

Recreational Special Use Permits



United States
Department of
Agriculture Forest
Service

Hoosier National Forest
Indiana's National Treasure

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What is a special use permit? A special use permit is permission for individuals or other entities to conduct an activity on National Forest System land that is beyond the normal day-to-day use of the forest. For example, you do not need a permit to go hiking with a small group of friends, but you would likely need a permit if you wanted to host a mountain bike race.

What kind of special uses are there? The Forest Service issues special use permits for a variety of things, such as power line right-of-ways, commercial filming, commercial gathering of forest products, outfitting/guiding, and events. Events can include recreational activities such as an adventure race or a group use such as a wedding. Addressed here are the guidelines for outfitting /guiding and recreation events. If you have a question about the other types of special uses please contact the appropriate office (see contacts listed below).

How do I know if I need a permit? If you answer yes to one or more of the following questions you will need to submit a proposal.

1. Does the activity involve more than 75 people, including spectators?
2. Is a fee being charged or will sales of any type occur, even if it's a non profit venture? (Exception – it is not considered a fee if people are simply pitching in for gas money or a meal and any excess funds are returned to participants).
3. Does this activity include high risk or high impact activities, to include but not limited to, adventure races, mountain bike races, ropes courses, horse endurance competition, orienteering, survival training, etc.?
4. Does the activity require any physical modifications such as mowing an area for parking, placement of a temporary structure, placement of special trail markers or signs, etc.?
5. Is this activity part of a class for which students have paid a fee or tuition?
6. Will you rent equipment to participants or will you provide equipment as part of a participation fee?

7. Will you provide guide service as part of the participation fee?

If you are still not sure just give us a call and we'll be happy to assist you. We will determine if the activity is allowed, if a permit is needed, and if other requirements are necessary.

Is there a fee? Typically there is a \$90 administration fee along with a 3-5% fee of adjusted gross receipts. For very large events additional fees may be added if an extensive environmental analysis is required. In some instances fees may be waived if the event provides public benefit.

Do I have to have insurance? Insurance may be required if the activity involves high risk activities. NOTE: if insurance is required the USDA Forest Service must be listed on the policy as additional insured; a rider is not sufficient.

How do I apply? Download a Proponent Proposal Form at http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/hoosier/project_docs/proponent_proposal.pdf or request one from this office. Please also include a detailed Operating Plan. An Operating Plan checklist appears on the back of this sheet to assist you in submitting all the required information. Please mail to the appropriate office below based on activity location. Proposals must be received at least **3 months** prior to the activity.

Contacts for more information:

For National Forest (NF) Area North of Paoli:
Stacy Duke, District Recreation Manager
811 Constitution Avenue, Bedford, IN 47421
812-276-4726 or Toll Free 1-866-302-4173

For NF around Paoli and south of Paoli:
Nancy Myers, Outdoor Recreation Planner
248 15th Street, Tell City, IN 47586
812-547-9241

*Federal relay for deaf and hearing impaired:
1-800-877-8339*

Recreation Special Use Permit Operating Plan Checklist

This checklist is provided to assist you in developing an operating plan for a recreation special use permit. The purpose of the operating plan is to ensure safety, reduce the potential for user conflict, and protect forest resources.

Introduction:	
	Explain in detail the nature of the activity. For example, will it be a race, search and rescue training, outfitting/guiding, etc? Are any special skills or equipment needed (i.e. climbing)?
	How many people will be involved, to include spectators and participants?
	Is there a fee involved and if so how much? Is this a for-profit activity?
	Will there be additional sales or services such as food, equipment or transportation?
Time Frame:	
	State the exact dates and hours of the activity, to include start and end times.
Location:	
	State exactly where the activity will occur including any trails, developed recreation areas, general forest areas, or areas off of the forest.
	Include a detailed map. (Maps can be purchased from the forest at http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/hoosier/maps.htm).
Health and Safety:	
	What provisions will you make for sanitation, such as port-a-potties?
	What provisions will you make for medical emergencies? (Requires EMS and hospital coordination.)
	If required, you will need to provide proof that EMT's on site are certified, and that local emergency services is aware of the time and location of your activity.
	How will communications be handled? Will there be cell phone coverage or adequate range for two way radios?
	What provisions will you make to deal with traffic on public roads and adequate parking? (Requires coordination with county sheriff.)
	What provisions will you make to resolve potential safety issues with other forest visitors who are not participating, but may happen to be using the trail or area?
	If additional services are provided such as food or electrical hookups, have appropriate permits been obtained?
Resource Protection	
	What provisions will you make to ensure all participants know and obey forest regulations?
	What potential resource impacts could occur, and how would they be repaired? For example, ruts on trail, or temporary trail markers and litter left behind.
Other	
	If the activity will also occur off of the Hoosier National Forest, have appropriate permits and permissions been obtained from those entities?
	Identify any potential for conflict with other forest visitors who may wish to use the same area. How will you manage this?