

Hoggetowne Medieval Faire Vendor Protocol and Industry Standards

Vendors submit an application to participate in the Hoggetowne Medieval Faire. Preference is given to those that participated in the past and have medieval/renaissance faire experience and product. The vast majority of vendors have participated for many years. Of the 165 vendors there are less than a dozen new participants each year. The City of Gainesville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department requires all vendors to provide the City with proof of adequate General Liability coverage in the amount of \$200,000 upon final execution of their application form. The City of Gainesville and Board of Alachua County Commissioners must be named as an additional insured on the certificate of insurance. When completing the Vendor Application, the vendor agrees to indemnify fully and hold harmless the City of Gainesville and Board of Alachua County Commissioners, its officers, employees and agents, against all damage, claims, liabilities and causes of action of every kind of nature. Every participant is issued a Parking Pass and required to display this pass to gate security in order to enter the Alachua County Fairgrounds. Sloan Security is contracted to man the vendor gate 24-hours a day for ten days. Eight Gainesville Police Department officers are stationed throughout the Faire during public hours. In addition, two EMS personnel from the Gainesville Fire Rescue Department are on site during public hours.

In researching industry standards for medieval/renaissance fairs regarding their background check policies, PRCA staff has contacted and received replies from a number of large festivals and several municipalities. The following is information received by PRCA:

Alachua County Fair

Jessie Lewis, President of the Alachua County Fair Association said they do not run background checks. He also said the ride contractor hires a lot of local temporary help and they do not do background checks.

Lady of the Lake

The Lady of the Lake Renaissance Festival is held the first two weekends in November in Tavares, located in central Florida. They moved to a new site this past year and expanded to 2 weekends. The producers of the faire work with the school district; they are the Educational Foundation for Lake County Schools. This is a fundraiser for their school. Their school board policy regarding background checks is that Renaissance Faire workers are exempt from background checks. They do not run background checks on vendors. Their vendors also employ temporary help and all the food is run by local organizations and they do not run background checks.

The Gulf Coast Renaissance Faire

The Gulf Coast Renaissance Faire, held in March at a county fairgrounds in Pensacola, Florida does not do background checks on merchants and vendors.

Camelot Days

Camelot Days, held for 2 weekends at a city park in Hollywood, Florida said they do not run a background check but they do a sexual predator search on new applicants (on the individual who is completing the application).

Riverdale Kiwanis Medieval Faire

This event is a fund raiser for the local Kiwanis club and is held for 2 weeks in early January at a county park in Fort Myers. Terry Short, the event producer, said they do not do background checks although

they have done a reference check on the jousters and elephant owner. They make sure to check for licenses and insurance and they issue parking passes, just like we do. They have five non-law enforcement security personnel on site each night, which is made up of their event staff that sleep in motor homes. They don't provide electric or showers to the campers and they are not permitted to leave the area after 7pm. They are an all-volunteer organization. More than 15 local organizations volunteer to park cars, work as cashiers, clean up, set up, security, etc. The proceeds from this event go towards helping children in need in Lee County.

Florida Renaissance Festival

This show is held for 6 weeks in February-March in Deerfield Beach at a county park. Bobby Rodriguez, the show promoter, said they have an ID system that requires an app, is automatic and very expensive. This system produces an ID badge and does a creditor check automatically. They do not run background checks. All vendors must complete a form and submit a copy of their driver's license for this process. They have seven non-law enforcement staff members that sleep on site throughout the duration of the event.

Arizona Renaissance Festival

Lauren Sterling, Administrative General Manager and Crafts Coordinator for this 8-week permanent site event, said they do not do background checks on their vendors and the cost involved would be too high for people living on their property for such a short time.

Ohio Renaissance Festival

This 8-week festival does not do background checks.

Georgia Renaissance Festival

This 8-week permanent site event does not do background checks. When accepting new vendors they reference their capability with existing vendors who have worked alongside them previously. Vendors are issued a security ID which their non-law enforcement security guard checks when they enter the site.

Richardson, Texas Parks and Recreation

Staff spoke to Spencer Doyle, Superintendent of Recreation for Richardson, Texas Parks and Recreation.

- They produce a three day music festival that draws 70,000 visitors.
- They started running background checks last year for both concessionaires and vendors.
- They are the only Parks and Recreation Department in Texas running background checks on vendors.
- Their crafts coordinator is in charge of sending out a form after they were accepted into the show. The shop owner must list all their employees and their driver's license numbers. Staff then enters this information into a database and then submits it to their Police Department.
- Their Police Department runs the background checks; there are no costs since they do it on their staff hours.

The Police Department initiated the background checks. They run it on open source records for the state of Texas and then on a national registry (an FBI database). They have had no issues in the past with their vendors.

Staff asked what would happen if there were an offense and he said they would decide based on the offense whether they would be barred from the event. Therefore, if ten years ago they were arrested for theft, they would not ban them from the event. They are primarily looking for sex offenders.

Staff also asked if they checked the workers once they arrived on site to make sure they had a background check, to make sure their name was originally submitted on the form. He said they do not check.

Westwood, MA Recreation Department

This department reported they run a Town Day event that brings in thousands of visitors. They implemented a new background check process last year that includes all event participants including volunteers, vendors, food vendors and individuals or groups running activities at the event. They have a background check form that is returned to our police department who then run the check and let us know that the individual is approved for participation.

City of Shoreline, WA Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services

This department reports they do not background check vendors with employees but rather have it in their contract that they are liable and require proof of insurance. They do run background check our performers at all their children's events.