



COUNTY OF ACCOMACK FACILITY USE POLICY

Purpose:

To establish guidelines and procedures regulating the use of public meeting spaces within County facilities by organizations external to County of Accomack Government.

Authority:

This policy is established by the County Administrator under general authority granted by the Accomack County Board of Supervisors.

Scope:

1. This policy governs the availability and use of specific public meeting spaces located in buildings or facilities owned or leased by the County of Accomack that are used to conduct County operational business. For purposes of this policy, public meeting spaces are currently limited to the following:
 - a. Board of Supervisors Chamber, Room 101 of the County Administration Building
 - b. Accomack County Airport Conference Room and Terminal Waiting Area
 - c. Fire Training Center
 - d. Department of Social Services
 - e. Sawmill Park – Parks & Recreation
 - f. Nandua Middle School Pavilion & Playground – Parks & Recreation
 - g. Arcadia Middle School Ball Field & Playground – Parks & Recreation
 - h. Pungoteague Elementary School Golf Driving Range – Parks & Recreation
 - i. Tangier Combined School Ball Field – Parks & Recreation
 - j. Accomack County Circuit Courthouse Green

Priority Use:

1. The primary use of County of Accomack facilities is for the conduct of County government business; consequently, organizations that are a part of or associated with the County of Accomack government have priority use of public meeting space. This includes:
 - a. The Board of Supervisors,
 - b. The School Board,
 - c. Boards or commissions appointed by the Board of Supervisors,
 - d. Subcommittees of the Board of Supervisors,
 - e. Individual members of the Board of Supervisors,
 - f. County Administrator
 - g. County staff for purposes of County business.

2. The above entities/individuals have scheduling priority, but may not pre-empt already scheduled events. Once a group has confirmation of using a particular space, no other user or entity may pre-empt usage of this space, subject to emergency use by the Board of Supervisors.

Permitted/Prohibited Groups:

1. The use of any County public meeting space (that falls under this policy) by profit-making groups or for profit making purposes is prohibited.
2. The following organizations are permitted to use public meeting areas in County of Accomack facilities and on County of Accomack grounds to the extent permitted by law:
 - a. Non-profit citizen groups that are located in or do business in the County of Accomack. Non-profit citizen groups includes: agencies, corporations, partnerships or governmental entities, which can provide legal verification, such as IRS 501(3) c form, of non-profit status.
 - b. State political parties (as defined by the Virginia State Code as any political party that meets the qualifications stated in Section 24.2-101).
 - c. State and Federal Agencies
 - d. Other political subdivisions such as incorporated Towns, PDC & EDA.

Use of Public Meeting Spaces:

1. Interference with County Operations - Use of County public meeting spaces must not interfere with County Government operation and functions.
2. Equal Access - No permitted group shall be excluded from equal access to County public meeting spaces because of considerations of sex, race, 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.
3. Restrictions on Availability – Permitted groups are generally limited to one reservation per month and the scheduling of reservations should occur no earlier than three (3) months in advance. The event must be conducted in approved areas only. The user shall obtain any licenses or permits required by law. Permission to use the Board of Supervisors Chamber shall be granted for events which are scheduled to begin and end between 5:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. Monday - Friday. Permission to use the Airport facility shall be granted for events which are scheduled to begin and end between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday - Friday. Use on weekends is limited to events coordinated and staffed by County of Accomack employees and/or officials.
4. Liability - Any permitted group using County public meeting spaces shall:
 - a. be required to release the County from any liability for damages caused to the user or its property during the time of use,
 - b. 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,
 - c. be liable to the County for any damages to County property or injuries to County employees or agents caused by the group or by any person attending the group's events, whether or not the damage is the result of negligence, intentional acts or accident.

- d. Note: Organizations applying to use the Board of Supervisors Chamber, Room 101 of the County Administration Building must provide evidence of a minimum of \$1,000,000 in liability insurance coverage as part of any application that may involve 20 or more persons.
5. Denial of Usage - The County reserves the right to deny applications to use public meeting space if the user has previously violated the rules set forth in this policy or if the use would pose health or safety risks.
6. Solicitation - Solicitation in facilities and on grounds is strictly prohibited, including solicitation by employees for personal profit. Minor solicitations, such as parents selling items for child's school fundraiser or organizing a team for participation in a charity event may be allowed without approval provided it is not conducted in a disruptive manner. Solicitation for a County-approved charity event may occur with the express permission of the County Administrator.
7. Security - The user shall provide, at its own expense, any security that the user desires. No security will be provided by the County. Depending on the extent and nature of the event, however, the County may require that the user provide a specific level of security and coordinate with the Accomack County Sheriff's Department.
8. Set Up and Clean-Up - The group/user may use furniture, such as tables, chairs and dry erase boards that are owned by the County and located in the public meeting space. Tables may not be moved without prior approval. After use of the room, the group/user shall be responsible for returning the meeting room/space to its original condition and configuration. The user is responsible for ensuring that all trash is placed in containers provided. Fees may apply if cleaning or trash removal is required after use.
9. Electronic and Audio-Visual Equipment – Permitted groups are prohibited from using County electronic or audio-visual equipment.
10. Signs - Signs, emblems, banners, pennants, etc. may not be affixed to any building surfaces, steps, walls or light fixtures. Signs, emblems, banners, pennants, etc. that are self-standing may be put into place one (1) hour before the scheduled start of the meeting and must be removed at the conclusion of the meeting. Signs, emblems, banners, pennants, etc. shall not contain any discriminatory or offensive material.
11. Inclement Weather - In the event County government is declared closed due to inclement weather or other reasons; any permission to use the public meeting space is automatically withdrawn during the closure period. County government closure information is available on local radio and the County website (www.co.accomack.va.us). In such an event, the County shall not provide notice of cancellation - users shall be solely responsible for notifying event participants.
12. Other Prohibitions/Restrictions - Food and/or beverages may be served and consumed only if approval is granted in advance of the event. There shall be no alcoholic beverages served upon, consumed upon or brought onto County property. Smoking is prohibited in all County buildings.

Costs:

Please refer to the County of Accomack Facilities and Rates sheet for specific fees. No refunds will be made for cancellations unless notice is given at least seven (7) days prior to the reserved date.

Applications and Notification:

1. Permitted groups seeking to use a County public meeting space must complete a Facility Use Permit Application Form.
2. Application forms should be submitted at least two weeks in advance of the first day needed.
3. Applications must be sent to the Building Access Control Group via email (accesscontrol@co.accomack.va.us) or via postal service to the following mailing address:

Building Access Control Group
Accomack County Department of Public Works
P.O. Box 476
Accomac, VA 23301

Note: Applications to use the Accomack County Circuit Courthouse Green require pre-authorization by the primary Circuit Court Judge.

4. Applicants will generally be notified within one week as to whether the room may be used on the dates requested.