



Sonoma County Vintners
Guide to Winery Event Permits
&
Event Best Practices

June, 2017

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Dear Members:

Welcome to our Winery Event Permits & Event Best Practices Guide.

As Director of Membership and Government Relations for Sonoma County Vintners, let me begin by once again stating our sincere appreciation for all your support for Sonoma County Vintners and Sonoma County. We are honored and proud to represent you and our amazing winery and affiliate members throughout our County.

As we all know, Sonoma County's wine community is a leading economic driver for our county with an economic impact to Sonoma County of \$13.4 billion. Our wine community, directly and indirectly provides 54,297 jobs in Sonoma County. Also Sonoma County's wineries and winegrowers contribute more than \$25 million to charitable causes including 95 local Sonoma County organizations. Promotional and charity events, as well as business related activities are essential to continuing the prosperity of both Sonoma County and our wine communities.

I hope this guide provides some clarity and insight on the events permit issue, and provides additional resources and contact information in order for you to effectively and efficiently permit and manage your future events and activities.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact me if I or Sonoma County Vintners can be of any assistance to you. Thank you again for your support for Sonoma County Vintners.

Cheers!

Michael Haney
Director of Membership & Government Relations
Sonoma County Vintners
michael@sonomawine.com / 707-522-5844

Introduction

While Sonoma County Vintners mission is focused on enhancing the visibility and exposure of our member wineries and spreading the word around the world about our amazing world-class wines, we are also focused on our community, our neighbors, and working together to continue to make Sonoma County one of the world's most beautiful locations to live, work and enjoy.

Over the past two years Sonoma County Vintners has seen an increase in interest and questions regarding the issue of winery special events and the specific permits required to host and activate select events. This guide is designed to assist wineries in determining which permits are required for events they would like to host or participate in, as well as identify the proper Sonoma County contacts and channels to assist them in obtaining these required permits.

Because of years of work by Sonoma County Vintners on our members behalf, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, along with the Sonoma County Permit Resource Management Department, is considering for development a consistent, understandable county-wide standard of definitions for winery special events vs winery activities. Once established, these definitions will assist further in bringing clarity to the events issue and permitting process.

Sonoma County Vintners believes that by working together with our neighbors and County officials and leaders throughout Sonoma County, we can enrich our county and succeed in sustaining our communities.



Sonoma County Vintners
“Community Connection”
Winery Event Best Practices

Sonoma County Vintners “Community Connection” Wine Community “Best Practices”

Association wide and cultural events are critical to the branding, visibility and sales of Sonoma County wines. In addition, association sponsored wine events have existed in Sonoma County for nearly forty years. These events contribute hundreds of thousands of dollars to our local economy and also make a significant supporting impact to local charitable organizations and causes throughout Sonoma County.

The following are recommended “Winery Event Best Practices” that will assist in event planning, communication, management, execution and promotion. They are also designed to work with and assist our winery neighbors to minimize any potential challenges or problems related to winery / charitable events.

Recommended Winery Event Best Practices:

1. Comply with your “use permit” limitations and allowances.
2. Cap number of guests for event and communicate this to nearby neighbors.
3. Proactive Communication:
 - Reach out and develop positive communications with neighbors.
 - Assign a contact person (with a contact cell phone number) to your event that is responsible for communicating with neighbors before, during and immediately after your event.
 - Post your activity details (day, time, location, contact person and cell number...) on your website, Social Media platforms and in event promotional materials.

- Reach out to neighbors to assess any potential impacts or signage needs and share event details. Use neighborhood groups, newspaper ads, Social Media posts, emails, posters...
 - Develop and share your traffic and parking plans with your neighbors and make sure to manage it. Have a person accountable for this.
 - Promote and adhere to your advertised event hours.
4. Hire CHP officers to assist with your event, if traffic and attendance warrant.
 5. Offer designated driver tickets to your event.
 6. Have plenty of water available and visible for event participants to consume.
 7. Designate a staff person to “float” during the event and monitor the event’s progress, schedule, participants, and be available to “troubleshoot” any problems, concerns.
 8. Offer “Responsible Hospitality Training” twice a year for winery Hospitality Staff as well as attend Sonoma County Vintners “Community Connection” Event Best Practices Seminar Series.
 9. Finally, your staff can go a long way to assist with the positive execution of an event and increased communication with event participants. Provide your staff with adequate training and support information for your event and ask them to be enthusiastic and positive ambassadors for your event, winery and Sonoma County.



Know Your Winery Use Permit

Know Your Use Permit:

If your winery is interested in hosting or participating in events, either at your facility or as part of an industry wide promotional event, there are a few important and necessary steps you should research and explore.

First, if your winery is indeed interested in hosting an event at your facility, take a moment to research and get to know your Use Permit and what it allows.

It is important to know, that only wineries open to the public with County approved tasting rooms are allowed to regularly host events.

Many Use Permits will identify the number of events allowed and use limitations (parking, capacity, septic...) for your winery. These criteria also govern your participation and limitations for events. If you are unable to review your Use Permit, *Sonoma County Permit & Resource Management's* (Permit Sonoma) website (sonomacounty.ca.gov/Permit-and-Resource-Management/) contains a searchable database to access and review your Use Permit.

However, if you are unable to review your Use Permit and simply need to understand the number of events your winery is permitted for, Permit Sonoma's webpage(www.sonoma-county.org/prmd/docs/winery_database/AccessReportJune2014CntyEvents.pdf) also has a database of permitted wineries that will identify the number of events allowed and maximum number of persons allowed per event.

Cultural Event Permit:

Cultural Events are defined in the Sonoma County Zoning Ordinance as a periodic event which attract a large gathering of people such as parades, concerts, festivals, races, or any large gathering where amplified music, advertisement to the general public, or a fee is charged.

There are two main reasons for applying for a Cultural Events Permit:

1. If your winery is open to the public with a County approved tasting room BUT wish to hold an event at another location that is off your approved and permitted site plan (vineyard...), or will use “temporary structures or tents”, then your winery will be required to apply for and gain approval for your proposed event with a Cultural Event permit.

Due to the fact that the proposed event site is not on your already approved Use Permit site plan, the Cultural Event Permit will require review, approval and signoff from multiple agencies (public works, fire & safety...). This could take 45 to 60 days. To begin this permit process it is recommended that you have your completed Cultural Event permit application, Use Permit and a proposed event site plan available for agency review.

2. If your winery is not open to the public and is “appointment only” and wants to participate or hold an event, then you must apply for and gain approval for your proposed event participation with a Cultural Event permit. This is the only way your “appointment only” winery can participate in an event short of modifying your original use permit.

To Obtain a Cultural Event Permit:

The following is a listing of information and materials that must accompany your application. Applications for Cultural Event Permits must include the following items. Incomplete applications will not be accepted by Permit Sonoma. Remember it can take weeks for approval of a Cultural Events Permit and such permit is not automatically granted.

Required Application Materials:

1. Completed Zoning Permit Application (PJR-001) signed by the applicant and property owner.
2. Proposal Statement indicating the date(s); times; duration of the event(s); activities to be held; number of participants; music; food; security; crowd control measures; road closures; alcoholic beverages; location and number restroom facilities.
3. Indemnification agreement must be signed by each property owner.
4. Site Plan. Show the area of the event, existing/proposed structures, parking areas, restroom location(s), circulation and other pertinent information.
5. Agency Approvals. Signatures/approvals must be obtained from each of the agencies identified on the attached form. These approvals may be submitted with the application or prior to posting the zoning permit. Please note: other departments may have separate fees and/or permit requirements that may need to be paid or obtained prior to clearance being provided on the Special Events/Cultural Events-Agency Approvals form (PJR-025).
6. Assessor's Parcel Map. One 8 ½" x 11" copy of the current Assessor's Parcel Map with the project site highlighted. Maps may be obtained from the County Assessor's Office or Permit and Resource Management Department (PRMD).

Procedure:

1. Schedule and meet with a County Planner. This meeting will identify what approvals must be obtained from each of the County agencies.
2. Submit application material to the Zoning Cubicle at Permit Sonoma. Please submit application at least 12 weeks in advance of an event to allow adequate time for processing in the event an appeal is submitted. If you believe the likelihood is high that an appeal will be submitted, you may want to submit your application as far in advance as possible as the time to process an appeal varies greatly.
3. Permit Sonoma staff will place posters in the neighborhood where the event is to take place.
4. After posting, there is a 10-day appeal period during which neighbors or concerned citizens may file a written appeal with Permit Sonoma. The appellant must pay a fee to cover the cost of processing. An appeal will increase the time for any permit by several weeks' time.
5. If no appeal is received by Permit Sonoma within 10 days of posting and all agencies have approved the event, the permit will be issued.
6. If an appeal is received, a public hearing will be set before the Board of Zoning Adjustments (BZA). Permit Sonoma will notify the applicant of the time and place of the hearing that has been scheduled. At the hearing, the appellant, the applicant and all interested persons will be allowed to speak and present evidence, including petitions of support or opposition. The decision of the BZA may be appealed to the Board of Supervisors within 12 days of the BZA action.
7. The Board of Supervisors hearing will be conducted in a similar manner as the BZA hearing. Appeals to the Board of Supervisors may take an additional six to eight weeks.



Contacts / Resources

Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

About the Board:

Sonoma County Board of Supervisors sits as the governing board of Sonoma County and of various special jurisdictions such as the Sonoma County Water Agency, the Northern Sonoma County Air Pollution Control District, the Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, County Sanitation Districts, and the Community Development Commission. The Board is composed of five supervisors elected from supervisorial districts for four year terms.

Address:

575 Administration Dr. Room 100 A Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Website:

www.Sonomacounty.ca.gov/Board-of-Supervisors/

Telephone:

707-565-2241 (Main Office Line)

Hours:

Monday – Friday 8:00am – 5:00pm

Supervisory Districts:

Board of Supervisors - District 1 – Supervisor Susan Gorin

Email: Susan.Gorin@sonoma-county.org

Location: Southeast

The City of Santa Rosa (Bennett Valley, Rincon Valley and the community of Oakmont), City of Sonoma and the adjacent unincorporated communities of Kenwood, Agua Caliente, Glen Ellen, El Verano, Boyes Hot Springs, Schellville and Vineburg.

Board of Supervisors - District 2 – Supervisor David Rabbitt

Email: David.Rabbitt@sonoma-county.org

Location: Southwest

The City of Petaluma, City of Cotati, a portion of Rohnert Park and the unincorporated communities of Penngrove, Two Rock and Bloomfield.

Board of Supervisors - District 3 – Supervisor Shirlee Zane

Email: Shirlee.Zane@sonoma-county.org

Location: Central

Most of central Santa Rosa and the City of Rohnert Park (east of Highway 101).

Board of Supervisors - District 4 – Supervisor James Gore

Email: James.Gore@sonoma-county.org

Location: Northeast

Northwest Santa Rosa (Fulton and Larkfield-Wikiup area), Town of Windsor, City of Healdsburg, community of Geyserville and the City of Cloverdale.

Board of Supervisors - District 5 – Supervisor Lynda Hopkins

Email: Lynda.Hopkins@sonoma-county.org

Northwest Sonoma County: Sonoma County coast, lower Russian River area, Sebastopol and the west and southwest Santa Rosa areas (extending into Highway 101).

Permit Sonoma – Sonoma County Permit & Resource Management Department

Permit Sonoma, also known as the Permit and Resource Management Department, is Sonoma County's consolidated land use planning and development permitting agency. Virtually any land development or construction that takes place in the unincorporated area of Sonoma County (outside the city limits of the nine cities) is reviewed, permitted, and inspected by Permit Sonoma. The department was created as part of a countywide reorganization in 1995 by bringing staff from five separate departments together under one roof and with one common mission.

Address:

2550 Ventura Ave. Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Website:

Sonomacounty.ca.gov/Permit-and-Resource-Management/

Telephone:

707-565-1900 (Main Office Line)

707-565-8350 Customer Service Ombudsman Patrick Mullin
Patrick.mullin@sonomacounty.org

Hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 8:00am – 4:00pm

Wednesday 10:30am – 4:00pm

Sonoma County Vintners Government Relations

Contacts / Resources / Committee

Sonoma County Vintners Staff Contact:

Michael Haney - Sonoma County Vintners Director of Membership / Govt. Relations

Email: michael@sonomawine.com

Telephone: 707-522-5844

Sonoma County Vintners Oversight & Compliance Manager

The Sonoma County Vintners Oversight & Compliance Manager position has been established to assist Sonoma County Vintners winery members and AVA partners in addressing and responding to community concerns for winery events taking place in Sonoma County, provide wine industry education related to permitted uses and to act as a liaison between local regulatory agencies and the wine industry.

The Oversight & Compliance Manager will provide a vehicle to address community concerns and issues regarding winery operations and promotional functions including being available to research reported complaints and assist in educating wineries and members of the public on allowable permit related issues.

To learn more about this resource or if you have a question related to a permit issue, please contact Michael Haney, Director of Membership & Government Relations , Sonoma County Vintners at:

michael@sonomawine.com.

Sonoma County Vintners “Community Connection” Initiative

While Sonoma County Vintner’s mission is centered on spreading the word around the world about our amazing world-class wines, we are also focused on our community, our neighbors, and working together to continue to make Sonoma County one of the world’s most beautiful locations to live, work and thrive.

Our “Community Connection” Initiative is designed to increase communication with our neighbors, develop “Best Practices” education for our wine community, and provide solutions to challenges our County’s success and growth have created.

We believe that working together with our neighbors throughout Sonoma County, we can enrich our county and succeed in sustaining our communities.

“Community Connection” Educational Seminar Resources

As part of our Sonoma County Vintners “Community Connection” Initiative, Sonoma County Vintners has developed our “*Community Connection Educational Seminar Series*”. This educational resource for member wineries is designed to further their understanding and education on events management, permit issues and additional topics.

Click on our “Community Connection” webpage on our Sonoma County Vintners website (www.sonomawine.com) for future seminar topics and dates.

Sonoma County Vintners Events & Government Relations Committee

Winery Events Public Reporting Procedure Overview

Program Overview:

The Sonoma County Vintners Winery Events Public Reporting Procedure has been developed as a resource and procedure that would assist Sonoma County Vintners and our wine community in addressing and responding to community concerns and impacts regarding winery events taking place in Sonoma County. In addition, this process will act as an educational resource and opportunity for Sonoma County Vintners to identify and communicate to the general public and neighbors the permitted guidelines and limitations wineries do have when conducting promotional events or business activities. It is our goal that this public and winery educational process will assist in reducing the number of complaints and promote enhanced communication between wineries and our community.

Winery Event Public Reporting Procedure:

If a neighbor or member of the public has an on-going concern regarding an event, the following procedures could be set in motion:

1. Neighbor or member of the public that has a concern would initially contact winery that is hosting the event.
2. If needed, the neighbor or member of the public may then contact the Sonoma County Vintners Events Oversight and Public Hotline to report their concern.
3. Once reported to SCV, SCV staff will confirm winery does have a telephone number and contact person listed on their winery's website related to events. If not, SCV will suggest that the winery post this number and contact person for all future events.

4. SCV staff will contact the neighbor reporting the issue (within 48 business day hours), as well as the identified winery.
5. If warranted, the SCV staff person can contact the Oversight & Compliance Manager who will research the issues at hand and report back their findings directly to the SCV contact person.
6. If warranted, the SCV staff person or Oversight & Compliance Manager may make direct contact with both the complaining party and the designated contact person for the winery / event in question to further resolve the issue.
7. If warranted, The SCV Government Relations Committee will review and recommend any additional action to be taken.



Conclusion

Sonoma County Vintners Guide to Winery Event Permits & Event Best Practices

Conclusion

Finally, there is considerable, and understandable, confusion in the wine community over “events”. This confusion has been created in part due to the fact there are no county approved definitions of what an event is. Sonoma County Vintners has proposed a set of definitions to the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors and is working with County officials for their consideration and approval.

It is our hope at Sonoma County Vintners that you find this *“Guide to Winery Event Permits & Event Best Practices”* beneficial and it further assists you in your planning and execution of successful promotional events and business activities.

The resources, and community engagement programs Sonoma County Vintners has developed and implemented over the past 24 months have been initiated in order to facilitate improved communication within our community, as well as create solutions to challenges that have been created related to our county’s and wine communities’ success and growth.

If you have any questions or we can be of any additional assistance to you, please don’t hesitate to contact us. As always, we enjoy and appreciate your comments, suggestions and support.