

STATE HOUSE LAWN  
GUIDELINES

The State House lawn was laid out in the 1830's as a formal, terraced setting for the granite capitol that was built at that time on the hillside, above the lawn and facing State Street. For years it was surrounded by a cast iron fence; since the fence's removal in the 1920's, it has increasingly been used as a less formal public park. Countless gatherings, recreational activities, events, public demonstrations and ceremonies have taken place with the State House as the backdrop. As such, the State House lawn can be seen as Vermont's front yard, and the following rules and regulations have been developed in that spirit—to simply ensure that it continues to be protected and made available to Vermonters for ongoing service in the years to come!

The process to request scheduling of the State House Lawn can be found on page 4 of this guidelines document. The process is managed through the Department of Buildings & General Services Request to Use State Facilities (RUSF) process.

**A. PROTECTION OF THE STATE HOUSE LAWN**

**1. Vehicles**

- a. No vehicles of any type (including agriculture vehicles) are allowed on the pavers or the lawn.
  - i. A waiver may be considered on a case-by-case basis for vehicles with a maximum total weight of less than 1,000 pounds.
- b. Skateboarding, roller skating, rollerblading, and biking are not allowed on the steps, railings, benches, monuments, cannons, or granite pavers.

**2. Banners & Signs**

- a. Do not fasten banners or signs on trees, posts, cannons, buildings.

**3. Clean Up Following Event**

- a. Following each event, the State House lawn must be returned to the same condition as existed prior to the event.
  - i. The event organizer is responsible to clean up the grounds at the conclusion of the event.
  - ii. All trash is the responsibility of the event organizer
- b. Following each scheduled event, the Department will inspect the Lawn to ensure:
  - i. Trash and debris are removed from site
    1. All trash must be disposed of in an existing trash container or taken away.
  - ii. Pet/animal owners have properly removed any animal waste.
  - iii. There has been no damage to the Lawn.
- c. Any remaining cleanup or repairs will be arranged by the Department and will be billed to the organization using the Lawn.
- d. **CONDITION OF PROPERTY:** The Applicant agrees to leave the premises in a condition equal to that at the time of possession. The authorized representative shall be responsible for assuring compliance with this paragraph. Failure to comply may result in

civil action for damages under 29 V.S.A. Sec. 4 and may result in the denial of future requests for use of State property.

**4. Flower Beds**

- a. Keep people and animals out of the flower beds.

**5. Climbing**

- a. Climbing in trees is prohibited.
- b. Climbing on the cannon is prohibited.
- c. Climbing on or hanging from the light posts is prohibited

**6. Digging/Excavation -- Disturbance of the State House Lawn**

- a. Any digging/excavation/disturbance of the turf must be approved in advance by the Department of Buildings & General Services.
- b. Cleats and other footwear that would damage the turf are prohibited.

**7. Chalk, Paint, and Candle Wax**

- a. Chalk, paint, candle wax, or any other material that require cleanup must be kept off the granite walks, steps, etc.
- b. Any necessary cleanup will be arranged by the Department and billed to the organization using the Lawn.

**8. Tents**

- a. No large tents or portable structures are allowed without prior approval (larger than 10x10)
- b. Tents cannot be left overnight without prior approval.
- c. The actual placement of any approved tents must be coordinated by the event organizer with the BGS Maintenance staff (802-828-3312)
- d. Tents must be tied or weighted down to prevent movement by the wind.

**9. Pets or Animals**

- a. Pets and animals must be attended and under control.
- b. Pet/animal owners must properly remove any animal waste.

**10. Fires**

- a. No open fires are allowed on State property
  - i. A waiver may be granted for permitted barbeque/grilling equipment used for cooking food to be consumed during a permitted event.

**11. Weapons/Firearms/Explosives**

- a. No firearms, explosives, dangerous weapons or components to fabricate such devices whether in open or concealed possession are allowed in State facilities and are discouraged on the State House Lawn.

**12. Drones**

- a. Drones are allowed on the State House Lawn only when associated with a request from
  - i. A State of Vermont agency/department
  - ii. A State of Vermont institute of higher education
- b. Must comply with all state/federal laws and regulations

- c. A copy of certification, obtained from the Agency of Transportation Aviation, must be provided.

**B. TO ENSURE ONGOING AVAILABILITY OF THE STATE HOUSE LAWN**

**1. Noise Level**

- a. During normal business hours, sound/music/noise must be kept to a level that will not disrupt/distract business in the nearby office buildings.
- b. No breach of the peace which impedes or disrupts the orderly conduct of State business.
- c. The Department of Buildings & General Services reserves the right to
  - i. Determine whether the sound/music/noise is excessive,
  - ii. Request that the volume be modified, and
  - iii. Revoke permission to be on the Lawn for non-compliance

**2. Conduct**

- a. No destroying, defacing, or damaging any State property.
- b. No stealing or unlawfully removing/relocating State property.

**3. Commercial Purposes**

- a. The Lawn may not be used for commercial purposes
  - i. No vendors are allowed to sell their wares on the State House Lawn.
  - ii. No soliciting, panhandling, or vending
  - iii. No displaying or distribution of commercial advertising

**4. Alcohol**

- a. The sale or consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited.

**5. Smoking**

- a. The use of tobacco products on the State House Lawn is prohibited.
- b. Smoking is prohibited on the State House Lawn in accordance with Title 18, Chapter 37, Section 1742 <http://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/18/037/01742>

**The Vermont Statutes Online**

**[Title 18 : Health](#) ; [Chapter 037 : Smoking In Public Places](#)**

**§ 1742. Restrictions on smoking in public places**

(a) The possession of lighted tobacco products in any form is prohibited in:

- (1) the common areas of all enclosed indoor places of public access and publicly owned buildings and offices;
- (2) all enclosed indoor places in lodging establishments used for transient traveling or public vacationing, such as resorts, hotels, and motels, including sleeping quarters and adjoining rooms rented to guests;
- (3) designated smoke-free areas of property or grounds owned by or leased to the State; and
- (4) any other area within 25 feet of State-owned buildings and offices, except that to the extent that any portion of the 25-foot zone is not on State property, smoking is prohibited only in that portion of the zone that is on State property unless the owner of the adjoining property chooses to designate his or her property smoke-free.



(b) The possession of lighted tobacco products in any form is prohibited on the grounds of any hospital or secure residential recovery facility owned or operated by the State, including all enclosed places in the hospital or facility and the surrounding outdoor property.

(c) Nothing in this section shall be construed to restrict the ability of residents of the Vermont Veterans' Home to use lighted tobacco products in the indoor area of the facility in which smoking is permitted. (Added 1993, No. 46, § 2; amended 2013, No. 135 (Adj. Sess.), § 3.)

**6. Electrical Service**

- a. The State will provide electricity at no charge if you utilize the existing circuits.

**7. Port-o-Lets**

- a. Port-o-lets are suggested in anticipation of large group gatherings, particularly on weekends.
- b. BGS reserves the right to require port-o-lets for large group gatherings
- c. The actual placement of any approved port-o-lets must be coordinated by the event organizer with the BGS Maintenance staff (802-828-3312).

**8. Sound System**

- a. The event organizer must provide any needed sound/amplifying system or equipment.

**9. Overnight camping**

- a. Overnight camping is not allowed

**10. Lighting**

- a. Special illumination of any portion of the State House will not be allowed.
- b. The lights along the walkways and State Street will not be turned off due to safety and security concerns.

**11. Access to State House & Portico Area**

- a. Permission to use the State House grounds does not include use of the portico area, as it is disruptive to the events inside the State House (see map for exact location)
- b. Permission to be on the State House Lawn does not include access to the interior of the State House.
  - i. Contact the Sergeant at Arms Office (802-828-2228 or [sqtatarms@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:sqtatarms@leg.state.vt.us)) for questions regarding events inside the State House.
  - ii. The rules of conduct inside the State House, as defined in the Joint Rules of the Senate and House of Representatives, are available at the following link (<http://www.leg.state.vt.us/misc/Joint%20Rules.pdf>).

**12. Process for Scheduling Use of the State House Lawn**

- a. Anyone seeking to schedule the State House Lawn must submit the Request to Use State Facilities (RUSF) form which is available online.
- b. The form can be found at the BGS website at the following link. <http://bgs.vermont.gov/content/request-use-state-facilities>. This is a "click to submit" form.

APPROVAL:



Christopher Cole, Commissioner

September 27, 2018

Date

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