

## PERMITS & LEGAL MATTERS

### WHERE TO OBTAIN PERMITS FOR YOUR PUBLIC ART PROJECT:

The type of permit needed, and the procedure for obtaining it, depends on the type of project and site. In general, it is most important to discover who owns the space, and consult with owners/managers of private spaces, or the appropriate agency(ies) responsible for city-owned spaces.

LMCC has identified several categories of sites, as well as types of activities, for which permits must be obtained. The list below will help you get started in determining the correct procedures for your project. The best way to find the most up-to-date permit requirements for each agency is to visit its website. You may need to consult with several different agencies if your project encompasses multiple sites and/or involves elements like filming or sound. It is best to call and ask these agencies and resources directly for detailed questions about the specifics of your project. We intend for this to be a starting point rather than a comprehensive list of all public art permits and legal matters.

It is important to get started early on permitting, as the process can take many months. While city agencies may state a minimum lead-time for considering a request, this should not be taken as an indication of how long it takes to process the request. Keep in mind that projects may need to go through up to 5 layers of permissions once submitted. Plan for a long lead-time and be sure to follow up on your request.

Note that even when not explicitly required by the agency issuing the permit, it is a good idea to gain the local community board's approval of your project. If you are working below Canal Street, contact Community Board 1 ([www.cb1.org](http://www.cb1.org)). If you are working in Chinatown, contact Community Board 3 ([www.cb3manhattan.org](http://www.cb3manhattan.org)).

For the general New York City government information line, dial 311.

### FOR A PROJECT IN A PRIVATELY-OWNED BUILDING (E.G., A CORPORATE PLAZA OR ATRIUM):

In the case of most buildings, permission can be secured through the building's owner or management team. It is important to consider who uses the section of the building where the project will take place, and if the project will present any barriers to normal use.

Most lobbies and other public areas of buildings contain plaques with the name and contact information of their owners.

In the case of storefronts, restaurants, and privately-owned institutions, it is necessary to work with the proper administrative departments on all stages of a project, and also to consider the public who uses the space.

## **FOR A PROJECT IN A TRANSPORTATION STRUCTURE OR ON THE STREET:**

### **Department of Transportation (DOT)**

Office of Permit Management  
55 Water Street, Concourse level,  
New York, New York 10041

[www.nyc.gov/html/dot](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot)

DOT issues permits for the use of sidewalks, streets, and transportation-related public spaces. Permit applicants must visit the DOT office and bring a project budget and insurance information.

Some structures may be operated by other city agencies, such as the New York Waterway, Port Authority, or Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA). It is necessary to identify and work with the appropriate agency for obtaining a permit.

Note that projects in Subway stations must be commissioned through the MTA's Arts for Transit Program, which is its own public art commissioning and funding body. For information about applying for an Arts for Transit project, visit the Arts for Transit website.

Also note that projects on the street or sidewalks may need a street activities permit from the local police precinct.

## **FOR PERFORMING OR HOSTING A SPECIAL EVENT IN A PUBLIC PARK:**

### **New York City Parks Department Special Events Division**

[http://www.nycgovparks.org/sub\\_permits\\_and\\_applications/permits\\_and\\_applications.html](http://www.nycgovparks.org/sub_permits_and_applications/permits_and_applications.html)

Permission for performing arts projects in parks must be obtained through the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation. There is a \$25 non-refundable administrative processing fee for all special events permits and applicants are required to apply at least 21 days in advance.

Parks Department regulations require street performers to apply for a sound amplification permit from the local police precinct, if the performance in question can be heard outside the immediate area.

More detailed guidelines can be found on the New York City Parks Department website.

For many parks projects, depending on the scope, it may be necessary to obtain the approval of the local community board.

## **FOR A TEMPORARY VISUAL ART INSTALLATION IN A PUBLIC PARK:**

Temporary public art installations in parks are commissioned through the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation's Temporary Public Art Program. NYC Parks & Recreation fosters the creation and installation of temporary public art in parks throughout the five boroughs by artists and arts organizations.

## FOR A TEMPORARY VISUAL ART INSTALLATION IN A PUBLIC PARK (cont'd):

Send proposals or direct questions to:

### **Public Art Coordinator**

City of New York, Parks & Recreation  
The Arsenal, Central Park, Rm. 20  
New York, NY 10065

[artandantiquities@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:artandantiquities@parks.nyc.gov)

(212) 360-8163

[http://www.nycgovparks.org/sub\\_things\\_to\\_do/attractions/public\\_art/art\\_guidelines/pa\\_temporary\\_guidelines.html](http://www.nycgovparks.org/sub_things_to_do/attractions/public_art/art_guidelines/pa_temporary_guidelines.html)

For many parks projects, depending on the scope, it may be necessary to obtain the approval of the local community board.

## TO USE AMPLIFIED SOUND:

Street performers who use amplification devices are required to apply for a permit from the local police precinct Community Affairs Office overseeing the area where they wish to perform. The permit costs \$45 a day, and musicians are expected to apply for it 7 days before they perform. The permit can be picked up the day of the event.

For Lower Manhattan, 1<sup>st</sup> precinct - Community Affairs: (212) 334-0640

For Chinatown, contact the 5th Police Precinct Community Affairs Office, (212) 334-0726.

## TO FILM IN A PUBLIC LOCATION:

### **Mayor's Office of Film, Theater, & Broadcasting**

1697 Broadway, Suite 602

New York, NY 10019

Ph: 212-489-6710 ext. 250

Artists must obtain permits to film in public locations, including public parks.

## FOR TAKING PUBLIC STILL PHOTOGRAPHY:

NYC Mayor's Office of Film, Theater and Broadcasting - Still Photography Permit

[http://www.nyc.gov/html/film/html/permits/still\\_prcedure.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/film/html/permits/still_prcedure.shtml)

Includes contact information and the procedure and application for obtaining a still photography permit.

## FOR INFORMATION ON PARADES:

Call the Parade Information Line, 311.

## LEGAL RESOURCES FOR ARTISTS MAKING PUBLIC ARTS PROJECTS:

**ACLU: Know Your Rights: What to Do If You're Stopped by the Police**

<http://www.aclu.org/police/gen/14528res20040730.html>

Relevant topics include: some things you should do, some things you must do and some things you cannot do.

**LEGAL RESOURCES FOR ARTISTS MAKING PUBLIC ARTS PROJECTS  
(cont'd):**

**NYCLU: Know Your Rights: Demonstrating in New York City**

[www.nyclu.org/content/know-your-rights-demonstrating-new-york-city](http://www.nyclu.org/content/know-your-rights-demonstrating-new-york-city)

Includes relevant topics addressing the right to distribute handbills or leaflets; demonstrations and rallies; and the right to march on public sidewalks and in public streets.

**NYPD Anti-Graffiti Initiative**

[http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/crime\\_prevention/anti\\_graffiti\\_initiatives.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/crime_prevention/anti_graffiti_initiatives.shtml)

The NYPD's program for addressing and tracking graffiti.

**The Street Performers Advocacy Project and City Lore**

[http://www.citylore.org/citylore\\_resources-guidetheo.html](http://www.citylore.org/citylore_resources-guidetheo.html)

[http://www.citylore.org/citylore\\_resources-guide.html](http://www.citylore.org/citylore_resources-guide.html)

The Street Performers Advocacy Project recognizes that there are different points of view among performers on the best ways to negotiate subway and other public urban spaces