

Facility Usage Policy



Updated 12/02/2021

The facilities of Ebenezer Bible Fellowship Church (EBFC) were provided through God's benevolence and by the sacrificial generosity of church members. EBFC desires that its facilities be used for the fellowship of the Body of Christ and to bring God glory. Although the usage of facilities is not open to the public, we make our facilities available for use by approved outside ministries as a witness to our faith, in a spirit of Christian charity, and as a means of demonstrating the Gospel of Jesus Christ in practice.

However, facility usage will not be permitted by persons or groups holding, advancing, or advocating beliefs or practices that conflict with the church's faith or moral teachings, which are summarized in, among other places, the Bible Fellowship Church's Articles of Faith & Order and the EBFC Bylaws. Nor may church facilities be used for activities that contradict, or are deemed inconsistent with, the church's faith or moral teachings. Nor may church facilities be used for personal financial gain for services, activities or products not needed for EBFC's purpose and ministry. The Property Committee is the final decision-maker concerning use of church facilities.

This restricted facility use policy is necessary for two important reasons. First, the church may not, in good conscience, materially cooperate in activities or beliefs that are contrary to its faith. Allowing its facilities to be used for purposes that contradict the church's beliefs would be material cooperation with that activity, and would be a grave violation of the church's faith and religious practice. (2 Cor. 6:14, 1 Thess. 5:22).

Second, it is very important that the church present a consistent message to the community, and that the church staff and members conscientiously maintain that message as part of their witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Allowing facilities to be used by groups or persons who express beliefs or engage in practices contrary to the church's faith would have a severe, negative impact on the message that the church strives to promote. It could also cause confusion and scandal to church members and the community because they may reasonably perceive that by allowing use of our facilities, the church agrees with the beliefs or practices of the persons or groups using its facilities.

This policy applies to all church facilities, regardless of whether the facilities are connected to the church's sanctuary, because the church sees all of its property as holy and set apart to worship God. (Col 3:17)

Approved Users and Priority of Use

The EBFC facility and property is primarily for EBFC Events and activities led by the church, its ministries, and its leaders to promote EBFC's ministry. However it may also be used for Non-EBFC Events that are hosted by organizations supported by EBFC. It can also be used for private events hosted by church members and non-members who are regular attenders. Usage is granted to non-members only if they attend regularly, since regular attendance is evidence that they are faithfully interested in EBFC's ministry. All users and activities must comply with the guidelines in this policy in order for facility usage requests to be approved. Generally, reservations are granted on a first come basis. However, EBFC holds the right to cancel any private reservation to make room for EBFC Events, with at least 30 days' notice (weddings excluded).

1. Groups or persons requesting facility use must affirm that their beliefs and practices and planned uses of the facilities are in harmony with the church's faith and practice.
2. The group or person seeking facility use must submit a signed "Facility Usage Request" form.
3. The group or person seeking facility use must be willing to take responsibility for the facilities and equipment used and must agree to abide by the church's rules of conduct for facility use, as stated below and as described in any additional instructions by church staff.

Scheduling Events

Requests to use the facility for Non-EBFC Events shall be made through the church office by submitting signed and initialed copies of the "Church Facility Use Policy" and "Request for Church Use" forms. The requested rooms will be reserved and the event placed on the church calendar only after it has been approved by the Office Administrator and/or Facility Manager.

Facility Use Hours

- Facilities are available between the hours of 8:00 am and 11:00 pm.
- Saturday night events that require the services of a custodian must end by 9:00 pm.
- Private Events: facilities can be reserved for a maximum of 6 hours (includes set-up & clean-up)
- Outside Ministry Events: facilities can be reserved for a maximum of 7 hours (includes set-up & clean-up)
- Exceptions to Facility Use time limits may be approved by the Facility Manager on a case-by-case basis.

Facility Use Guidelines – for Non-EBFC Events

1. Non-EBFC Events = Private Events, Outside Ministries' Events, and Weddings
2. Anyone seeking facility use must submit initialed and signed copies of the "Facility Usage Policy" and "Facility Usage Request" forms.
3. By signing the above internal documents, the group or person seeking facility use agrees to take responsibility for the facilities and equipment used and agrees to abide by the church's rules of conduct for facility use, as stated in the documents and as described in any additional instructions by church staff.
4. All outside organizations which are faith-based, must submit a written "Statement of Faith" and other outside organizations must submit a written "Purpose Statement" or equivalent.
5. All outside organizations using the facilities must provide proof of liability insurance coverage including EBFC named as additional insured and must not exclude liability for sexual misconduct. Liability insurance coverage must be in the amount of at least \$1,000,000 or higher as determined by the insurance carrier of EBFC when a review is made of the specific use request.
6. Equipment broken or damaged shall be replaced or paid for by the group responsible for the damages.
7. You are responsible for supplying all of your own consumables: paper products, coffee, creamer, beverages, condiments, table covers, etc.
8. Clean-up check lists must be submitted to the Facility Manager at the conclusion of your event. If you are not paying the custodial fee, you are responsible for all clean-up. Please see the clean-up check lists for details.
9. All items you bring to the church are your responsibility to collect and take home with you at the end of your event. EBFC is not liable for lost or misplaced items. Be sure to take all food items with you. Do not leave any leftover food or condiments in the kitchen.

Facility Use Guidelines – for Weddings

1. Any of our pastoral staff may officiate the wedding. The use of another pastor to perform or assist in the ceremony must be approved by EBFC's Board of Elders.
2. Premarital counseling is required of all those who desire to be married at EBFC. Details should be discussed with the officiating pastor.
3. When using a florist, please coordinate the delivery time with the Church Office or Wedding Coordinator.
4. Due to the difficulty of clean-up, rice, bird seed, and confetti are not permitted to be thrown inside or outside of the church building. Flower petals and bubbles are permitted.
5. Hiring musicians is the responsibility of the couple being married. However, EBFC's Worship Pastor can assist in finding musicians if needed.

Facility Use Guidelines – for ALL Events

1. All exterior doors should be locked 20 minutes after the event starts.
2. Groups are restricted to only those areas of the facility that they have reserved.
3. The maximum capacity of the Sanctuary = 400 people, and Fellowship Hall = 350 people. These limits may not be exceeded.
4. Church equipment, such as tables and chairs, must be returned to their original placement, unless arranged otherwise prior to the event.
5. You are responsible for setting up and taking down tables & chairs (unless prior arrangements have been made with the custodian).
6. There shall be no sitting on tables.
7. All decorations must be removed at the conclusion of each event. (All decorations that stay up longer than a single event must be approved by the Property Committee.) Poster putty and removable 3M products are the only approved adhesives for hanging decorations. Do not use pins, nails, screws, tape, or glue.
8. The church's decorations on the sanctuary stage cannot be changed for your event. The church often changes them seasonally, so they may look different on the day of your event than on the day of your reservation.
9. Eating and/or drinking within the Sanctuary is forbidden.
10. No alcohol may be served or consumed on the church property.
11. Smoking is prohibited in any indoor church facility and within 50 feet of any entrance to the building.
12. There shall be no dancing except for the first wedding dance of a newly married couple or the mother/son or father/daughter wedding dance.
13. Any music used must not conflict with our Christian values as stated in the BFC Articles of Faith & Order.
14. There shall be no gambling.
15. Fighting is unacceptable at all times and may result in expulsion from church property.
16. Modest dress is required.
17. There shall be no immoral conduct of any kind. Only appropriate Christian conduct and activities will be permitted on the church property.
18. No pets or animals (except for service animals) are permitted in the building except with special permission.
19. **Musical Instruments:** Only those persons approved by the Worship Pastor may play the musical instruments owned by the church.
20. **Sound Equipment:** Only persons approved by the Worship Pastor may operate the sound system. No video recording from the sound room is permitted unless an approved member of the Worship Ministry is present.
21. Use of the Audio/Video equipment in the Youth Room must be approved by the Youth Pastor.
22. There shall be no use of open flames (such as candles) without permission of the Facility Manager and complete familiarity with the location and use of fire extinguishing equipment.
23. Care should be taken to protect the gym floor. No rideable wheeled toys (like skateboards or scooters) may be used in the gym. Heavy equipment should not be slid across the carpet; instead it needs to have large roller-type wheels (preferably 4" casters or larger).
24. No bicycles, skateboards, roller skates, inline skates, wheeled sneakers, scooters, or riding toys of any kind are permitted to be used in the building or on the exterior steps or rails.
25. Events/activities that are for personal financial gain (not needed for EBFC's purpose and ministry) are not permitted. This includes, but is not limited to, home sales like Tupperware Parties.
26. No furniture, furnishings, or equipment are to be removed from the premises without authorization from the Facility Manager.

These policies are to be observed in order that the facility might be properly maintained for everyone's use. Any group or individual not observing these policies may be denied use of the facility. Thanks for your cooperation.