



MARYLAND CAPITOL POLICE OPERATIONS DIRECTIVE



Events on Capitol Grounds

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.01 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that events held inside the boundaries of the State Capitol Grounds are conducted in a manner that protects public health and safety, ensures the orderly business of State Government, and allows State Legislatures to fulfill their legislative responsibilities.

.02 Policy

MCP personnel will protect the Constitutional Rights of all people regardless of their politics, beliefs, opinions or affiliations. Further, MCP personnel will enforce the laws of the State of Maryland as necessary to ensure the safety of the public and participants during public demonstrations.

.03 Definitions

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA): The Annapolis Complex must be in compliance with the ADA as applied by the Congressional Accountability Act. As such, any sponsoring person and/or organization that is granted a permit to engage in a demonstration or other organized activity on Maryland Capitol Grounds shall maintain and not block, in any way, accessibly routes (pedestrian walkways). Further, the sponsoring person and/or organization agrees to provide all people with disabilities equal access to the activity as required by the ADA.

.04 Authority

- [U.S. CONST. AMEND. I, IV, and XIV](#)
- [MD CODE ANN. STATE FIN. & PROC. § 4-204](#)
- [MD CODE ANN. STATE FIN. & PROC. § 4-601, et. seq.](#)
- [MD CODE ANN. CRIM. LAW § 4-101](#)
- [MD CODE ANN., TRANSP. § 21-1122](#)
- [COMAR 04.05.02.02-07](#)
- [AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT \(ADA\)](#)

.05 Procedures

- A. Prohibited Areas: Groups of any size are prohibited from demonstrating in the following areas:
1. Inside any State Buildings;
 2. On the steps of the Maryland State Capitol;
 3. On the steps of any building on the Capitol Grounds;
 4. In any area otherwise closed or restricted for official use;
 5. On roadways or any area routinely used for vehicular traffic;

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6. Areas that are not deemed as a primary or secondary demonstration/rally area as identified in the "Maryland Capitol Police Rally Areas Map" (see **Appendix A**).

Note: Notwithstanding the above, use of the State House, State House steps and grounds is not permitted for any types of demonstrations/rallies, as it is subject to the procedural rules of the Maryland Senate and House of Delegates.

B. Designated Demonstration/Rally Areas

1. The primary demonstration/rally area on the Maryland State Capitol Grounds is located at Lawyers Mall. This is the area located in front of the back steps, leading to the main entrance of the State House; between the Government House and the Legislative Services Building which is identified as the Primary Rally Area #1 on the Maryland Capitol Police Rally Areas Map (**Appendix A**).
2. The secondary demonstration/rally area on the Maryland State Capitol Grounds is located on the east side of the House of Delegates Building (side door entrance), on College Avenue, close to St. Johns Street which is identified as the Secondary Rally Area #2 on the Maryland Capitol Police Rally Areas Map (**Appendix A**).

C. Approval Process

1. The rules and regulations governing press conferences, demonstrations and rallies occurring on Maryland State Capitol Grounds and other State Office Buildings and Grounds under the jurisdiction of the DGS are enumerated in [COMAR 04.05.02](#).
2. **Form 3 – Public Event Permit Application** which can be obtained from the Maryland Capitol Police webpage, mcp.maryland.gov.
3. Applications may be submitted:
 - 1) by mail to:
Maryland Capitol Police
Annapolis Division Commander
29 St Johns Street
Annapolis, MD 21401;
 - 2) in person to the Maryland Capitol Police (MCP) Annapolis Division, between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday;
 - 3) by email to mcp.rallyrequest@maryland.gov; or
 - 4) by fax to 410-974-2224.
3. Approved events may only occur in the area designated in the permit. In the event to an emergency such as a major thunderstorm or extreme heat, access to suitable alternate area may be granted.
4. Demonstrations and rallies may not be conducted in the walkways, streets, and other paved areas of the plaza known as Lawyer's Mall in front of the State House between the Legislative Services Building and Government House. The areas in there posted as fire lanes may not be obstructed.
5. In the event of an official function of the Legislature is scheduled that conflicts with an already permitted activity, participants of the activity must clear the affected area prior to the start of the Legislative function, but may return in keeping with the permit guidelines, after the function has concluded or departed Capitol Grounds.
6. In case of preemption or conflicting scheduling of Lawyer's Mall, demonstrations may be conducted in other nearby outdoor areas if agreeable with the applicant for the demonstration permit and the Superintendent of Annapolis Public Buildings and Grounds.

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7. Demonstrations or rallies outside State Property may require separate approval of the Mayor of Annapolis through the Annapolis Police Department.

D. Individuals or Groups (demonstrations or solicitation)

1. Groups of 15 or more persons wishing to hold demonstrations or rallies or engage in solicitation should apply in writing at least 2 days in advance to the MCP for a permit, unless extraordinary circumstances prevent the applications.
2. Groups of less than 15 persons may hold demonstrations or rallies or engage in solicitation without a permit, space permitting, subject to the same conditions in this regulation, but an individual or group holding a permit will have priority over an individual or group without a permit.
3. Permits shall be issued at no cost to the applicant on a first-come, first-served basis. MCP may not refuse to issue a permit based on the:
 - a. Subject matter of the demonstration;
 - b. Applicant; or
 - c. Lateness of the permit application.
4. Subject to paragraph 1, above, the following activities are not prohibited at Lawyer's Mall:
 - a. Distribution of literature, materials, and merchandise for the exposition of ideas and opinions in the exercise of freedom of speech, association, assembly, and religion, but excluding purely commercial materials; and
 - b. Solicitation of funds for lawful, non-commercial purposes or the collection of petitions signatures.
5. The applicant shall indicate whether solicitations for charitable contributions will occur and, if so, indicate whether the applicant is properly registered under the Maryland Solicitation Act, Business Regulation Article, Title 6, or exempt from registration.
6. The applicant or any participant engaging in solicitation or funds shall inform donors whether the contribution is tax deductible, a contribution under article [MD CODE ANN., ELECTION LAW § 1-1101\(o\)](#), or a gift.

E. Duration of Activity

1. Approved events cannot commence earlier than 9 a.m. nor be scheduled to start after 8 p.m. All events must be concluded by 9 p.m., except sessions of the Senate or House of Delegates run beyond 9 p.m.
2. Permitted activity may not exceed two (2) consecutive hours, not to include time for set-up and clean-up. When completing application, spokespersons should include set-up and clean-up time in the time requested.

F. Signs, Banners and Placards

1. Signs, banners, and placards are permitted in outside areas. All supports for these items must not exceed $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch at their largest point, have dull ends and cannot in any way be construed as a weapon. There can be no nails, screws, or bolt-type fasteners protruding from the supports.
2. Any display of signs, banners, placards, and related items is **strictly prohibited** inside all Maryland State Buildings on the Annapolis Complex.

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G. Props and Equipment

1. Props, equipment and other movable facilities reasonably necessary for and integral to the activity shall be permitted. The event coordinator will include on the application; size, location, and structure for the items needed, so MCP can evaluate reasonable conditions, limitations, and restrictions provided for by the DGS. These items include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Chairs;
 - b. Tables;
 - c. Stages, risers and platforms (maximum 2 feet in height);
 - d. Audio / visual equipment (maximum extension is 13.5 feet wide by 9 feet high);
 - e. Other props and equipment (maximum of fifteen (15) feet in height).
2. Equipment for the event must be unloaded in the designated area. Designated unload areas will be identified during the walk-through process of the application. State Circle, public streets and designated emergency lanes shall not be obstructed.
3. Use of State of Maryland electrical outlets or other power sources is **not permitted**, except by prior approval from the Annapolis Building Superintendent or their designee.
4. Gasoline or propane powered generators are **not allowed** on State Property.
5. Minimal battery-operated sound amplification may be used, however, it may not conflict with local ordinance(s) which prohibit noise from exceeding a distance of fifty (50) feet from the source.
6. Live bands or musicians are **not permitted**.
7. Staging and use of canopies or tents are **not permitted**.
8. The setting up, placement or storage of a shelter (of any kind) or storage or camping equipment, tents, sleeping bags, bedrolls, bedding is prohibited at all times.
9. Temporary structures of any kind may not be erected on State Capitol Grounds. This includes tents, cabanas, canopies and all other types of covered or enclosed structures.
10. No objects shall be tied, fastened or suspended to any tree, pole, or other landscape or architectural feature on State Capitol Grounds. The only exception to this rule is if permission is given by the Secretary of the Department of General Services for special circumstances.
11. No climbing on, removing, or damaging any memorial, statue, architectural feature, tree, or landscaping.
12. The MCP reserves the right to limit the size, nature and scope of props and equipment for reasons of safety and security. At no time will props or equipment be left unattended.

H. Distribution of Literature

Literature may be distributed to interested people, at no charge, as a part of a permitted activity. ***Distribution of literature is prohibited inside of the Maryland State Capitol and all Legislative Office Buildings.***

I. Vehicles

1. No vehicles are allowed in the Lawyer's Mall area at any time before, during, or after the event.
2. Vehicles on the property will be operated in a careful and safe manner, complying with directions of police personnel and posted signs.
3. Vehicles are subject to removal by MCP that:

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- a. Block entrances, driveways, walks, or loading platforms
 - b. Park without authority in unauthorized locations or in locations restricted by signs.
4. Vehicles circling the vicinity of the approved event are subject to all applicable laws, including but not limited to, [MD CODE ANN., TRANSP. § 21-1122](#) (Sound amplification system).
 5. No drones are permitted for use during these events.

J. Solicitation and Debt Collection

1. The soliciting of alms, money, or contributions, commercial soliciting, the display or distribution of commercial advertising, political soliciting, or the collection of private debts, is prohibited on DGS property, except as specified below.
2. Permissible solicitations require the prior approval of the occupying agency head for scheduling, safety, security, and traffic purposes. Permissible solicitations are limited to:
 - a. Solicitation by national or local campaigns for savings bonds, health, welfare, and charity;
 - b. Solicitations by labor organizations for membership or dues as authorized by law;
 - c. Recruitment campaigns for the Armed Forces, National Guard, and other federal or State agencies, as previously approved by the occupant agencies;
 - d. Operation of vending facilities and concessions as part of the operation of the property for the benefit of employees and the public;
 - e. Personal notices posted by employees on authorized bulletin boards; and
 - f. Activities on portions of the property leased to other individuals or organizations.
3. These restrictions **do not apply** to Lawyers' Mall in Annapolis, which is regulated under [COMAR 04.05.02.02](#).

K. Conditions of Grounds

1. Immediately upon the scheduled conclusion of a permitted activity, all props, equipment and facilities must be removed from Capitol Grounds. The event coordinator shall take such action as may be necessary to leave the space utilized by the activity in the same condition which existed immediately prior to the commencement of the activity.
2. It is prohibited at any time to climb, remove or in any way damage any statue, seat, wall, fountain, light poles, elevator towers, or other erection or architectural feature, or any tree, shrub or landscaping features within the Capitol Grounds. No person may stand or otherwise enter upon any of the fountains, planters, walls, surface level air grates and generators.

L. Marches

1. Marches are permitted to pass through State Capitol Grounds provided the march does not disrupt the orderly business of the Legislature or impede the equal access by others to the Maryland State Capitol and all Legislative Office Buildings.
2. When applying, applicants must identify the specific march route requested and also must provide a copy of a corresponding permit issued by either the City of Annapolis or the Annapolis City Police Department.
3. Marchers will be required to remain on sidewalks and obey all traffic signals and signs.

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M. Parking

There is no parking available for private automobiles, buses, or other vehicles on State Capitol Grounds. Buses may utilize College Avenue, prior to the St Johns Street intersection, or the right side of St Johns Street, to drop off passengers. There are several private parking garages and some street parking in the city of Annapolis. On some occasions parking can also be utilized at the Naval Football Stadium.

N. Prohibited Items - The following items are prohibited at all times on State Capitol Grounds:

- a. Firearms; replica guns, and ammunition;
- b. Explosives, missiles, fireworks other incendiary devices;
- c. Other handheld weapons;
- d. Chemical or hazardous materials;
- e. Mace, pepper spray and "stun guns";
- f. Razors and box cutters;
- g. Any knife or handheld weapon identified as a dangerous weapon under [MD CODE ANN., CRIM. LAW § 4-101](#);
- h. Controlled Dangerous Substances;
- i. Alcoholic beverages; and
- j. Open flame including, but not limited to, ignited candles, torches, lanterns, or lamps. Flashlights and other battery-operated lights are permitted.

Approved:



Colonel Michael S. Wilson
Chief of Police 01/04/23

Appendix A:

Maryland Capitol Police - Rally Areas



DGS Authorized Rally Areas

