

# Frequently Asked Questions: Proposed Revisions to the Denver Parks & Recreation Alcohol Policy

## 1.) Why is the policy being revised?

The purpose of the revisions is to eliminate inconsistencies that exist throughout the current policy; align the policy with changes to state liquor laws; and add a variety of restrictions and requirements. This uniformity will improve regulation and enforcement.

## 2.) What does it mean to “permit” a park for an event?

Denver Parks & Recreation (DPR) issues a variety of permits to reserve all or a portion of a park for various activities. These include public events, races and walks, picnics, assemblies, athletics, etc. Each permit type has restrictions and requirements depending on location and the associated activity. To obtain a permit, an application must be submitted to the DPR Permitting Office that ensures all requirements have been met. Details of the process along with restrictions and requirements can be found at [denvergov.org/permits](http://denvergov.org/permits).

## 3.) What needs to be done to sell alcohol at an event?

If an event meets all DPR restrictions and requirements, a “Pending Permit” is issued which the applicant can take to the Denver Department of Excise and Licenses to apply for a liquor license. Denver Excise and Licenses processes the application and approves or denies the license based on applicable liquor laws.

## 4.) What is required to get a liquor license?

Detailed requirements on what is needed for a liquor license can be found at [denvergov.org/LiquorLicense](http://denvergov.org/LiquorLicense).

## 5.) Do the proposed changes mean that I will be able to drink full strength beer in parks?

Currently, and until December 31, 2018, only 3.2% beer (in cans) may be consumed by the public in Denver parks. This rule is based on state liquor laws. The Colorado State Legislature recently passed legislation enabling local municipalities to establish their own regulations governing the consumption of alcoholic beverages in public places. If signed by the governor, Denver will begin the process of establishing regulations with a goal of implementation prior to the end of the year.

## 6.) Will I be able to drink any type of alcohol in Denver parks?

The answer falls into two categories:

- **General public consumption** – Starting in 2019, the types of alcoholic beverage able to be consumed will be governed by the regulations disseminated by the State of Colorado or the City and County of Denver, if the governor signs the pending state legislation. Until December 31, 2018, only 3.2% beer (in cans) can be consumed by the public in Denver parks.
- **Permitted Activity**- With the propose changes, any type of alcoholic beverage would be allowed to be served and/or sold at private, invitation only events (special occasion permits). Any type of alcoholic beverage would also be allowed to be served and/or sold at public events, if the appropriate liquor license is obtained. Other types of permitted activity (such as certain athletic and demonstration/assembly permits) would not allow the serving or selling of any alcoholic beverages.

## 7.) Do the proposed changes to the policy mean that parks and recreation centers will have bars or facilities that sell alcohol to the public?

No—the proposed policy only addresses permitted activity and general consumption. Any commercial food and beverage is managed via a concession license that must be approved by Denver City Council.

## 8.) Do the proposed changes mean that there will be unlimited events in parks?

No—the proposed policy only governs alcohol-related components of permitted events. All rules and guideline governing how many and what types of events can occur remain in place including DPR’s rest period program ([denvergov.org/Permits](http://denvergov.org/Permits)).

**9.) Will the number of races and runs in parks increase with the proposed policy changes?**

DPR does not anticipate an increase in race events due to these proposed changes but will monitor the issue and implement additional limits beyond DPR's rest period program if necessary.

**10.) How will the proposed changes impact Park Ranger and Police enforcement?**

DPR has discussed the proposed policy changes with both DPR Park Rangers and Denver Police, and does not anticipate that policy changes will result in significantly increased demand on patrol resources. DPR will monitor the issue and modify the policy if resources become strained.

**11.) Would this policy change lead to competition with bars and restaurants surrounding parks?**

DPR does not believe this policy change will impact businesses surrounding parks. Only attendees would be able to purchase alcoholic beverages at an event, as is currently the case.

**12.) If the proposed changes are approved, will they be monitored over time?**

Yes—all affected city agencies and offices (DPR Permitting, DPR Park Rangers, Denver Police, Denver Excise and Licenses) will monitor impacts of the new policy, with a formal review scheduled to occur at the end of the 2019 event season. Modifications will be made to the policy at that time if necessary.

**13.) Will glass bottles still be prohibited?**

Yes—glass bottles will continue to be prohibited in parks.

**14.) Will this impact playing softball with "beer leagues"?**

As is currently the case, a permit holder (league organizer) cannot sell or serve alcoholic beverages. The ability for individual participants to bring their own alcoholic beverages will be governed by the "general public consumption" section of the policy (details above in question 6).

**15.) How will the proposed rule of "no alcohol within 50 feet of playgrounds" be enforced?**

The distance between playgrounds and alcohol serving stations will be verified via a site map and/or an on-site, pre-event inspection conducted by the DPR Permit Office.

**16.) How would the policy change affect picnic sites?**

The sale or serving of alcoholic beverages will be prohibited in association with a picnic permit. Consumption of alcoholic beverages at picnic sites will be governed by the "general public consumption" section of the policy (details above in questions 5 & 6)

**17.) Are these revisions being proposed to please commercial interests?**

No—the only type of liquor license that is available for park events is a *Special Event Liquor License*. Only non-profit organizations can obtain this type of license. Commercial entities cannot.

**18.) Will the City and County of Denver make money from having more events with alcohol?**

Permit fees collected are intended to cover the cost of administering events. Since DPR does not anticipate a significant increase in events, we do not expect the revenue associated with permits to increase.

**19.) Why do Washington Park and Sloan's Lake have different rules in the first place?**

There were specific circumstances in these parks when the alcohol policy was initially implemented that prompted the DPR Manager at the time to modify rules for these parks.

**20.) Will kegs be allowed in the park?**

No—kegs will continue to not be allowed in Denver parks.

**21.) Does City Council need to approve this policy change?**

Denver City Council does not need to approve this change in policy. Under the Denver City Charter, rules and regulations for Parks & Recreation are promulgated by the Parks & Recreation Department. Denver City Charter vests the authority to establish rules and regulations for Parks & Recreation to the DPR Manager (Executive Director). City Council members, however, have been briefed and have provided input on the policy. A briefing will be made to the Land Use, Transportation and Infrastructure Council Committee prior to the policy's formal adoption.

**22.) Will the policy change restrict public access to parks?**

No—events that require a ticket for entrance are governed by DPR's Admission Based Event Policy ([denvergov.org/ParkRules](http://denvergov.org/ParkRules)).