

FACILITY USE POLICY

Purpose

Chippewa County facilities are primarily used for official county functions by elected officials and staff. This policy identifies the hours of operations to provide for a fully functioning Courthouse facility and governs the use of public areas within the Government Center Campus.

Definitions

The Government Center Campus includes parking lots A, B, C, D1, D2 and E, along with the courthouse, Sheriff's Department, Jail, 21 E. Spruce Street building, and the maintenance shop at 109 E. Spruce Street, Chippewa Falls.

The Highway Administration Building includes 801 E. Grand Avenue, Chippewa Falls.

Courthouse Hours of Operation

To provide for safety, security and energy efficiency the normal recognized hours of operation for the Chippewa County Courthouse per Ordinance Sec. 2-2 are 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on Friday; closed weekends and holidays. During the normal hours of operation, the Courthouse is fully functioning with all lights, HVAC, electrical and elevator systems activated. During after-hours and weekends the systems are de-activated and not fully functional. The Courthouse does provide for some limited evening hour activities for County Board and committee meetings, and incidental department business.

Primary Use of County Facilities

The primary use of county facilities is to conduct county government business. Consequently, groups that are a part of Chippewa County Government have sole use of most facility space and priority use of meeting rooms and other public facility space.

Access

Unlimited access to the Courthouse is available Monday – Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. After-hour entry is limited to the High Street Entrance #3 and Cedar Street Entrance #4. These doors will remain open Monday through Thursday until 6:00 p.m., unless evening meetings are scheduled, and Friday until 5:00 p.m.

- Meetings should not be scheduled before 7:45 a.m. to allow the attendees enough time to gain access to the facility and arrive to the meeting on time.

Priority Use for Public Areas

Priority for use shall be approved based on the type of use/activity as follows from highest to lowest priority:

1. The Chippewa County Board of Supervisors;
2. Formal and standing committees of the Board of Supervisors;
3. The County Administrator;
4. Boards and commissions appointed by the Board of Supervisors or the County Administrator;
5. County staff for purposes of county business;
6. Non-profit entities holding public meetings, or conducting official business related to a county service or program or public purpose activities.

If a scheduling conflict arises between the above groups, the higher priority user will have the reservation priority. Any conflicts will be resolved by the County Administrator.

Only non-profit citizen groups that are located in or do business in Chippewa County are permitted to use public areas in county facilities and county grounds to the extent permitted by law. Such use must not interfere with county government functions, operations and business.

The County reserves the right to implement a user fee for non-profit users if a user does not fully comply with this policy.

Attorneys, mediators and other court related personnel conducting court related functions have open access to the conference rooms identified as attorney conference rooms on the second floor of the Courthouse.

Security

To provide for the security and safety of visitors and staff, County/State personnel and other designated courthouse occupants are issued identification cards which must be worn at all times while in the courthouse. Please see the Identification and Access Card Policy for specific details.

Definition of Terms

A. Courthouse Public Use Areas

- Courthouse Grounds (West Lawn)
- Courthouse Parking Lot A (North)
- Courthouse Parking Lot D-1 (South)
- Courthouse Parking Lot E (West)
- Courthouse Cul-de-Sac Entrance #1
- Courthouse Room 001 – Small Assembly Room
- Courthouse Room 003 – Large Assembly Room
- Courthouse Room 005 – Lower Level Conference Room
- Courthouse Room 016 – Lower Level Conference Room
- Courthouse Room 119Q – First Floor Conference Room
- Courthouse Room 226 – Second Floor Conference Room
- Courthouse Room 227 – Second Floor Conference Room

Note: Other county facilities may have separate public use policies that govern public use of those facilities. Not all County facilities are open for public use. The Highway Department is not generally available for public use unless written approval is received from the Highway Commissioner.

B. Non-profit entity

A non-profit entity is an agency, corporation, partnership or governmental entity, which can provide legal verification of either its non-profit status (including approved IRS non-profit status), or governmental relationship.

C. For-profit entity

A business or other organization whose primary goal is making money (a profit), as opposed to a nonprofit organization which focuses a goal such as helping the community and is concerned with money only as much as necessary to keep the organization operating.

D. Public purpose

An activity in which the action or direction concerns, affects, or is of benefit to the County or the greater County community, not just those affiliated with the group.

Terms of Use

The use of any county facility by profit-making groups or for profit-making purposes is generally prohibited. No business, non-profit, or personal organization shall be allowed to solicit business or sell items for profit without the prior permission of the Chippewa County Facilities & Parks Committee. This prohibition does not apply to those vendors approved to conduct business by the Department of Administration.

No alcoholic beverages shall be served, or consumed in county facilities listed in this policy. No person(s) impaired by alcohol shall be permitted in county facilities. For additional guidelines related to the Parks or County Forest Lands please reference County ordinance chapters 50 and 16.

Smoking of tobacco products is prohibited in any enclosed building as provided by Wisconsin Statutes §101.123. In addition, the smoking of tobacco products and the use of smokeless tobacco products is prohibited in any enclosed building and/or on the grounds by Chippewa County Ordinance §48-92(b). For additional guidelines related to the Parks or County Forest Lands please reference County ordinance chapters 50 and 16.

Except as provided in Chippewa County Ordinance §2-462(b)(2), no person shall possess, carry, or bear a weapon, whether concealed or unconcealed, or contraband, or any other prohibited item within any county building. County building means the entire building housing the Circuit Court of Chippewa County, located at 711 N. Bridge Street, Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, or some other temporary location that may be authorized by the court, the buildings housing the Chippewa County Jail and Chippewa County Sheriff's Office, all Chippewa County Highway Department buildings, the building located at 21 E. Spruce Street, and the maintenance shop located at 109 E. Spruce Street.

For additional guidelines related to the Parks or County Forest Lands please reference County ordinance chapters 50 and 16.

Functions occurring in county facilities shall not violate any City of Chippewa Falls, Chippewa County, State of Wisconsin or federal applicable laws, ordinances or regulations.

There shall be no partisan political activities, political news conferences, or other events designed to announce or support any candidate for public office regardless of party or non-party affiliation in county facilities. The County may allow current state representatives to hold listening sessions at the Courthouse if rooms are available.

Permission to use Chippewa County facilities shall not in any way constitute an endorsement by the County of the user group or individual, or their policies and activities and the County assumes no obligation or responsibility for the activities of the user group or individual.

Signs, emblems, banners, pennants, etc. may not be affixed to any building surfaces, steps, walls or light fixtures. User groups may post events on any of the approved bulletin boards, or cork strips available in the Courthouse hallways or meeting rooms by contacting the County Clerk's Office. In addition, users may affix notices no larger than 8½ x 11 inches to the approved sign stands that are located at each entrance and/or in the Cul-De-Sac Entrance #1 closet to direct meeting participants to proper meeting locations. Advertising items that are self-standing may be put into place before the scheduled start of the meeting or event, and must be removed at the conclusion of the meeting. In addition, display space may be available in the Courthouse Cul-de-Sac Entrance #1 for items that non-profit organizations desire to display to courthouse employees and the general public. Displays must fit on a standard folding table that will be provided for use by the County.

Equal Access

This policy shall apply to all groups and individuals that have requested use of the public areas of county facilities and grounds as defined in this policy. No group or individual shall be excluded from equal access to said grounds and facilities because of considerations of gender, race, sexual orientation, religious or political persuasions or views. However, use may be denied or terminated if there is a violation of the rules set forth in this policy and/or if the use poses health or safety risks.

Liability

Any non-Chippewa County Governmental group using the public use areas of county facilities as defined in this policy shall:

1. Be required to release the county from any liability for damages caused to the user or its property during the times of use.
2. Hold the county harmless from any liability to third parties for injury caused by the group or any persons or groups to attend the event.
3. Be liable to the county for any damages to county property or injuries to county employees or agents caused by the group or by a person attending the group's events, whether or not the damage is the result of negligence, intentional acts or accident.

The granting of permission to use county facility space does not obligate the county to furnish any applicant with any service or utilities, or to render any support regarding personnel, fixtures, equipment or supplies. The county may furnish such assistance as it, in its sole discretion, determines appropriate.

The county does not warrant that any county facility space, fixtures or equipment is fit for any purpose, and the county shall not be responsible in case of damage or injury to property or person or the loss of individual property which may arise out of, result from, or be in any manner connected with the use thereof.

It is the user entity's responsibility to ensure that adults properly supervise all children.

Indemnification and Liability Insurance

Non-Chippewa County Governmental groups understand and agree that using space, fixtures and equipment may expose user and others to risks. Such users voluntarily agree to assume all such risks, and to release and hold harmless Chippewa County and the county's supervisors, directors, officers, employees, volunteers and agents from and against any and all claims regarding damage to property or injuries to or death of any person(s), and to defend, indemnify and hold harmless Chippewa County and the county's supervisors, directors, officers, employees, volunteers and agents from any and all claims, demands, suits, actions or proceeding of any kind in nature, of or by anyone whatsoever, in any way resulting or arising out of activities, action or inactions of the user group. A representative of all non-Chippewa County Governmental groups shall sign an indemnification release (DOA-103-A) prior to reserving space.

Chippewa County reserves the right to require a public user of county facilities to provide adequate liability insurance prior to the use of county facilities.

Space Arrangement, Equipment, Food, Beverage, Fixtures and Utilities

Tables, chairs, fixtures and other equipment may not be removed from their assigned room without permission.

The Small Assembly Room (001) and Large Assembly Room (003) can be reconfigured to user specifications (see Process for Scheduling Facilities). At the conclusion of the permissible use, the user entity shall arrange the space back to the original configuration and condition.

User entities shall be responsible for any costs of repair or replacement incurred as a result of action or inaction by the user entity during approved use of the space.

No food and only covered beverages are allowed in the County Board Room (302). Food and beverages are allowed in all other courthouse conference rooms. Users shall discard all waste generated during the approved event.

Non-county organizations are prohibited from using the sound system in the Small Assembly Room (001) and Large Assembly Room (003). Guest Wi-Fi is available for visitors to use in the conference rooms.

User entities or their representatives shall not adjust the heating or lighting.

Process for the Scheduling Facilities

A. Interior Space – Courthouse:

Non-county organizations should contact the County Clerk's Office to complete the Facility Use Application.

B. Exterior Space – Government Center Campus:

To schedule an outside parking lot, the courthouse grounds, or the internal Cul de Sac Entrance #1, contact the Facilities and Parks Division to complete the Facility Use Application, which will then be approved or denied.

Cancellation of Permission and Right to Refuse Permission

In the event county government is declared closed due to inclement weather or other reasons, any permission to use the facility or grounds is automatically withdrawn during the closure period. In such an event, the county shall not provide notice of cancellation. Notices of Courthouse closure are generally announced through local radio broadcasts. Users shall be solely responsible for notifying event participants if a closure of the Courthouse or public use grounds occurs.

Notwithstanding the above closure notice, the county reserves the right to cancel, move or preempt scheduled use of a county facility and further reserves the right to access and enter the reserved space at any time. The county further reserves the right to refuse permission to use county facilities.

The County reserves the right to charge user for any costs incurred by County due to use or misuse of space, fixtures, and equipment. **User is expected to ensure space, fixtures, and equipment are left as they were found, in a clean, undamaged, presentable and organized manner.** In the event cleaning, repair or other actions are necessary due to the actions or inactions of user. User may be assessed reasonable costs, and barred from future use of any space at County Facility discretion, for violation of the written Facility Policy of any County Facility. User may not reserve or use any space unless user has paid all costs and amounts due regarding prior usage of any space.