	95	87.96%
Non-Profit & Community	7	6.48%
School	3	2.78%
Work-Related	3	2.78%
Total	108	

Appendix 2: Citywide and District Group and Picnic Reservations by Type (2010 to Present)

District 6

Individual Birthdays & Celebrations	154	79.79%
Non-Profit & Community	32	16.58%
School	5	2.59%
Work-Related	2	1.04%
Total	193	

District 7

Individual Birthdays & Celebrations	1,232	90.65%
Non-Profit & Community	24	1.77%
School	101	7.43%
Work-Related	2	0.15%
Total	1,359	

District 8

Individual Birthdays & Celebrations	1,456	93.69%
Non-Profit & Community	23	1.48%
School	73	4.70%
Work-Related	2	0.13%
Total	1,554	

Dolores Park

Individual Birthday Parties & Celebrations	156	71.23%
Non-Profit & Community	44	20.09%
School	11	5.02%
Work-Related	8	3.65%
Total	219	

District 9

Individual Birthdays & Celebrations	1,281	93.57%
Non-Profit & Community	39	2.85%
School	39	2.85%
Work-Related	10	0.73%
Total	1,369	

District 10

Individual Birthdays & Celebrations	1,804	87.83%
Non-Profit & Community	154	7.50%
School	63	3.07%
Work-Related	33	1.61%
Total	2,054	

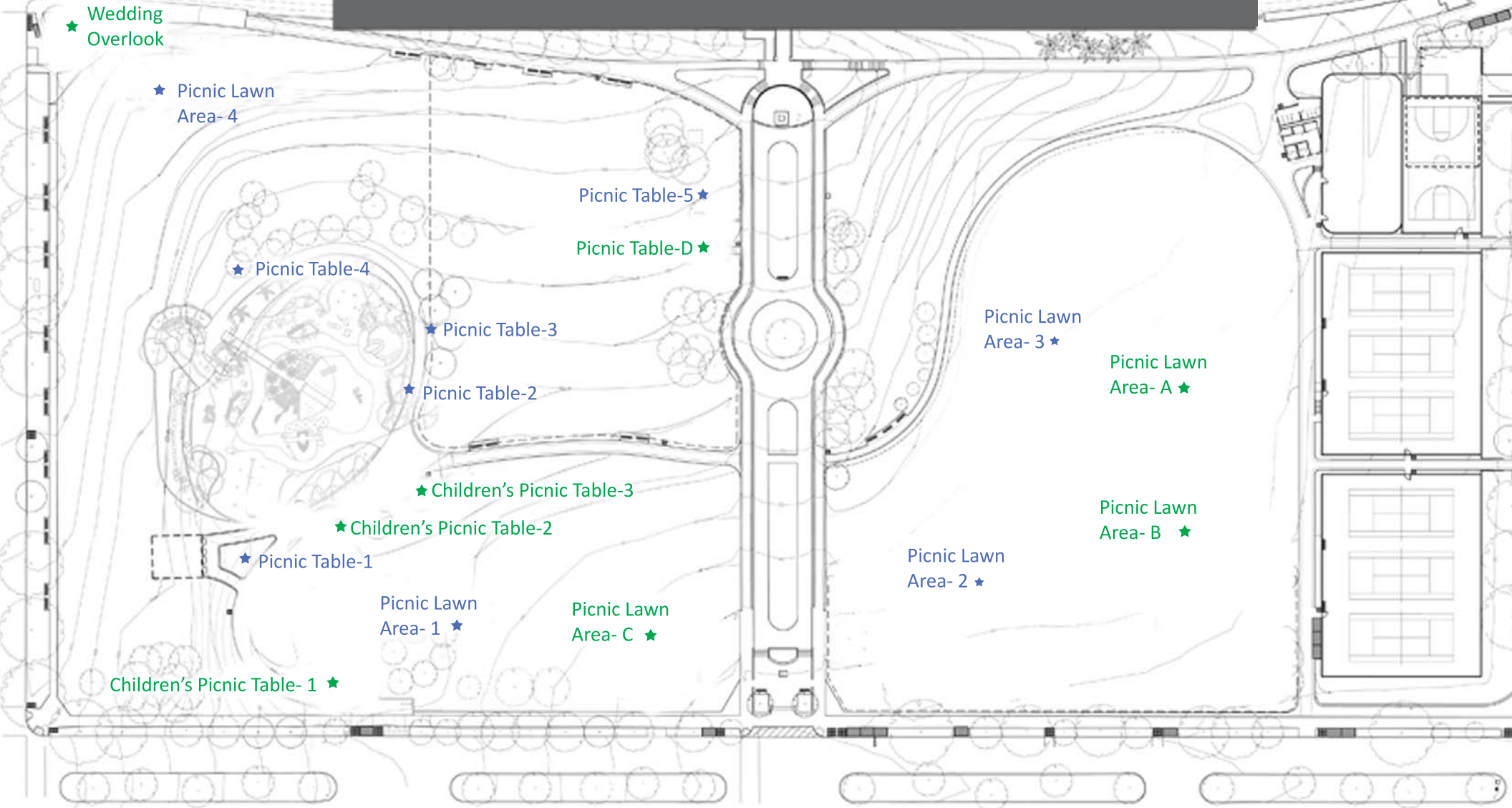
District 11

Individual Birthdays & Celebrations	500	91.91%
Non-Profit & Community	19	3.49%
School	24	4.41%
Work-Related	1	0.18%
Total	544	

Golden Gate Park

Individual Birthdays & Celebrations	14,205	85.43%
Non-Profit & Community	1,033	6.21%
School	560	3.37%
Work-Related	829	4.99%
Total	16,627	

Appendix 3: Dolores Park Group Picnic Areas



★ Reservable Space after 2012 Parks Bond Renovation

★ Reservable Space before 2012 Parks Bond Renovation

MISSION DOLORES PARK