

## **Collin County Policy on First Amendment-Protected Activities**

*“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”*

Demonstrations, protests or other First Amendment- Protected Activities can have various consequences for local government. They can adversely affect the normal delivery of services. These events can also pose a threat to the safety and security of employees and the public when coming to, using and departing from Collin County property.

### **Policy on Demonstrations, Protests, and Rallies**

Demonstrations, protests, and rallies must be requested through the County Judge at least three days prior to the event. The following regulations must be followed:

- Requests must specify purpose, location, date, and time. Organizers must have all necessary city permits as required by city ordinance. expected to participate in the event; and g) the estimated number of people the event organizers expect to attract to the event.
- Collin County may request a meeting to review the application and policy prior to approval.
- Collin County will attempt to notify the requesting party within 48 hours in writing whether the application is approved and any conditions that may apply to such an approval. A copy of the approval and any city permits should be maintained at the location of the demonstration and be made available for review upon request from any Collin County official.
- Organizers and participants must not:
  1. block pedestrian or vehicular traffic;
  2. directly confront passersby;
  3. block building entrances or exits;
  4. locate themselves on city streets or sidewalks without a city permit\*;
  5. interfere with the public’s ability to conduct normal business, e.g. property actions, motor vehicle registration, paying property taxes, etc.
- Organizers must:
  1. abide by the pre-approved beginning and ending times;
  2. confine the event to the pre-approved location;

3. notify Collin County Sheriff's Office and/or local police department of the event and arrange for Public Safety presence if needed;
4. clean up the area before departing.

### **Place and Time**

- a. Demonstrations and assemblies are permitted outside of county buildings in public places. Designated locations for outdoor demonstrations are attached.
- b. Indoor demonstrations and assemblies are not allowed.
- c. The approval of any specific location will always be subject to accommodation of planned or on-going Collin County activities and any relevant physical conditions and safety issues.
- d. Demonstrations and assemblies may occur any day of the week from Sunday through Saturday but shall occur no earlier than 8:00 a.m. and shall terminate no later than 10:00 p.m.

### **Manner**

- a. Demonstrations and assemblies may not:
  - 1) prevent or disrupt other Collin County activities or business;
  - 2) prevent or interfere with the ability of other members of the community, visitors or guests to conduct business or have access to county facilities;
  - 3) engage in, or threaten, physical violence or destruction of government property;
  - 4) jeopardize the safety and/or security of county staff or the public
- b. Signs affixed to poles or sticks are not permitted. Signs that are not affixed to sticks or poles are permitted.
- c. Tents, tarps, and all other forms of camping equipment are prohibited.
- d. Alcoholic beverages and the use of controlled substances are prohibited.
- e. The individual, group or organization that requested approval for the demonstration or assembly is responsible for removing all trash at the conclusion of the demonstration or assembly and for restoring the area to the condition it was in at the beginning of the demonstration or assembly.
- f. Public restrooms are available for demonstrations and assemblies. Bathing within public restrooms is prohibited.
- g. Participants in demonstrations and assemblies must carry official and current government I.D. cards or State-issued identification at all times and present it to officials upon request.

h. Law enforcement may monitor the demonstration and, at their discretion, install barricades for the protection and safety of the demonstrators, those assembled, and/or the general public.

### **Policy and Procedures for Spontaneous Demonstrations and Assemblies**

Collin County recognizes there may be occasions that do not permit the submission of an application 48 hours in advance of a demonstration or assembly. Such spontaneous demonstrations or assemblies in response to emergent situations where advance planning is not possible are permitted, but they are limited in location to: a) County Courthouse or b) Hatchell Administration Building. Any individual, group or organization calling for or organizing such a demonstration or assembly must report that information immediately to the County Judge, and comply with the time, place and manner provisions set forth above in this policy.

### **Applicability and Violations**

This policy applies to all First Amendment-Protected activities conducted on Collin County property. All persons involved in or attending a demonstration or assembly must adhere to this policy, as well as other applicable Federal, State, and local laws. Any person in violation of this policy or applicable laws will be asked to cease and desist and, upon failure to do so, law enforcement will take appropriate action. Any Collin County employee who acts in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action under applicable Collin County policies. Any person in violation of Federal, State, or local law will be subject to criminal prosecution.