

Helpful Picnic Tips

Tour the park: We strongly suggest you visit the park before your scheduled event. It will help get an idea of what the area looks like which will aid you with set up. Look at parking, table configuration, and park amenities such as playgrounds, hiking trails, etc.

Time in & Time Out: Our parks open at 8am and closes at dusk (the area must be cleaned out and vacated by dusk).

Condition of area on arrival: Park staff maintain picnic areas a couple of times a week. There is no guarantee that your area will be cleaned before your event. Prepare for dust on the tables, spider webs in the corners, minimal ground trash (cigarette butts, small pieces of paper, etc.). Adding table cloths and other decorations will go a long way in dressing up the area.

Permits: Keep your FCPA permit with you at all times, if there are any problems with the booking, such as “who rented the area,” you will have verification in-hand. If there are any issues, please contact Fairfax County Police non-emergency number 703-691-2131.

Bathrooms: All of these areas have bathroom facilities (if not bathroom facilities, areas will have portable restrooms)

Alcohol: Alcohol is prohibited in all of our picnic areas. Leave it at home and avoid potential disruption (and liability).

Parking: Parking in all of our parks is first come first serve (no reserved parking). We suggest arriving early to get the closest parking spots.

Grilling: You will find grills in some of these areas. In addition, we allow customers to bring in their own grills (charcoal or propane). Grill must be kept at a safe distance of at least 20 feet from all structures, picnic tables, and trees. There are no grills or picnic tables allowed at the Mclean Central Gazebo. No grilling is allowed at Colvin Run Mill.

Signs & Maps: We suggest providing specific directions to your picnic guests. Also, post directional signs on park property (stand-alone signs are best; we do not allow anything to be tacked or nailed or stapled to trees, shelters, gazebos, canopies, and amphitheaters). We do not allow the posting of political signs other than 25 feet around the main park sign. Please remove your signs before you leave for the day.

Electricity: Some of our sites have electricity. Know what is in your area before arrival and plan accordingly. To double check if your shelter has electricity or refer to our website www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/picnics.

Activities: Check our website for specific park amenities. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/picnics. Prepare for your event by bringing your own athletic equipment.

DJ's, Bands & Music: Acoustic music, radios, MP3s, and CD players are allowed however, the sound should not affect other park guests. Maximum amplification allowed is 70 decibels or as loud as a normal conversation at 3-5 feet. DJ's are not allowed.

Emergency Preparedness: Bring a first aid kit, include ice packs (for bumps and bruises) along with bee-swabs. (Is anyone in your group allergic to bee stings? If yes, then do they have their EpiPen?) For hot days, we recommend to stay hydrated, wear hats, wear sun block, and bring chilled water.

Set up & Break down: We suggest bringing a lot of volunteers to assist. Also, bring a hand truck, wheel barrow, a cart, etc. to transport food and drinks from the parking areas to the picnic area. Often there is no opportunity to drive up to the picnic area or shelter for unloading.

Clean-up: Please take the time to pick up and bag all trash (bring extra bags).

Bugs: As part of a natural environment, you will find critters in the area. Bring bug spray that can be applied to your participants.

Pets: Pets are allowed in the park, but must be kept on a leash.

Catering: Catering is allowed and should be contracted independently since FCPA does not provide catering services.

Wildlife: Wildlife is plentiful in Fairfax County. It is not usual to see deer, beavers or turtles and an amazing assortment of birds. Bring your camera, sit back & enjoy!

Sales on park grounds: If you are interested in selling items on park grounds you will need to apply for a Business Activity License permit which must be approved. Sales on park grounds are only permitted with a Business Activity License. For more information, visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/permits> or email FCPAParkPermits@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Amphitheaters: Amphitheaters requires a 4-hour minimum rental. Electricity may be available and turned on but does require park and picnic staff approval. Electricity may be requested at the time of making your reservation. No additional services are included with your reservation.

Athletic Field Use: Please keep in mind, field space is often limited or has already been reserved by an established group (such as youth soccer or adult softball, etc.). Evening or weekend use of these fields can be made by calling the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services (DNCS), 703-324-5533. For weekday field use please visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/permits> or email FCPAParkPermits@fairfaxcounty.gov.