

Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance Outdoor Event Regulations

(December 19, 2022)

The County of Ventura (County) regulates certain “outdoor events” (a defined term) pursuant to Section 8107-46 of the Ventura County Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance (NCZO). The purpose of the regulations is to ensure that outdoor events are compatible with surrounding land uses and are not detrimental to public health, safety or the environment. As an initial matter, it is important to note that the County’s outdoor event regulations only apply to certain types of outdoor activities in certain locations. The regulations **DO NOT** apply to:

1. Events Held in Zones Other Than Agricultural Exclusive, Open Space, or Rural. The regulations only apply to certain outdoor events held in the Open Space (OS), Agricultural Exclusive (AE) and Rural (RA) zones. See Answer to Question 1 below regarding outdoor events held in other zones.
2. Events Mainly Held Inside Structures. The regulations do not apply to any event where the primary activities occur within dwellings or other enclosed structures.
3. Events Held at a Public Location. The regulations do not apply to any event held on public property such as a community park.
4. Mobile Events. The regulations do not apply to events, such as hikes and tours, that do not occur at a stationary location.
5. Events With Fewer Attendees Than Defined Thresholds. Smaller events are exempted from the regulations. Events are exempt if (a) attended by 75 or fewer total “attendees” (a term that includes guests, staff, vendors, and any other persons in attendance) over the course of an event on a lot smaller than 250 acres, or (b) attended by 100 or fewer attendees over the course of an event on a lot that is either greater than 250 acres or, when combined with other contiguous lots under common ownership, totals 250 or more acres.
6. Events Separately Regulated. Section 8102 of the NCZO defines the types of “outdoor events” covered by the County’s outdoor event regulations. This definition excludes events associated with a land use that is separately regulated by the NCZO, addressed by a County-issued land use permit or entitlement, or that occur at a permitted school or college. Consequently, an outdoor event venue with an existing Conditional Use Permit (CUP) is subject to the conditions of its CUP including limits on number and size of events; and the venue operating under said CUP could not host additional events pursuant to the outdoor event regulations or exemptions. As another example, events hosted at a winery with tours and/or a tasting room would be regulated as part of the winery land use and associated County permit/entitlement; the winery could not host additional events under the outdoor event regulations or exemptions.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Question:** What zoning classifications are covered under by the outdoor event regulations, and what rules apply to events held elsewhere?
Answer: The County's outdoor event regulations **only** apply to the Agricultural Exclusive (AE), Rural (RA), and Open Space (OS) zones. Outside of these zones outdoor events are allowed if they are customarily incidental, appropriate and subordinate to the primary use on the property. For example, occasional outdoor social gatherings are allowed on Residential-zoned properties, but the same properties cannot be used as commercial outdoor event venues.
2. **Question:** Can I host my daughter's wedding at my property in the Rural (RA) zone, and how many people can attend?
Answer: Yes. See Answer to Question 3 below for attendance limits.
3. **Question:** How many people can attend an event on my property, how may events can I host, and when can I receive compensation?
Answer: The number of events and attendees depends on the size of your property and if compensation is received for the event:
 - No Event Limit**
 - a. Properties up to 250 acres have no limit on the number of events with 75 or fewer attendees, and compensation may be received for these events.
 - b. Properties 250 acres and over have no limit on the number of events with 100 attendees, and compensation may be received for these events.
 - Annual Event Limit**
 - c. Properties up to 5 acres may have 5 events per calendar year with 76 - 150 attendees, and compensation may be received for these events.
 - d. Properties from 5 to 249 acres may have 5 events per calendar year with 76 - 250 attendees, and compensation may be received for these events.
 - e. Properties 250 acres and over (including contiguous lots with the same owner) may have 10 events per calendar year with 101 – 350 attendees, and compensation may be received for these events.
 - Permissible Additional Attendees**
 - f. Events that count toward a property's annual event allowance (see **Annual Event Limit** at subparts c. through e. above) may exceed the above applicable attendee limits **only if** (i) the event is incidental, appropriate, and subordinate to a principal use of the property

(e.g., an occasional charity or social gathering would typically qualify as such) and (ii) the property owner receives no compensation for the event (e.g., the property is not rented to a third party for the event.)

4. **Question:** Is a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) required to hold an outdoor event at my property?

Answer: It depends. No Conditional Use Permit (CUP) is required for events that comply with **both** (1) the applicable attendee limits and (2) number of allowable events per year, as stated in the Answer to Question 3 above. Conversely, a CUP is required for any event that exceeds either of those limits. In addition, a CUP is required for an event counting toward a property's annual event allowance (see Question 3 c. through e. above) if the event does not comply with any of the regulations' standard event requirements – see the Answer to Question 5 below regarding these requirements.

5. **Question:** Do any requirements apply to the larger events that count toward a property's annual event allowance?

Answer: Yes, events that count toward a property's annual event allowance (see **Annual Event Limit** in Answer to Question 3), the following requirements apply:

- a. No vehicle shall be parked within a 15-foot diameter of the trunk of any Protected Tree (as defined in NCZO Sec. 8107-25.2).
- b. Offsite vehicle parking may occur on public roads and rights-of-way only as legally permitted.
- c. Each event may only occur between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. in one calendar day. If set up and/or breakdown cannot be completed on the day of the event between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m., set up may occur the day prior to the event between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., and breakdown may occur the day after the event between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.
- d. No amplified noise or music shall occur before 10:00 a.m. or after 10:00 p.m.
- e. No event shall occur in a Hazardous Fire Area unless and until the event host contacts the Ventura County Fire Protection District and agrees to comply with the Fire District's fire hazard-related ordinances and policies for the event.
- f. At least one portable restroom and hand washing station shall be provided for each 50 attendees.
- g. All temporary lighting for the event, except for market/string lighting, shall be hooded and/or directed downward to prevent spillover.

6. **Question:** Can I advertise my property on the internet for outdoor events?

Answer: The County does not regulate event advertising. However, if a property is used to host events that violate the County's zoning ordinance (e.g., the property owner is hosting events that require a Conditional Use Permit but has not obtained one), such advertising may be used by the County as evidence in a code enforcement proceeding.

7. **Question:** Are rehearsals allowed the day or two before my wedding or other event?

Answer: Probably. If the property is **not** covered by an outdoor event Conditional Use Permit (CUP), then rehearsals are considered an independent event that is also covered by the outdoor event regulations. For instance, a rehearsal would be exempt from the regulations if attended by fewer than 75 or 100 attendees, as applicable depending on property size. In contrast, if the property **is** covered by an existing outdoor event CUP, then rehearsals are probably regulated by the CUP itself which must be followed.

8. **Question:** I'd like to open a new event venue on my property that will require a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). What are the basic restrictions and how could I go about applying for a CUP?

Answer: New Conditional Use Permits (CUP) are limited to an initial term of 5 years maximum, and allow for a maximum of up to 60 outdoor events per calendar year. To continue after an initial 5-year term, a CUP may be renewed through a permit modification for subsequent 10-year terms that could allow for a maximum of up to 90 events per calendar year. The exact number of events allowed under a CUP is decided during the permitting/renewal processes based on each case. Refer to the Ventura County Planning website for application information.

9. **Question:** How does the County monitor and enforce the outdoor events regulations?

Answer: Outdoor events held at properties covered by an existing outdoor event Conditional Use Permit (CUP) are subject to permit conditions of approval and monitoring through the Planning Division Condition Compliance Program. Permit conditions may include conditions such as annual submittal of temporary events schedule; on-site posting of designated contact person and telephone number available on a 24-hour basis responsible for resolution of complaints; resolution of noise complaint process which requires notification to residents within a specified distance with the contact person and their telephone number responsible for ensuring compliance noise permit conditions; annual submittal of events report presenting a description of events held throughout the year; and periodic site inspections. Outdoor events held at properties that are not covered by an existing outdoor event CUP are subject to the County's complaint-based code enforcement program. The Code Compliance Division responds to filed complaints, for more information please visit: <https://vcrma.org/en/make-a-complaint-code-compliance>

NOTE: Whether or not an outdoor event is subject to the County's outdoor event regulations, the use of fireworks, large tents, bonfires or other structures or activities presenting a fire hazard may require approval by the Ventura County Fire Protection District. Additionally, events may be subject to other County regulations such as the Environmental Health Division mobile food facilities.

OUTDOOR EVENT ORDINANCE APPLICABILITY/EXEMPTIONS

Outdoor Events Exempt from ALL Planning permitting pursuant to NCZO Sec. 8107-46 (*Note, Outdoor Events Ordinance Only Applies in Following Zoning Classifications: Agricultural Exclusive (AE), Rural (RA), and Open Space (OS)*)

| Property Size (Acres) | Number of Attendees(b) | Number of Events Allowed | Compensation Allowed | Applicable Code Section | Other Applicable Requirements | Note | CUP Required |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---|--|--|-------------------------|
| Indoor Events | Depends on the activity | Depends on the activity | Depends on the activity | See NCZO Use Matrix and Property Land Use Permits to Determine Whether Indoor Activity Is Allowable Use | Depends on the activity | Events at which primary activities occur indoors are not covered by Outdoor Event Ordinance. | Depends on the activity |
| 0-249 | 0-75 | Unlimited | Yes | 8107-46.1 | <p>VC Fire Protection District approval may be required for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fireworks • Large tents • Bonfires • Other structures or activities that present a fire hazard <p>Environmental Health Division (EHD) approval may be required for mobile food facilities.</p> | Operational standards/ requirements as set forth in § NZCO 8107-46.3 (b) DO NOT APPLY | No |

| Property Size (Acres) | Number of Attendees(b) | Number of Events Allowed | Compensation Allowed | Applicable Code Section | Other Applicable Requirements | Note | CUP Required |
|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--|--|--------------|
| 250+ (a) | 0-100 | Unlimited | Yes | 8107-46.1 | VC Fire Protection District approval may be required for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fireworks • Large tents • Bonfires • Other structures or activities that present a fire hazard Environmental Health Division (EHD) approval may be required for mobile food facilities. | Operational standards/ requirements as set forth in § NZCO 8107-46.3 (b) DO NOT APPLY | No |

(a) One lot or combined w/contiguous lots under one owner

(b) Includes “guests, staff, vendors, and any other persons in attendance over the course of an event”

Outdoor Events Exempt from a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) pursuant to NCZO § 8107-46.3 (Note, Applicable Zoning Classifications: Agricultural Exclusive (AE), Rural (RA), and Open Space (OS))

| Property Size (Acres) | Number of Attendees(b) | Number of Events Allowed | Compensation Allowed | Applicable Code Section | Other Applicable Requirements | Note | CUP Required |
|-----------------------|--|--------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--|--|--------------|
| 0-4.99 | 76-150 or larger number if allowed (c) | 5 per calendar year | Yes, but only if 150 or fewer attendees | (8107.46.3 a. (1) & c. (1)) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fireworks • Large tents • Bonfires • Other structures or activities that present a fire hazard Require VC Fire Protection District approval | Operational standards/ requirements as set forth in § NZCO 8107-46.3 (b) DO APPLY Advertising is not regulated | No |
| 5-249 | 76-250 or larger number if allowed (c) | 5 per calendar year | Yes | 8107.46.3 a. (2) & c. (1) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fireworks • Large tents • Bonfires • Other structures or activities that present a fire hazard Require VC Fire Protection District approval | Operational standards/ requirements as set forth in § NZCO 8107-46.3 (b) DO APPLY Advertising is not regulated | No |
| 250+ (a) | 101-350 or larger number if allowed (c) | 10 per calendar year | Yes | 8107.46.3 a. (3) & c. (2) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fireworks • Large tents • Bonfires • Other structures or activities that present a fire hazard Require VC Fire Protection District approval | Operational standards/ requirements as set forth in § NZCO 8107-46.3 (b) DO APPLY Advertising is not regulated | No |

(c) Only after one of these thresholds has been crossed has a potential violation occurred.

(a) One lot or combined w/contiguous lots under one owner

(b) Includes “guests, staff, vendors, and any other persons in attendance over the course of an event”

(c) Larger number only allowed if the event use is (i) “incidental, appropriate, and subordinate to a principal use of the parcel” and (ii) does not include compensation which is “consideration of any form” and would include bartering or reciprocity.

NOTE: Restrictions/operating requirements on event venues operating under a Conditional Use Permit are contained within the permit. For information regarding these conditions please contact plan.counter@ventura.org or call (805) 654-2488 or (805) 654-2451.