

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1) Who should I contact to talk about reserving space for an event at Congregation Beth Israel?

Special member events including but not limited to B'nai Mitzvah celebrations, wedding celebrations or other special events should contact facilities@bethisraelbellingham.org.

If Congregation Beth Israel committees/ chaverim want to reserve space at CBI, they should contact Mary Somerville at office@bethisraelbellingham.org to check availability and to reserve space.

2) How long in advance can I reserve space for my event at Congregation Beth Israel?

Congregation Beth Israel members may reserve space up to 2 years prior to an event and no later than 14 days prior to an event. Non-Congregation Beth Israel members may reserve space up to 1 year prior to an event and no later than 14 days prior to an event.

3) What if two people want to reserve space on the same date?

Facility reservations will be approved on a first come, first served basis, using the Facilities Request Form.

4) If I can't use the date I reserved, can I let someone else of my choosing use the date?

No. Dates may not be assigned by one individual/organization to another individual/organization. In some cases, there may already be a waiting list for a particular date.

5) Is there a publicly available calendar of bookings so that people can plan for future events?

We are working to create a central calendar for all events. Anyone interested in a date can contact Mary Somerville in the Congregation Beth Israel office at office@bethisraelbellingham.org and she will be able to answer all inquiries.

6) Why do we have to pay to rent space at CBI when I'm a dues paying member?

Rental fees will enable ongoing building maintenance of our new synagogue, inside and outside. Scheduling a time to meet with a member of the Facilities Committee to review and discuss the Facilities Rental Policy & Procedure Information Packet will help members better understand the opportunities of the facility and the necessity of charging members for rental fees.

7) Why do I need to jump through hoops for renting space in my own synagogue?

In order to ensure that all protections are in place for our new synagogue facility, it is necessary to include all relevant policies, procedures and expectations in the facilities agreement. Comparable event spaces require similar assurances and we would not be fulfilling our responsibilities to Congregation Beth Israel and its members if we did not take every opportunity to ensure the integrity of our facility and our assets.

8) How do facility rental fees compare with other similar venues in the area?

Facility rental fees were collected from similar size Jewish congregation facilities in Northwest as well as some Bellingham venues (i.e. Bloedel Donovan, Baker Creek Place, Bellingham Boat House, Ferry Terminal, Leopold and Evergreen Banquet Facility). Congregation Beth Israel has created a special rental fee structure for members that is comparable or less in some cases to other similar venues and facilities in the area.

9) As a member, can I reserve space for an event for an organization's or a non-member event?

No. Each non-member/organization must apply to rent space at the Congregation Beth Israel facility on its own. There are separate rental rates for members, non-members and non-profit organizations.

10)What equipment is included in the rental fees?

The following are included in the rental fees: 7-large pop up tents; 2-small pop up tents; 175 non-folding chairs; 200 folding chairs; 15-5ft round tables; 16-4ft rectangular tables; 6-8ft rectangular tables; normal use of water, electricity, phones and wifi.

11)Can I set up for my event the day before?

If the rental space is not being used the day before, Congregation Beth Israel will consider the previous day setup for members only.

12)Can I attach decorations to the walls?

No decorations may be used which require pasting or fastening, nailing, taping, stapling or tacking to walls, doors, light fixtures, floors or ceiling by any means.

13)Do I need to clean up immediately after the event or can I clean up the next day?

Yes, cleanup must be done immediately following an event. All rental spaces must be returned to pre-rental condition including but not limited to the tent/table/chair setup. A cleanup checklist is provided as part of the facilities packet.

14)What is the threshold for deciding if a particular booking is a Congregation Beth Israel covered or not covered event and what is the difference in fee structure and required documentation for members and non-members?

Congregation Beth Israel covered events include Congregation Beth Israel related committees/chaverim meetings for members. In these cases, no additional rental fees or paperwork are required, however, use would be based on availability and should be directed to Mary Somerville at office@bethisraelbellingham.org. Examples such as Brotherhood holding a BBQ fundraiser for its members, a regular knitting group, NFTY holding a movie night for the Congregation Beth Israel congregation, etc. are all considered Congregation Beth Israel covered activities. These types of meetings/events would not require additional rental fees or paperwork, however, use would be based on availability.

Rental policies requiring special coverage, applicable paperwork and facility rental fees include special events for Congregation Beth Israel members, including but not limited to B'nai Mitzvahs, weddings, special member parties or events, etc. All non-member events would require special coverage, applicable paperwork, facility rental fees. For more information, contact facilities@bethisraelbellingham.org.

15) Why do I need to purchase special insurance liability coverage naming Congregation Beth Israel as additional insured for an event I'm holding at Congregation Beth Israel when Congregation Beth Israel already has insurance?

Any special event sponsored by a Congregation Beth Israel member, even though held in the Congregation Beth Israel facility, is not considered a Congregation Beth Israel event and therefore is not covered by Congregation Beth Israel's insurance. It is standard practice, by most if not all rental facilities, to request that renters provide personal insurance liability coverage naming the venue as an "additional insured." This insurance will cover someone who gets hurt or any damages that occur during an event and safeguards CBI from any liability.

All non-members/organizations who use the Congregation Beth Israel facility are required to provide personal/organization insurance liability coverage naming Congregation Beth Israel as an "additional insured."

16) Can I purchase the special insurance liability coverage from my personal insurance company or am I obligated to purchase it from a specific insurance company?

Individuals/organizations may choose to either purchase an event policy from their personal insurance company, as long as it meets the requirements of the Congregation Beth Israel agreement, or purchase it from another third party insurance company as noted in the Facilities Packet. If alcohol will be served at an event, this must be noted when liability insurance is obtained, otherwise the insurance liability coverage is null and void.

17) Why does the caterer or vendor that I'm hiring for my event have to purchase special insurance liability insurance naming CBI as additional insured?

Any caterer or vendor hired for a Congregation Beth Israel event is responsible/liable to underwrite his/her services by providing insurance liability coverage naming Congregation Beth Israel as an "additional insured." This will protect Congregation Beth Israel from any injury or any damages incurred as a result of the service provided by the caterer or vendor.

18) If I hire people to help me at my event who do not have a business, do they need to provide any kind of insurance?

In regards to Congregation Beth Israel members only, Congregation Beth Israel realizes that members often ask friends or hire people who do not have registered businesses to help with their event. This is acceptable, however, members should be aware that they will be responsible for any injury or damages incurred during an event as a result of people helping at the event without registered businesses.

19) Am I responsible to obtain a permit to serve alcohol at my event?

Yes. Proof of a one-time Banquet Permit for an event serving alcohol must be purchased a minimum of 7 days prior to the event and posted on Congregation Beth Israel's premises the day of the event. This allows the service and consumption of liquor at a private, invitation-only banquet or gathering held in a public place or business. Applications for permits may be obtained at the following website: <https://lcb.wa.gov/licensing/online-banquet-permit>

20) If my event is being held completely on exterior grounds of Congregation Beth Israel, am I still obligated to observe the kosher style food guidelines policy?

Yes. The kosher style food guideline policy applies to all events on the Congregation Beth Israel campus, regardless whether held inside or outside.

21) Can my caterer use the Congregation Beth Israel kitchens?

Yes. Caterers may use the Congregation Beth Israel kitchens, however, they must supply everything that is necessary for the preparation and serving of food. If the kitchens are used, all appliances and surfaces must be cleaned at the end of the event. No food may be left on Congregation Beth Israel property after an event.

22) How important is recycling when hosting a special event at Congregation Beth Israel?

Members, non-members and all vendors hired to cater events at Congregation Beth Israel are encouraged to be mindful of the environment when planning for an event. Congregation Beth Israel encourages the use of reusable and compostable products such as glass bottles, reusable bags and cups, etc. Recycling containers for the disposal of recyclable items are provided.

23) Do I have the option of not having security personnel at my event?

Members and non-members are required to pay for security personnel during the event as part of the rental fee except by prior written authorization. Congregation Beth Israel members renting space for Bar/Bat Mitzvah events will not be required to pay for security personnel during the religious portion of the event.

24) I would like to invite the Rabbi from my former congregation to officiate my lifecycle event, is this ok?

If a member desires to have another Rabbi officiate a service at Congregation Beth Israel written permission must be obtained by the Rabbi of Congregation Beth Israel to allow this to take place.

25) I would like to invite another Cantorial Soloist or musician to perform in my lifecycle event, is this ok?

If a member desires to have another Cantorial Soloist or musician perform in his/her lifecycle event, written permission must be obtained by the Rabbi of Congregation Beth Israel and Cantorial Soloist to allow this to take place.

26) If my caterer has been contracted for previous lifecycle events at Congregation Beth Israel, does she/he still need to provide proof copies of her/his caterer's annual food service permit, caterer's food worker card and certificate of insurance liability coverage naming Congregation Beth Israel as an additional insured?

As long as a caterer has provided proof to Congregation Beth Israel of his/her current caterer's annual food service permit, food worker card and certificate of insurance coverage naming congregation Beth Israel as an "additional insured" (without specific event dates), they will be kept on file and can be used for another member's event for the remainder of the caterer's insurance policy in their policy year.

27) If my vendor (i.e. DJ, photographer, etc) has been contracted for previous lifecycle events at Congregation Beth Israel, does she/he still need to provide proof of her/his certificate of insurance liability coverage naming CBI as an additional insured?

As long as a vendor has provided proof to Congregation Beth Israel of his/her certificate of insurance naming congregation Beth Israel as an "additional insured" (without specific event dates), it will be kept on file and can be used for another member's event for the remainder of the vendor's insurance policy in their policy year.

28) As a member of Congregation Beth Israel, what if I can't afford to pay to rent space at Congregation Beth Israel?

In the case of financial hardship, contact Congregation Beth Israel's President.