



2025  
Busking Program  
Guide

## Background

An evolution of the former Street Performers Program, the Busking Program works to animate downtown Barrie, while giving performing artists of all ages and stages an opportunity to perform for tips.

Busking is an important element of a thriving city where people want to live, visit, work and play. Busking contributes to placemaking, a city's culture, identity, and spirit. It brings energy and excitement to our streetscapes and provides an element of safety to communities, helping people feel more comfortable and safer by animating spaces and encouraging positive behaviour. Busking provides an opportunity for emerging and established artists to showcase their work and creates opportunities for community members to connect with and appreciate local talent.

## Busker Permit Information

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Busker Permits are required for all performances happening on municipal property where the performer is accepting tips from the public. Applying for and obtaining a Busker Permit is free.

### Who can apply?

All performing artists are welcome to apply for a Busker Permit. Performances involving fire or sharp objects are not permitted.

### Where can I busk?

Permitted buskers are welcome to perform in the designated busking zones in downtown Barrie and along the waterfront. Busking zones include:

- a) Dunlop Street between Maple Avenue and Mulcaster Street with permission from business owners if performing in front of a business;
- b) Meridian Place (so long as an Emerging Artist is not scheduled to perform there);
- c) Beside the walking path at Heritage Park;
- d) Beside the walking path between Heritage Park and the Marina in north Centennial Park;
- e) Permit holders may request permission to busk at events by contacting event organizers directly or by emailing [events@barrie.ca](mailto:events@barrie.ca) for a schedule of City events.

Should an event be taking place within one of these busking zones, the Permit Holder must obtain permission from the event organizer to busk in that location.

Between June and September each year, youth hired for the Emerging Artist Program also busk in the areas listed above. Upon preparation of their performance schedule, staff will share it with permitted Buskers to avoid any potential performance conflicts. Popular locations for these performances include Meridian Place and along the path near the Ice Cream hut by the Marina. We encourage Buskers and Emerging Artist Program participants to work collaboratively to find a solution should a performance conflict arise.

## **What is needed to obtain a Busker Permit?**

To be issued a Busker Permit, applicants must provide a certificate of insurance for a minimum of \$2 million liability naming the Corporation of the City of Barrie as additional insured.

## **How long does it take to receive a permit from application?**

If all permit requirements have been met, a Busker Permit will be issued within 24 hours, during weekdays. Staff will endeavor to issue busking permits on the same day complete permit applications are received whenever possible.

## **Busker Permit Terms and Conditions**

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### **General:**

1. Permits are non-transferable and apply only to the named individual on the permit.
2. Permit holders must display or have easy access to their permit while busking and provide it to a Municipal Law Enforcement Officer, a member of the Barrie Police Service or other duly appointed or designated City staff.
3. Signs, banners, posters etc., are not to be utilized, except where properly permitted in accordance with Sign By-law 2018-029.
4. Solicitation of religious or political membership is not permitted.

### **Performance Locations, Times & Guidelines:**

5. Performances are permitted between 9:00 AM and 9:00 PM daily, during the “Valid” dates indicated in the upper section of the permit, and for which their insurance is valid and on file with the City of Barrie.
6. Permit holders are permitted to perform in designated busking zones when no programming or other events are scheduled or are taking place on that site.
7. Permit holders may perform in a designated busking zone for up to two hours. Multiple zones may be used on the same day.
8. The following “Designated Busking Zones” (DBZ’s) are available, when not being used for events or by participants of the Emerging Artist Program:
  - a) Dunlop Street between Maple Avenue and Mulcaster Street *with permission from business owners if performing in front of a business;*
  - b) Meridian Place (so long as an Emerging Artist is not scheduled to perform there);
  - c) Beside the walking path at Heritage Park;
  - d) Beside the walking path between Heritage Park and the Marina in north Centennial Park;

- e) Permit holders may request permission to busk at events by contacting event organizers directly.
- 9. The Permit holder agrees to use only available “Designated Busking Zones” to carry out their performance.
- 10. The Permit holder shall not set up or perform within a 50-meter distance of any other performance. If you can see another performance from where you are setting up, you are too close.
- 11. Permit holders may coordinate with other permitted performers to share the space but may not displace Community Engaged Performances (C.E.P.s) scheduled through the Emerging Artists program.

*C.E.P.’s are typically scheduled in July and August:*

*a) Wednesday and Thursday 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM,*

*b) Friday to Sunday 12:00 PM – 9:00 PM, and*

*c) Holiday weekends as scheduled.*

*Reach out to [Greyson.Carson@CanadianMusicians.coop](mailto:Greyson.Carson@CanadianMusicians.coop) and [alisha.dmello@canadianmusicians.coop](mailto:alisha.dmello@canadianmusicians.coop) if desired, to check the most current C.E.P. schedule in advance.*

- 12. Buskers must provide their own form of amplification (motorized generator), as **use of hydro from light standards is not permitted**. If unable to provide their own form of amplification, buskers may opt to play acoustically.
  - a) The sound level must be reasonable, within limits set in City by-laws and intended for an audience within 10 feet.
  - b) If neighbouring businesses or residents complain about the sound level, it must be lowered.
  - c) Equipment, cables and cords must meet current safety standards. Cords or other equipment must not cross roadway or pedestrian pathways or in any way interfere with the safe and convenient movement of pedestrians.
  - d) The City reserves the right to disconnect any equipment that is likely to cause injury or damage.
  - e) Repeated failure to comply with these conditions will result in the permit being revoked.”
- 13. The Permit holder shall ensure the performance is suitable for all audiences, including those with children. The performance must not include indecent conduct or use abusive, threatening or profane language.

### **Health & Safety:**

- 14. Permit holders must ensure that no aspect of their performance or any of the equipment/props used, pose any danger or risk to the public or the environment. Performances involving fire or sharp objects are not permitted.

15. Permit holders who encounter unsafe or dangerous conditions from other persons when busking should remove themselves from the situation if it is safe to do so and contact Barrie Police Service. For non-emergencies, please call 705-725-7025. In case of emergency, please dial 9-1-1.

### **Collection of Tips:**

16. Permit holders shall never openly solicit funds, but are welcome to open their guitar case, hat or other small receptacle for those that wish to support them.
17. The sale of Permit holders' branded merchandise specific to their performance career, including but not limited to CDs, records, cassette tapes, stickers, t-shirts and buttons, (collectively known as "merch") is permitted.
18. The display of the performer's "merch" is to be maintained within the Permit holder's existing performance setup.

### **Conduct:**

19. Permit holders are considered ambassadors for the City of Barrie and will therefore conduct themselves appropriately. Permit holders will be pleasant and mannerly and always treat their audience with respect and consideration. Coarse language, rude gestures or inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated.
20. The Permit holder shall be appropriately attired for their artform, in clean clothing without rips or tears.
21. The Permit holder shall refrain from conducting the performance while under the influence of alcohol and/or illicit substances.
22. Permit holders must behave in a manner that minimizes the risk of pavement or installations within the street allowance being damaged, permanently marked or in any way rendered unsafe for pedestrian use.

### **Regulatory:**

23. Permit holders must comply with all other statutory requirements, rules, regulations, and by-laws of the City of Barrie and/or authority which in any manner affect or relate to the use of the sidewalk, boulevard, public property or public highway including, without limitation the by-laws of the City of Barrie.
24. Permit holders are to immediately cease any activity and remove any performance equipment or materials which are located within the public street allowance at the request of a Municipal Law Enforcement Officer, a member of the Barrie Police Service, or any other duly appointed or designated City staff for reasons of public safety.
25. Alcohol and/or illicit substances shall not be brought onto any park or street allowance.

26. Any breach of the terms or conditions of this Permit and/or provision of false or incorrect information by the Permit holder to the City will result in the immediate revocation of this Permit.

## **How to apply for a Busker Permit**

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Applications are submitted via the online submission link for APLI available on the [City of Barrie website](#). If you have not used APLI in the past, you will be required to create an account before submitting your application. Please read all application steps to ensure you have everything you need for your permit.

### **Application Steps:**

1. Visit APLI - <https://eservices.barrie.ca/>
2. Sign up for an account with APLI. A registration email will be sent to complete the process.
3. If you have signed up for APLI before, you should be able to sign in with that account.
4. Once registered, log in, then click "Submit an Application".
5. Click the "Busker Permit" tab, then the hyperlinked "Busker Permit".
6. Read and accept the disclaimer, then click "Continue Application".
7. Under Applicant, click "Select from Account".
8. Select your artform from the drop-down menu. Fire and sharp objects are not permitted in performances.
9. If you already have a certificate of insurance for \$2+ million liability naming the Corporation of the City of Barrie as additional insured, upload a copy where it says, "Provide proof of Insurance" and click "Save".
10. If you do not yet have insurance leave the proof of insurance section empty.
11. Type your name as your attestation (signature) and hit "Continue Application".
12. Thoroughly review your information and the full Terms and Conditions for receipt of a Busker Permit then check the box agreeing to the Terms and Conditions and hit "Continue Application".
13. You will see a message saying, "Your application has been successfully submitted." and receive a confirmation email that your application was submitted.
14. If you uploaded a copy of your insurance, staff will review your application and if all information is correct, will issue a Busker Permit. You will receive an email with a note to download your permit.

15. If you do not already have insurance, your confirmation email from APLI will contain two links to third party insurance providers. Buskers who are looking to obtain a busker permit for less than a week can click [Barrie.instantriskcoverage.com](http://Barrie.instantriskcoverage.com) and follow the steps below for that provider. Buskers looking to obtain a busker permit for longer than a week or for the full season can click
16. <https://eventinsurance.marsh.com/ca/en/programs/event-liability-insurance.html> and follow the steps below for that provider. If you would like to source your own insurance, you may do so.
17. Once you have received your insurance certificate, [log into APLI](#), click “My Records”, click on “Busker Permit” then click the application number you received when you submitted your application. This will open your application record. From there, click “Record Info”, then “Attachments”, then “Add”. Upload the certificate and hit “Save”. Staff will then review the insurance certificate, and if all information is correct, will issue a Busker Permit. You will receive an email notifying you of your successful permit application, including your permit number and a note to visit <https://eservices.barrie.ca/> to download your permit.
18. Download your permit by logging into <https://eservices.barrie.ca/>, clicking on “My Records”, then “Busker Permit”, then click the application number. This will open your application record. From there, click “Record Info”, then “Attachments”. Click the bottom link that says “Busker Permit” to open the permit.
19. You can save the permit to your phone, and/or print a copy. You must have a copy of your permit easily available while busking so that By-Law officers and Police can see it if they request it.

## **Applying for Short-term Insurance**

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Buskers who are looking to obtain a Busker Permit for less than a week can purchase liability insurance for as little as one day at a time through one of the City’s third-party event liability insurance providers. Insurance rates vary based on applicant information. Please note, insurance payment will be processed online via credit card.

### **Insurance Purchase Steps:**

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1. Visit [Barrie.instantriskcoverage.com](http://Barrie.instantriskcoverage.com) and sign in or sign up for an account.
2. Review the Use of Application Agreement and select “Yes” for both items below, then “Confirm”.
3. Fill in your personal information.

4. Under Additional Insured, click “Yes”, then type “Corporation of the City of Barrie” and the address: PO Box 400, Barrie, ON, L4M 4T5. Click “Next”.
  5. Select the type of activity taking place – choose “Individual Vendor / Photography”.
  6. Select the name of the facility you will be busking at: Downtown Barrie.
  7. Select the amount of insurance coverage required – choose \$2,000,000.
  8. Select “No” for whether food or beverages are being sold.
  9. Select the range of dates you require insurance for. If you only require insurance for one day, you can note the start time as 9:00 a.m. and end time as 9:00 p.m. on the same day.
  10. Review the information you submitted and answer the questions below. For the question about binding the Corporation, select “N/A”. Click “Quote”.
  11. You will be redirected to a page with the General Policy Information, including the quote for your insurance coverage. If you are content with the price, click “Purchase” and proceed with payment.
  12. Once you have obtained an insurance certificate, log back into APLI to upload it and receive your Busker Permit.
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## **Applying for Seasonal, Annual or Long-term Insurance**

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Buskers who are looking to obtain a Busker Permit for up to one year can purchase liability insurance through one of the City’s third-party event liability insurance providers. If you think you may want to busk throughout the season, you can purchase insurance coverage until the end of the year at the same rate as coverage for one month. The minimum rate for long-term coverage through this provider is \$164.50. Please note, insurance payment will be processed online via credit card, or if you prefer, you can arrange to pay by cheque.

### **Insurance Purchase Steps:**

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1. Visit <https://eventinsurance.marsh.com/ca/en/programs/event-liability-insurance.html> and click “Get Quote”.
2. Review the Eligibility Criteria and click “Continue”.
3. Review the Program Disclaimer and click “Continue”.
4. Agree to the Privacy Agreement.
5. Fill in your personal details (for “Position in Organization”, type “busker”) and the date you would like the policy to start, then click “Continue”.
6. Select Facility User & Event Liability Insurance, then click “Continue”.
7. Under Event Information, fill in the following:

Select Event: Buskers

Select Venue: General Public / Municipal Property

Provide the location: type in “Downtown Barrie”

Total number of attendees: type in “50”

Capacity of venue: type in “10”

8. Under Additional Insured, select “Yes”, the type in “Corporation of the City of Barrie”
9. Select your preferred start date and end date for insurance coverage and select \$5,000,000 limit.
10. Estimate the number of days you anticipate busking and type in the section for number of days the “event” is to be held. Select “No” for Annual Coverage for event planning.
11. Under Event Activities, select “No/None” for all items, and leave the law and jurisdiction field at the bottom blank. Click “Continue”.
12. Answer the three questions under Your Insurance History and click “Continue”.
13. Review the status of each section you completed, and if all are completed, click “Continue”.
14. Review all your application information and click “Submit”.
15. Review the quote, and if content, select payment option – cheque or credit card.
16. Review the Terms and Conditions, select that you wish to apply for coverage, and click “Submit”.
17. Proceed with payment to obtain your insurance certificate.
18. Once you have obtained an insurance certificate, log back into APLI to upload it and receive your Busker Permit.

## **Assistance with Applying**

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The City of Barrie’s Cultural Development staff is available to support you in your application. If you are unclear how to complete a portion of the application form, please do not hesitate to call the Economic & Creative Development Department at (705) 728-9850 or email [Amanda.Dyke@barrie.ca](mailto:Amanda.Dyke@barrie.ca).

## **Confidentiality**

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Staff are required to keep the contents of all applications confidential. Personal and contact information will not be shared. If a member of the public is inquiring about hiring a busker, staff will

endeavor to determine who they are speaking of and make arrangements to share their contact information with the busker.

## **Busking Best Practices**

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- Introduce yourself to nearby businesses, organizations and fellow buskers. This will help strengthen our community and make complaints less likely.
- Let people get past. Even during busy times, you and your audience should not be blocking others. There should be enough space for a stroller or a wheelchair to pass through at all times.
- If your audience spills onto the road, blocks the whole sidewalk, a crosswalk, a doorway, accessibility ramp or amenity, please stop and clear the way.
- Share the busking zones with other buskers. That means if other permitted buskers are waiting for the same busking zone, share your spot after two hours or less.
- If two buskers show up at the same busking zone at the same time, take turns and work it out or try jamming together.
- Avoid sound clash – do not attempt to perform in a busking zone if there is amplified music or announcements taking place in the same sound space. If you can hear them, they can likely hear you as well, so pick another location to busk at.
- Contact the Economic and Creative Development Department via [creative@barrie.ca](mailto:creative@barrie.ca) for a list of upcoming events and programming that might have an impact on your busking schedule. Staff can provide guidance on which programming may be busker-friendly, and which programming may be best to avoid.