

2026

WORLD'S CHAMPIONSHIP BAR-B-QUE TEAM HANDBOOK & CONTEST RULES

HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO™
3 NRG PARK
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77054
REVISED: OCTOBER 28, 2025

**THIS HANDBOOK IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. PARTICIPATING TEAMS WILL RECEIVE
ELECTRONIC NOTIFICATION OF ANY CHANGES.**

*** WHAT'S NEW IN THE HANDBOOK FOR 2026 ***

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PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

CONTACT INFORMATION

The following Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo (the “Show”) staff management support the World’s Championship Bar-B-Que Contest (the “Contest”) operations and are available to assist teams as they plan their participation in the Contest.

Dalinda Cauble, Management Coordinator
Brooke Henderson, Staff Coordinator, Operations & BBQ
Kennedy Gross, Coordinator, Operations & BBQ

WCBBQ Office
3 NRG Park
Houston, Texas 77054
wcbbq@rodeohouston.com
Phone: 832-667-1210

The 2026 World’s Championship Bar-B-Que Committee (the “Committee”) management team is made up of the following dedicated Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo volunteers:

David Stone.....Officer in Charge

Chad Lyons Chairman

Peter Johnson Division Chairman

Dana Nash, Vice Chairman, Safety & Security
Bobby Butzke, Vice Chairman, Beverage Stands
John Stone, Vice Chairman, Beverage Inventory
Jonathan Lenz, Vice Chairman, Command Center

Jake Busceme Division Chairman

Sheldon Hodgkiss, Vice Chairman, Logistics
Brad Thompson, Vice Chairman, Garden Operations
Jennifer Williams, Vice Chairman, Chuckwagon
Matt Sawyer, Vice Chairman, Equipment

Mike Mitchell..... Division Chairman

Kris McGinty, Vice Chairman, Contest & Judging
John DeFrancesco, Vice Chairman, Coach’s Corner
Ashley Smith, Vice Chairman, Publicity
Laura Williams, Vice Chairman, Jr. Cook-off

Brian Vogt.....Division Chairman

Amy Phillips, Vice Chairman, Check-in & Information

Shayne Stinson, Vice Chairman, Gates & VIP Parking

Valerie Lacy, Vice Chairman, Special Events & Donors

Michele McDaniel, Vice Chairman, Hospitality

Rob Connor, Vice Chairman, Bands & Special Events

Jimmy Shuford Sponsorship Coordinator

Tess Casbeer..... Coordinator, Roster Management & Service Pin

Sarah Doran Coordinator, External Communications & Events

Brian Dunwell..... Co-Coordinator, Conex and Rental Equipment

Todd Heath Co-Coordinator, Conex and Rental Equipment

TEAM INVITATIONS

Invitations to the World's Championship Bar-B-Que Contest are extended on an annual basis at the sole discretion of the Show. Invitations are emailed to the registered Team Owner and are non-transferable.

Teams who receive an e-mailed invitation to participate must complete the annual World's Championship Bar-B-Que Contest Online License Agreement (the "License Agreement") on the Show's website by the due date.

- Only complete License Agreements will be accepted.
- License Agreements may not be modified in whole or part.
- **Full payment** must accompany the License Agreement; extensions to pay the entry fees will not be granted.

When completing the License Agreement, teams are required to:

1. Electronically sign the License Agreement.
 - For teams owned by individuals, the registered Team Owner must complete the License Agreement online.
 - For teams owned by a company, the License Agreement must be completed by an individual duly authorized to do so, and who is empowered to bind the company to the terms of the License Agreement. The team must also list a main point of contact who can be reached, if needed, by committee or Show management.
2. Complete or update all team contact information (Team Coordinator and Chief Cook), by entering them in the "Current Contacts" section under the "Manage Account" tab in your online account.
3. Submit the completed License Agreement and fee online by the due date.

- Failure to meet the annual deadline for submitting required forms and payment may result in forfeiture of the invitation.
- Partial or invalid payment (e.g., a returned check or declined credit card) may result in forfeiture of the invitation.

Special Invitations

The Show extends invitations to the winners of Rodeo Austin, the San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo Bar-B-Que Cook-off, the Jack Daniel's World Championship Invitational Barbecue, and the American Royal World Series of Barbecue to compete in Champions Row. In exchange, these contests extend invitations to the winner of the World's Championship Bar-B-Que Contest. The Team Name, Team Owner, and the Chief Cook provided to the Show as the winner by the participating reciprocity contests must be the same that competes in Champions Row. Similarly, the winner of the World's Championship Bar-B-Que Contest must compete at these reciprocal competitions under the same Team Name with the same Team Owner and Chief Cook as listed in the online team account at the time they are named Grand Champion Overall. We will not allow any exceptions. Each team in Champions Row must follow all Meat Judging rules as listed in the Contest Information section of this handbook. Each team has the option for one (1) turn-in for the Open Contest and one (1) turn-in for the Dutch Oven Dessert Contest. We request that all teams be available for media opportunities as it relates to Champions Row.

If the winner of the previous year's World's Championship Bar-B-Que Contest participated on a special invitation, they will automatically receive an invitation to the current year's Contest so the team may defend their title. If the winner of the previous year's Contest is a regular team (not on a special invitation), they will also be offered a space in Champions Row in addition to their regular team space and the foregoing special rules will also apply.

If the team has won at one of the above mentioned contests and already has a space in the WCBBQ Contest, or receives an invitation to Champions Row by winning the previous year's Contest, that team must follow all Meat Judging rules as listed in the Contest Information section of this handbook. All meat entries may be cooked in Champions Row by the previous year's winning Chief Cook.

The regular WCBBQ team space and the Champions Row space are considered one team. The Champions Row space does not grant additional meat entries. No exceptions will be made. The team has the option to turn in one (1) entry for the Open Contest and one (1) entry for the Dutch Oven Dessert, from either Champions Row or the regular team space. Any and all discrepancies of a condition above should be submitted in writing to the WCBBQ Office (wcbmq@rodeohouston.com) and will be handled on a case-by-case basis. All final decisions will be decided by the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo and the WCBBQ Committee.

Space sizes for special-invitation teams will vary depending on the number of participating teams.

TEAM OWNERSHIP

Team Owner

Each team must have a registered Team Owner. The Team Owner may be an Area Go Texan County, a Houston Metro Go Texan Committee, an individual, or a company.

- Before designating a Team Owner, each team should ensure familiarity with and acceptance of the responsibilities of team ownership as described throughout this Handbook.
- Team ownership does not equate to or contract as space ownership. Participation in the Contest is by invitation, on an annual basis, at the sole discretion of the Show.

Area Go Texan Team Ownership

Area Go Texan County invitations are extended by the Show on an annual basis. The invitations are e-mailed to the current Area Go Texan County Ambassador. Each County may select their annual team representative. The License Agreement must be signed and executed by a representative of the selected team.

Houston Metro Go Texan Team Ownership

Houston Metro Go Texan Committee invitations are extended by the Show on an annual basis. The Houston Metro Go Texan Committee will designate the teams to receive an invitation, and the Show will e-mail the invitation to the selected teams. The License Agreement must be signed and executed by a representative of the selected team.

Individual Ownership

Individual-owned teams are provided a one-time opportunity, at the time of their first participation in the Contest, to declare the registered Team Owner.

- Teams owned by an individual are required to list a Team Coordinator on their team's online account; the Team Coordinator may be different from the Team Owner.
- Changes to the Team Coordinator should be made via the team's online account at the time the License Agreement is signed.

Company Ownership

Company-owned teams are provided a one-time opportunity, at the time of their first participation in the Contest, to declare the registered Team Owner.

- Teams owned by a company are required to list a Team Coordinator on their team's online account at the time the License Agreement is signed.
- The Team Coordinator must be an employee of the Team Owner and must be authorized to perform legal and financial transactions on behalf of the Team Owner.
- The Team Coordinator will serve as the primary contact and decision maker for the team.
- Changes to the Team Coordinator should be made via the team's online account.

Team Owner Responsibility

The Team Owner and Team Coordinator will be held responsible for the conduct of team members, guests, and any persons who are or have been in the team space (collectively, the "Team Representatives"). Any behavior deemed inappropriate by the Show may result in immediate expulsion from the Contest and forfeiture of future invitations.

The Team Owner or Team Coordinator must be physically present and available to Contest and Show management during the Contest operations, including setup and teardown periods.

Changes to Team Ownership

Requests for changes to team ownership must be submitted via email by the current Team Owner to the WCBBQ Office before August 15 of the year preceding the Contest. If the Team Owner is a company, the email should be received from the company's Owner, President, CEO, or highest ranking official. The WCBBQ staff, Committee chairman, and officer-in-charge will review the request, and teams will be notified of the decision. All team ownership requests must be emailed to wcbq@rodeohouston.com.

Changes to Team Name

A team may change the team name by emailing a request with the new team name to the WCBBQ Office (wcbq@rodeohouston.com) **prior to signing** the annual License Agreement. The Show will notify the Team Owner within 30 days of the License Agreement due date whether the change has been approved or not.

Teams may not have the same or substantially similar name. In the event a team requests a name already being used by another Contest team, the request will be denied. If a team splits, the registered Team Owner at the time of the split will be allowed to retain the team name.

Team Relationships

Teams are encouraged to inform the Show about relationships with neighboring teams. Sometimes, utility, safety, or other issues require teams to be relocated. It is to the team's benefit to make the Show aware of relationships so that they may be taken into consideration when evaluating space changes or relocations.

Team relationships must be documented by both teams to be deemed valid.

Teams wishing to combine or share space must receive pre-approval from the Show. Requests to combine or share space must be submitted via the Team Relationship Form by October 1. The form can be found on the team's online account. Requests will be reviewed by the WCBBQ staff, Committee chairman, and officer in charge, and teams will be notified via email to check their team's online account regarding the decision. The Team Relationship form must be submitted yearly by both teams in question.

HLSR WEBSITE

The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo website is **www.rodeohouston.com**. All important Contest information can be found on the Exhibitors & Contestants → WCBBQ page of the website, including:

- the Team Application (available May 1 – July 31)
- the Team Handbook and Contest Rules
- the Team Login site
- the Contest Calendar (includes important dates and deadlines)

We will add additional information to this page as it becomes available, including maps, order forms, and links for service providers, etc. Please utilize this resource as you prepare to participate in the Contest.

ONLINE LICENSE MANAGEMENT

All license agreements and payments must be processed through your team's online account on the WCBBQ Team Login site on or before October 1, 2025. If you have trouble utilizing the website, please contact the WCBBQ Office for assistance.

To access the WCBBQ Team Login site, please visit **www.rodeohouston.com**, find the Exhibitors & Contestants section, and select the WCBBQ icon. Once on the main WCBBQ page, scroll down to the bottom of the page and click the orange "Team Login" button to enter the secure team online system.

CONTEST HOURS

The World's Championship Bar-B-Que Contest is open to the general public and guests of team members at the following times:

Date	Time
Thursday, February 26, 2026	5 p.m. to 11 p.m.
Friday, February 27, 2026	12 noon to 11 p.m.
Saturday, February 28, 2026	9 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Only team members engaged in setup or teardown activities may be inside the Contest grounds when the Contest is not open to the general public. **Teams may not host public or private events in their space prior to 5 p.m. on Thursday, February 26, 2026, unless they obtain advance approval from the Show.** Any team wishing to host an event outside the public Contest hours must contact the WCBBQ Office (wcbqq@rodeohouston.com) to request approval for the event. **All requests must be received by February 1, 2026.** If approved, the team may be required to:

1. Pay a fee.
2. Sign a License Agreement.
3. Provide insurance coverage specific to the event. The policy provided to the team for the WCBBQ Contest dates will not suffice as coverage for the event.
4. Purchase admission tickets and parking passes for the event attendees.

DUE DATES

The following items are due to the WCBBQ Office on or before the specified dates:

Date Due	What is Due
August 15, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Team ownership change requests
October 1, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• License Agreement and fees• Team Relationship Form (if applicable)
November 1, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Variance Request Form (if applicable)
December 1, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RV Parking Order Form
February 1, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Beverage Order Form• Parking and Admission Tickets Order (if applicable)• Team Security Form (REQUIRED by all teams)• Tent Information Form (REQUIRED by all teams)• Special Group Events Request Form (if applicable)

INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

A Special Events General Liability policy (the "Insurance Policy") will be provided insuring all teams. A hard copy of the certificate of insurance evidencing proof of coverage will be provided upon request. The Insurance Policy will provide each team with the minimum insurance requirements for participation in the 2026 Contest. Teams desiring higher limits of coverage should consult with their insurance agent. A portion of each team's entry fee is used to purchase this Insurance Policy. Certificates of insurance evidencing coverage for teams from any other source will not be accepted. The insurance coverage provided is not an accident, group-medical, or workers' compensation policy for team members.

LEGAL ENFORCEMENT AND SUMMARY

The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo management reserves the final, absolute right to interpret rules and regulations and to arbitrarily settle and determine all matters, questions, or differences in regard thereto, or otherwise arising out of, connected with, or incident to the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo and its activities. It further reserves the right to determine unforeseen matters not covered by these rules and to amend or add to these rules as in its judgment as it may determine necessary.

1. **Failure of any Team Representative to abide by all rules, regulations, specifications, guidelines, and requirements as set forth in the 2026 World's Championship Bar-B-Que Team Handbook and Contest Rules may, at the sole discretion of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, result in forfeiture of all monies, rights, and privileges.**
2. By this reference, the Handbook is incorporated into and becomes a part of the License Agreement. By signing the License Agreement, the Team Owner agrees to abide by the provisions of this Handbook. It is also agreed and assured that the Team Owner has made all Team Representatives aware of the contents of the Handbook.
3. **Any incident of non-compliance with any part of this Handbook is considered a breach of agreement and may be cause for immediate expulsion from the Contest.** Violations of the rules and regulations set forth in this Handbook will result in:
 - a. First Violation: verbal and written warning
 - b. Second Violation: \$1000.00 fine, payable upon assessment
 - c. Third Violation: \$2000.00 fine, payable upon assessment
4. Show policy promotes equal opportunities and participation for everyone with no distinctions based on race, color, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, national origin, or other considerations. Notwithstanding other provisions included in this Handbook, violation of this policy could result in immediate termination of the Team's License Agreement, requiring the Team to vacate leased space and forfeit all monies paid to date.
5. The various logos of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo and RODEOHOUSTON are registered trademarks and may NOT be used under any circumstances **without prior written permission** from the marketing division of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.

6. Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo management reserves the right to establish and enforce whatever rules are necessary for the regulation of the Contest.
7. Team Representatives must comply with all rules, regulations, and requirements of the Fire Marshal, the City of Houston Health Department and any governmental entity having jurisdiction over these premises.

PLANNING YOUR PARTICIPATION

BEVERAGE & ICE PURCHASES

Special Rules for Beer, Cider, and Hard Seltzer Purchases

Violating either rule below will result in revocation of your right to participate in the current and future Contests.

1. Teams are required to purchase all beer, cider and/or hard seltzer that will be served or consumed during the Contest through the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.
 - No outside beer, cider and/or hard seltzer may be brought on the Contest grounds for use during the Contest. **(Teams may bring in a limited amount of beverages, including alcoholic beverages, during setup to be consumed during setup only. A limited amount of beverages is recognized as an amount that will fit in one (1) cooler approximately 60 quarts in size, with the lid closed, per team.)**
 - No keg beer, cider and/or hard seltzer is permitted.
2. Distributors contracted by the Show may not donate beer to teams participating in the Contest.

Teams are subject to inspection by Committee representatives and Show officials. Those found in violation will be asked to remove the beer from the property and may forfeit future invitations to participate.

Other Beverages

Teams may bring hard liquor (a.k.a distilled spirits), wine and non-alcoholic beverages in from outside the Contest grounds. Soda, water, and mixers may also be purchased from the Show.

1. Glass bottles/containers of any kind must be kept inside the team space. No glass is allowed in the general Contest area.
2. Teams are encouraged to bring in adequate supplies of these items before the Contest starts and during the Friday and Saturday morning restocking times (see page 52).

Beverage and Ice Orders

Teams are encouraged to preorder beverages (beer, soft drinks, water, and mixers) and ice tickets.

1. The Beverage Order Form will be available on the team's online account beginning December 1, 2025.
2. The due date for preordering beverages for the 2026 Contest is February 1, 2026, as specified on the Beverage Order Form in your online account. **Preorders will not be accepted after the deadline.**
3. If additional product is needed after the preorder deadline, the product may be purchased on the Contest grounds at the Beverage Inventory sales center.
4. Partial or invalid payment (e.g., a returned check or declined credit card) for beverage and ice purchases may result in forfeiture of the team space and future invitations.

Beverage and Ice Delivery

Preordered beverages will be delivered by the WCBBQ Committee on Wednesday and Thursday of the Contest week, after the team has checked in with their Contestant Supervisor. An authorized team member, over the age of 21, must be available to receive the order and sign the delivery ticket.

On-site Beverage Sales

1. Beverages may be purchased on-site at the Beverage Inventory sales center. Operating hours are as follows: *no deliveries after 6pm, carryout only*

Date	Time
Thursday, February 26, 2026	2 p.m. – 10 p.m.
Friday, February 27, 2026	8 a.m. – 10 p.m.
Saturday, February 28, 2026	8 a.m. – 10 p.m.

2. Beverages may be delivered by HLSR contracted vendors during the following hours:

Date	Time
Thursday, February 26, 2026	2 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Friday, February 27, 2026	8 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Saturday, February 28, 2026	8 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

3. Beverages must be purchased by the case only. Available products typically include:

Club Soda	Coors Light	Budlight
Coke Classic	Coors Banquet	Budweiser
Dasani (20 oz)	Dos Equis Lager	Modelo
Diet Coke	Lonestar	Michelob Ultra
Sprite	Karbach Love Street	Topo Chico Hard Seltzer
Tonic Water	Miller Lite	Topo Chico Ranch Water
Blue Moon	Shiner Bock	
Blue Moon(non-alcoholic)	Sol	

4. A full list of available products can be found on the Beverage Order Form task in the team's online account.
5. Payment must be by cash, check, or credit card.
6. All product is sold on a NO RETURN, NO EXCHANGE basis.

On-site Ice Sales

During Contest Setup

Teams may bring ice and the associated freezer equipment from any source during setup only.

1. Thursday at noon is the cut-off deadline for outside vendors to deliver ice.
2. After noon on Thursday, NO ice or equipment may be brought into the Contest area by a team or ice provider, other than the Contest ice provider.

During Contest

1. After noon on Thursday, all ice must be purchased through the Committee.
2. Ice can be purchased at the Beverage Inventory sales center (cash, check, or credit card), at the Ice Hub sales center (cash only), or from the Garden and Westridge beverage stands.
3. The ice truck will start its route through the Contest area at the approximate times below, crowd permitting:

Date	Route Starts at:
Wednesday, February 25, 2026	1:30 p.m.
Thursday, February 26, 2026	9:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.
Friday, February 27, 2026	9:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.
Saturday, February 28, 2026	9:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

4. The Beverage Inventory sales center will be open to purchase ice tickets at the following times:
All day Wednesday, and Thursday until noon will be cash/check only

Date	Time
Wednesday, February 25, 2026	12 noon – 6 p.m.
Thursday, February 26, 2026	8 a.m. – 10 p.m.
Friday, February 27, 2026	8 a.m. – 10 p.m.
Saturday, February 28, 2026	8 a.m. – 10 p.m.

5. The Ice Hub sales centers will be open at the following times:

Date	Time
Thursday, February 26, 2026	9 a.m. – 9 p.m.
Friday, February 27, 2026	9 a.m. – 9 p.m.
Saturday, February 28, 2026	9 a.m. – 9 p.m.

6. Ice will be sold from the Garden and Westridge beverage stands at the following times:

Date	Time
Thursday, February 26, 2026	5 p.m. – 10 p.m.
Friday, February 27, 2026	12 noon – 10 p.m.
Saturday, February 28, 2026	9 a.m. – 10 p.m.

CHIEF COOKS' MEETING

There will be a Chief Cooks' Meeting held during the Contest at the Miller Lite Garden Stage on Thursday, February 26, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. All Chief Cooks are required to attend. Any other pertinent information will be emailed to Owners and Team Coordinators prior to the Contest. All forms, links, and contact information for Contest service providers (power, waste management, ice, plumbing, and propane) will be provided on the main WCBBQ page as soon as available.

ADMISSION TO CONTEST GROUNDS

Anyone entering the Contest area, including team members and team donors, must have an admission ticket or Chief Cook wristband. A separate admission ticket is required for each day of the Contest, Thursday through Saturday.

Team Owners are responsible for ensuring that all Team Representatives are aware that admission tickets are required to enter the grounds. If a Team Representative is reported by the Gatekeepers Committee as attempting to enter without a ticket or harassing a Gatekeepers volunteer, the Team Owner will be subject to disciplinary action, including fines and up to revocation of the team invitation.

General Admission

1. Admission tickets for the World's Championship Bar-B-Que contest are \$30 for ages 13 years and older, \$10 for ages 3 to 12 years, and are not required for children ages 2 years and younger.
2. Tickets are not required for HLSR committee members wearing their current-year volunteer gold badge. Committee members may bring in one guest each when wearing their current-year gold badge.
3. Tickets are not required for guests presenting an HLSR current-year season pass or life-member card; however, they may not bring in a guest using their season pass or life-member card.

Complimentary Admission

1. As part of the team entry fee, the team will receive thirty (30) complimentary, one-time admission tickets per team space, regardless of the dimensions of the space. No admission tickets are provided for variance spaces.
2. As part of the team entry fee, the team will receive four (4) Chief Cook wristbands per team for in-and-out access for cooks or other team members.
 - Wristbands must be connected around the wrist and worn by the same person for the duration of the Contest.
 - Wristbands are the only form of team re-entry and will be accepted at all public gates.
3. Complimentary admission tickets and wristbands may NOT be resold by teams at either the discounted or full price. **Any team reselling admission tickets or wristbands will be banned from this and all future Contests.**
4. Complimentary admission tickets and wristbands may NOT be reproduced by teams at either the discounted or full price. **Any team reproducing admission tickets or wristbands will be banned from this and all future Contests.**

Discounted Admission Tickets

The Team Owner, Team Coordinator, and Chief Cook may pre-purchase additional admission tickets at a flat rate of \$22.50 per ticket by purchasing them through your AXS link found in your online team account by the February 1st deadline.

1. After the deadline, admission tickets will be available at the regular price of \$30 per ticket at the following:
 - online at www.rodeohouston.com
 - the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Ticket Office
 - the entrance gates of the WCBBQ Contest
2. **Admission tickets may NOT be resold by teams at either the discounted or full price. Any team reselling admission tickets will be banned from this and all future Contests.**
3. Admission tickets may NOT be reproduced by teams at either the discounted or full price. **Any team reproducing admission tickets will be banned from this and all future Contests.**

Team Guest Invitations

Requirements for Invitations

1. Guest invitations to team spaces must clearly state that a separate admission ticket is required for entrance onto the Contest grounds.
2. Guest invitations should indicate a team space number, Contest street name, and official team name.
3. Guest invitations may not include any of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo logos or “marks” without prior permission from the Show. Send requests to the WCBBQ Office (wcbbq@rodeohouston.com).
4. Teams may not create tickets as entry to their space that in any way resemble NRG Park Admission Tickets as distributed by the Show.
5. Guest invitations should indicate the invitation is not a Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo credential and guest must enter through the public security lanes of bag check when entering Contest grounds. Team invitations do not provide the bearer access to the “credential only” lane in the bag check area at the entry gates to the Contest.
6. Guest invitations may not include language indicating open or free bar service, including but not limited to phrases like “open bar” or “complimentary bar service.”

Distribution of Invitations

1. Team Owners are liable for the behavior of all persons entering their team space and should manage the guest invitation and donor solicitation process accordingly.
2. Teams will limit the number of guest invitations distributed such that the number of invited guests does not:
 - exceed the occupancy for the team space; or
 - cause lines to enter the team space to extend into the public walkways.
3. Teams may only host events in their team space during the hours that the Contest is open to the general public (see page 13).
4. Teams with questions should contact the WCBBQ Office for clarification.

Tips to Avoid Counterfeit Invitations

It is the responsibility of each team to monitor the invitations to their areas and determine which guests will be permitted access. The following are tips to help teams avoid counterfeit invitations:

1. Print tickets on high-quality card stock to which counterfeiters may not have easy access.
2. Print invitations on safety paper to prevent copying.
3. Imprint invitations with a foil stamp, hologram, or color photo.
4. Include language on the invitation that makes counterfeiting of the ticket legally actionable.
5. Train the team members at the door to spot counterfeit passes.
 - Look for inaccuracies or alterations to the ticket.
 - Look for color variations from the original ticket.
 - Check for spelling mistakes on the ticket.
 - Check the quality of the printing. Fake tickets can sometimes have blurred printing as a result of using a cheap printer or copier. Real tickets should have clear, crisp print.
6. Search for online postings selling team invitations (e.g., Craigslist, eBay, Facebook) and respond to prevent the sale of duplicate invitations.
7. Use a printed guest list at the door to verify invitation holders.
8. Exchange the ticket for a wristband at the door to avoid guests passing back their ticket to another person.
9. Use barcoded tickets and portable ticket scanners to ensure the barcode is not used more than once.

PARKING

Vehicle Parking Lots

Advance Sales

1. Parking passes may be purchased in advance for NRG Park Green and Teal Lots. Parking passes are not sold for the HLSR 610 Lot.
2. Parking passes are required Wednesday through Saturday of Contest week in the NRG Park Green, Teal, Yellow and Purple Lots.
3. Parking orders are due February 1, 2025. The AXS link to purchase parking and admission tickets can be found on the team's online account.
 - Preordered parking is limited to 15 passes per day, per team space.
 - Passes are \$25 per pass, per day.
 - Passes in the NRG Park Green and Teal Lots are assigned on a first-come basis as the preorders are received.
 - All pre-ordered parking will be delivered digitally to your AXS account. RV passes will be mailed to the purchaser after January 1.
 - Parking may not be returned or exchanged.
4. **Parking passes may NOT be resold by teams at either the discounted or full price. Any team reselling parking passes will be banned from this and all future Contests.**

5. **Parking passes may not be copied or reproduced in any fashion. Any team reproducing parking passes will be banned from this and all future Contests.**

Event Day Sales

1. Parking is sold on a first-come basis as available during the Contest.
 - Wednesday: Parking is available for purchase in the Yellow Lot. Parking is also available in the 610 Lot at no charge. The 610 Lot may be accessed via Gate 19 off of West Bellfort Ave.
 - Thursday, Friday, Saturday: Parking is available for purchase in the Teal, Yellow, Purple and 610 Lots.
2. Parking is paid upon entering the lot; the fee is \$28. As a reminder, NRG Park is cashless.

RV Parking

610 Lot

Teams may purchase RV parking in the 610 Lot, which is directly across Interstate 610 from the Contest grounds at NRG Park.

1. Two hundred and fifty (250) spaces are available, to be sold on a first-come basis for \$150 per pass. Each team will be allowed to purchase up to four (4) RV parking passes per space. If there are RV parking passes remaining after the deadline, we will open sales back up on a first-come basis.
2. Each team will be able to purchase a maximum of four (4) parking passes per team space.
3. No hook-ups, utilities, or waste management services are provided at the RV lot.
4. One (1) passenger vehicle may park with each RV at no additional charge.
5. Teams may purchase one 3-day Green Lot pass with each RV pass purchased for \$75.
6. Parking orders are due December 1, 2025 and must be submitted online. The Parking and Ticket Order Form can be found on the team's online account starting September 1, 2025, followed by completion of the License Agreement and Fees.
7. If there are remaining RV Parking spaces available after the due date, we will open it back up on a first come first served basis.

General

1. RVs may be moved in at the following times:

Date	Times
Tuesday, February 24, 2026	12 noon – 7 p.m.
Wednesday, February 25, 2026	9 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Thursday, February 26, 2026	8 a.m. – noon.

2. RVs not moved in by Thursday, February 26, 2026, at noon will not be allowed on property.
3. RVs must be removed from the 610 Lot by 12 noon, Sunday, March 1, 2026.
4. **RV parking passes may NOT be resold by teams at either the discounted or full price. Any team reselling RV parking passes will be banned from this and all future Contests.**

5. **RV parking passes may not be copied or reproduced in any fashion. Any team reproducing RV parking passes will be banned from this and all future Contests.**
6. RV parking passes may not be returned after purchase.

Equipment Trailer Parking

Equipment trailers may be parked, on a first come first served basis (maximum 2 per team), in the 610 lot by no later than 12 noon on Thursday, February 26, 2026. Access through Gate 19 off Bellfort St. All trailers will need to be secured with a tongue lock. Please park only in the area marked by BBQ signage.

Team Parking

Reed Road Shuttle Service

Teams may park passenger vehicles at the Reed Road Lot free of charge. This lot has extended hours for shuttle service and is less than four miles from NRG Park. A designated shuttle provides free round-trip service for WCBBQ team members with the proper team credentials. Team credentials are required of all team members wishing to ride the shuttle for free.

1. Shuttle service is provided 5 a.m. to 2 a.m., Thursday, February 26 through Saturday, February 28, 2026.
2. The shuttle may be boarded in the southwest corner of the Reed Road Lot or at the designated building positioned in the center of Lots 2 and 3, closest to the pedestrian exit gate.
3. Passenger drop-off and pick-up at NRG Park will be at the Rodeo Express Bus Tent (located between Naomi and Holly Hall):
 - WCBBQ participants will utilize the “Special Events Shuttle” bus lane to return back to the Reed Road Lot.

610 Parking Lot

Teams may park in the 610 Lot free of charge during move-in on Tuesday thru Thursday before the Contest opens. This lot opens at 12 noon on Tuesday, February 24, 7 a.m. on Wednesday, February 25, and 7a.m. on Thursday, February 26. Team vehicles must be removed from the move-in lot by 2 p.m. Thursday, February 26. Teams may access the lot through Gate 19 on West Bellfort Ave. Team vehicles must not park in the lot accessed via Gate 20.

Parking in Team Spaces

1. A team may park up to two passenger vehicles or one RV within its team space.
2. The vehicles must be parked no later than **12 noon on Thursday.**
3. The vehicle may not be moved or leave the team space between 12 noon on Thursday and 4 a.m. on Sunday.
4. Movement outside the team space on Sunday is subject to the move-out rules and schedule.

SPECIAL TEAM EVENTS

1. Teams may not utilize the public walkways for team activities (games, etc.) after 4 p.m. on Thursday and Friday and after 12 noon on Saturday.
2. Teams may only host special events during hours the Contest is open to the general public.

3. All teams hosting special events during Contest hours must submit a request on the Special Group Events Form to the WCBBQ Office by February 1, 2026. The Special Group Events Form can be found on the team's online account and should be submitted online.

SAFETY & SECURITY

1. Safety and security in and around the immediate perimeter of the team space is the sole responsibility of the Team Owner.
2. The Show is not responsible for theft of or damage to the property of a team, its members, or guests, nor injury to team members or public who are in or have been in the space of a team. Teams must sign the License Agreement acknowledging such.
3. **Teams serving alcohol (including beer and wine) in their team space or wishing to deny general public access to their space must secure their spaces with the appropriate number of uniformed peace officers licensed by the state of Texas unless the team meets ALL the following criteria:**
 - the team operates in a single 40' x 40' space and has no relationships with teams in other spaces, **AND**
 - there are never more than 75 people in the team space at the same time, **AND**
 - the team serves only beer and wine.
4. Teams qualifying for the exemption outlined in item 3 will immediately lose the exemption if there is a security incident in the team space at any point in time during setup, the Contest, or teardown.
5. It is recommended that teams required to secure officers for their space have a minimum of one (1) officer per each 40x40 space.
6. The officers must be on duty during all hours that the Contest is open to the public.
7. Teams must submit online the Team Security Form by February 1, 2026. The Team Security Form can be found on the Team's online account and should be submitted online.
 - All requested information on the Team Security Form must be provided.
 - All teams are required to submit the Team Security Form whether "exempt" or not. If your team is exempt, please simply fill out the form, entering "N/A" or "not applicable" on each required line and 000-000-0000 in the "phone number" field.
 - All requests are subject to approval by the Show.

DESIGNING YOUR TEAM SPACE

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Show provides only the space and minimum electricity (40 amps); each team is responsible for providing all other equipment and supplies.

Boundaries

Teams must fit all structures, equipment, supplies, etc., within the boundaries of their assigned team space.

1. Teams may not extend, under **any** circumstances, into any utility alleys created between, behind, or beside team spaces. **All** power alleys and easements must be left clear and open at all times, including during move-in.
2. Teams may not store supplies, equipment, etc., outside their assigned space before or during the Contest.
3. Any encroachment outside the assigned team space requires an approved variance request.
4. If a tent is to be staked, a team representative must be present while the tent is being erected to ensure the tent is placed correctly in the space. If a tent is set up outside a team's space, the team bears all responsibility for correcting the placement. If a team has a question about placement, they should contact their Contestant Supervisor or the WCBBQ Logistics Subcommittee.

Size

The majority of the Contest spaces are 40' x 40'. All spaces are assigned by the Committee chairman at the sole discretion of the Show. Space assignments are not guaranteed from year-to-year, and teams may be moved and/or team space reduced at the sole discretion of the Show.

1. A single team may occupy no more than four spaces.
2. No combination of teams may occupy more than four spaces.

General

1. No two-story structures are permitted. Teams with pits that have a second level must block the second level.
2. All facades or temporary structures must be secured to the tent using metal straps.
3. Balloons, inflatables, and/or other aerial objects may not be used by teams for identification, decoration, advertising, or any other purpose.
4. Holes, dug pits, or open flames in boxes are not permitted. All pits must be diapered to prevent damage to the surface of the parking lot.
5. The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo is a non-profit organization and is precluded from engaging in political activity. Additionally, the Rodeo does not tolerate discriminatory practices. Therefore, any signage, décor and public engagement activities must adhere to the Show's non-political and non-discriminatory practices. Any materials, décor and/or anything visible to the general public must be appropriate for a public audience of all ages,

racism and ethnicities and may not consist of material that may detract from the general character of the Rodeo. This includes, but is not limited to, items having a political, discriminatory, racial or lewd nature, such as the Confederate flag and items for/against political parties or candidates. The Committee Chairman and Rodeo management reserves the right to remove any of such signage, décor and displays, and end any such activity deemed to detract from the general character of the Rodeo.

POWER

The Contest area is powered by a grid of generators, junction boxes, and conduit. The grid is set and maintained by a contractor ("Power Provider") selected by the Show.

Power Alleys

Power alleys must remain clear and free at all times. Teams may not store or set equipment, supplies, vehicles, etc., in these areas at any time or block access to a power alley. Any team blocking a power alley or access to a power alley will be asked to clear it without objection.

Power Loads

1. The Show will provide two (2) 20-amp 110-volt quad boxes for each team space.
2. Each team will have two (2) individual circuits (w/ GFI protection) for their team space.
 - Teams must order enough power to support the operations in their tent (see #5 below for common power requirements).
 - If a team setup pulls more power than available, the breaker will automatically trip in that individual team space ONLY.
 - To remedy a tripped breaker:
 - a. Unplug all items from the circuit.
 - b. Push the GFI button to ensure it isn't a GFI that needs to be reset. If it doesn't reset, then...
 - c. Call your Contestant Supervisor or the WCBQB Command Center to have the power provider reset the breaker.
 - d. Begin plugging in the necessary items individually, leaving off at least one item so as to reduce the load on the circuit.
 - To remedy a tripped GFI plug:
 - a. Unplug all items from the circuit.
 - b. Push the GFI button to reset the circuit.
 - c. Begin plugging in the necessary items individually, but do NOT plug in the item that tripped the circuit.
 - If more electricity is needed, contact the Power Provider.
 - Pricing for power increases significantly on the Contest grounds, and availability is not guaranteed.
3. Teams utilizing HVAC units must have pre-approval from Show management. Teams will provide the following information via email (wcbqb@hlsr.com) no later than January 1, 2026: team name, space number(s), number of HVAC units to be used. HVAC units must fit within

the approved team space. Units may not take up space within power alleys. Representatives from the Power Provider must be present when units are plugged in and turned on to ensure proper power loads are available.

4. Outside generators that are not a permanent part of the pit or motor home are **not** allowed.
5. Examples of common power requirements:

Barrel Fan - 8 amps
 RV or Travel Trailer – 20 amps
 Coffee Maker - 10 amps
 PA Systems - 17 amps
 Margarita Machine – 20 amps

Lamps and Lighting - 3 amps
 Neon Lights - 5 amps
 Microwave Ovens - 8 amps
 Radio & Stereo - 4 amps
 Refrigerator - 13 amps

Power Services

1. To receive the discounted price and to guarantee availability, additional power must be purchased through the Power Provider before January 15, 2026.
 - Requests for additional power are made on a form, provided by the Power Provider, and all payments are made directly to the Power Provider.
 - The WCBBQ link to the Power Provider's website will be posted on the Show's website on November 1, 2025.
 - Failure to pay the Power Provider, including partial or invalid payments (e.g., a returned check or declined credit card) may result in forfeiture of future invitations to participate in the Contest.
2. Pricing for power is as follows:

Amps	Volts	Phases	Description/Connector Type	Cost Per Circuit
20	110	1	Standard Edison Circuit	\$214.25
20	220	1	6-20R Plug	\$321.37
20	208	3	L21-20	\$321.37
30	110	1	RV Connector	\$374.93
30	220	1	L6-30	\$374.93
30	220	1	L14-30	\$374.93
50	220	1	RV Connector	\$535.61
60	208	1	Cam-lok Connector	\$803.42
60	208	3	Cam-lok Connector	\$803.42
100	208	1	Cam-lok Connector	\$803.42
100	208	3	Cam-lok Connector	\$803.42
200	208	3	Cam-lok Connector	\$1,285.47
100	480	3	Cam-lok Connector	\$1,606.84
200	480	3	Cam-lok Connector	\$2,678.06
50	480	3	15 Ton HVAC w/ Electrical*	\$3,642.17
100	480	3	30 Ton HVAC w/ Electrical*	\$4,927.64

3. **Additional power purchased after January 15, 2026, will cost 1.5 times the rate above (i.e., 20 amps for \$310.50). Power requested at the Contest will be charged at double the price above (i.e., 20 amps for \$414.00).**
4. The Show's 2026 exclusive Power Provider is:
Aggreko, LLC
For Technical and Sales Questions:
Attn: Jamie Lenehan
jamie.lenehan@aggreko.com

For Website Questions:
Attn: April McBride
april.mcbride@aggreko.com

PROPANE AND PLUMBING

The Show will designate a contractor to provide plumbing and propane services (the "Plumbing Representative").

Inspection

1. It is **mandatory** that all cooking equipment, including, but not limited to, fryers, gas burners, and warmers, be tested by a licensed LP-gas technician and tagged with a current-year proof of inspection.
2. Any team arriving on-site without a current inspection may contact the Show's designated contractor:
Billy Love or Stephanie McKinnies
Love's Plumbing Company, Inc.
14365 Hillside Lane
Willis, Texas 77318
Phone (281) 541-1000 or (281) 203-7543

Plumbing Services

1. All teams intending to use LP gas at their booth must notify the Plumbing Representative.
2. The Show will provide a single propane hookup; all other hookups must be completed by the Plumbing Representative at the team's expense on a time and material basis.
3. Teams requiring any pipework needed for the line between the cylinder and cooking device should contact the Plumbing Representative.
4. Teams will provide the Plumbing Representative with unrestricted access to any booth that has propane. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**
5. All equipment must be tested and tagged before the Plumbing Representative can perform the hookup. **Teams may not turn on propane services until the connection has been tagged by the Plumbing Representative under any circumstances.**

6. **We strongly urge you to set up early and allow plenty of time for the Plumbing Representative to conduct the inspection before the time that you need to begin cooking.**
The Plumbing Representative is on site and available to begin inspections on the day you move in. Please arrange for your inspection early in your setup, before the rest of your tent layout and decorations are attended to in order to allow plenty of time for all inspections before you need to begin cooking.
7. Under NO circumstances will Team Owners or their representatives disconnect or reconnect a propane bottle. If tag is broken, all propane will be disconnected until such time that all testing and inspections can be performed again.
8. Only the Plumbing Representative can swap propane canisters after the Contest opens.
9. The Show's 2026 exclusive Plumbing Representative is:
Love's Plumbing Co.
Contact: Billy Love
Phone: 281-541-1000
Fax: 281-367-4078

General Requirements for Propane Use

1. Each team will have a propane cylinder large enough to supply cooking for the whole weekend without disconnecting to change bottles. Up to two (2) 100-lb. cylinders manifolded together and one (1) 20-lb. cylinder for starting wood fires is recommended.
2. LP-gas cylinders shall be in approved locations and away from the public. Protective barriers are required to keep the public at least 3 feet away from LP-gas cylinders and cooking surfaces (this includes electric and charcoal cooking).
3. LP-gas cylinders will be placed within the designated 5-foot easement.
4. All propane LP-gas cylinders and equipment must be inspected prior to move-in (inspections are good for one full year and can be done by your local gas company).
5. LP-gas cylinders in service must be secured to prevent tipping over (this can be in milk crates or secured to the tent posts).
6. LP-gas wood starters will be of an approved type (for example, a roofing torch or similar style with the prop or footrest only and automatic shutoff).

SIGNAGE

Required Signage

1. The Show will provide a sign (approximate dimensions 24"h x 36"w) with the team name, assigned space numbers, and street name.
 - The team must permanently affix the sign in the upper right corner (if facing the tent) on the front of the team tent/façade.
 - The sign must be at least 8' off the ground.
 - The sign must be highly visible and well-lit so it can be easily identified and read by emergency personnel.

2. Teams must provide a 24" x 24" sign stating the occupancy load that is placed inside the tent and near the main entrance or exit, in a highly visible location where it may be easily identified and read.
 - The occupancy load must be printed in 4" red letters on a white background.
3. Each team is required to post at least the minimum number of No Smoking signs within the tent space (see "Fire Code" section).

Donor Signage:

1. For signage in the public view, each team may identify the team donors by choosing to **either** recognize individual donors on individual signs (maximum dimension 24" x 24") **OR** all donors on one large, tastefully created sign.
 - When acknowledging companies, individuals, and other supporters of their team, teams must refer to these supporters as "donors" or "underwriters." Teams may not refer to these supporters as "sponsors" or "contributors."
 - No logos or slogans may be used on the donor signage. Only the donor name may be listed, in plain text.
 - Examples of correct signage are included in Appendix B; examples of incorrect signage are included in Appendix C.
2. The following companies have purchased exclusive sponsorships with the Show. Teams may not display signage of category competitors in publicly visible areas, including tent exteriors and tent interiors that are visible from the public walkways.

Company	Category
Electricity and natural gas	NRG/Reliant Energy is the official and exclusive electricity and natural gas sponsor. Any company that sells electricity or natural gas to consumers is a competitor and cannot be a commercial exhibitor. Products, signage, merchandise, or other promotional items of any NRG/Reliant Energy competitor may not be sold or displayed.
Vehicles	Ford is the official and exclusive gas and electric truck/SUV/CUV sponsor. Ford must manufacture any trucks/SUVs/CUVs displayed or promoted anywhere on the grounds outside NRG Center. Products, signage, merchandise, or other promotional items of any Ford competitor may not be sold or displayed.
Non-alcoholic beverages	Coca-Cola has exclusivity in this category, which includes carbonated and noncarbonated soft drinks (including "new age" beverages). Exceptions include pasteurized flavored and unflavored milk, chocolate milk; milk-based products such as ice cream and yogurt (frozen or not); hot chocolate freshly brewed on premise; and fresh squeezed juices. All other non-alcoholic beverages served, purchased, or displayed anywhere at NRG Park, including bottled water, flavored and unflavored

	packaged water (still and/or carbonated), must be Coca-Cola products. Lemonade must be a Minute Maid product made by Coca-Cola. Products, signage, merchandise, or other promotional items of any Coca Cola competitor may not be sold or displayed.
Mattress and furniture store	Mattress Firm is the official and exclusive mattress and massage chair sponsor. Any company that sells mattresses is a competitor and cannot be a commercial exhibitor. Additionally, there can be no display of mattresses by any exhibitor. Sales of western lifestyle furniture will be permitted. Products, signage, merchandise, or other promotional items of any Mattress Firm competitor may not be sold or displayed.
Official beer, malt beverage, and hard seltzer	Miller Lite and Topo Chico Hard Seltzer is the official and exclusive beer, malt beverage, and hard seltzer sponsor. Miller Lite has sponsorship (but not pourage) exclusivity in this category, including exclusive rights to sell branded merchandise. No other competitor's branded merchandise items are permitted to be sold or displayed; no signage or other promotional items are permitted in exhibitor booth spaces.
Tractor	Shoppa's Farm Supply is the official and exclusive tractor sponsor. John Deere must manufacture any farm tractor/implement displayed or promoted anywhere on the grounds.
WM	WM is the official and exclusive environmental services provider. Products, signage, merchandise, or other promotional items of any Waste Management competitor may not be sold or displayed.
Carnival Cruise Lines	Carnival Cruise Lines is the official and exclusive cruise line. Products, signage, merchandise, or other promotional items of any Carnival Cruise Lines competitor may not be sold or displayed.
R-C Ranch	R-C Ranch is the official and exclusive beef jerky. Products, signage, merchandise, or other promotional items of any R-C Ranch competitor may not be sold or displayed.

Other

1. Teams may not use exterior walls or porches for advertising purposes, including, but not limited to, signage or "on-site" product or service promotions (including, but not limited to, giveaways and sampling).
2. Balloons, inflatables, and/or other aerial objects may not be used by teams for identification, decoration, or advertising.

SPACE LAYOUTS AND OCCUPANCY CALCULATIONS

Teams are required to prepare a detailed space layout, have the layout onsite during move-in and the Contest, and provide the layout to the Fire Marshal, WCBBQ Committee member, or Show officials immediately upon request. Failure to adhere to this rule may result in immediate expulsion from the Contest and forfeiture of future invitations. The layout and the occupancy calculation do not need to be turned into the Show in advance of the Contest.

Tent Permitting Process

Permits are required for any space with a tented area, or tented aggregate area, of 1,200 sq. ft. or more. Forms that are emailed to the teams must be filled out and submitted to the City of Houston by January 1st. Guidelines for the Tent Permitting Process can be found on the Bar-B-Que Page under the downloads section.

Space Layout Guidelines

Please prepare the space layout using the guidelines below and ensure the listed information is clearly marked.

1. Draw the space layout on an 8-1/2" x 11" piece of paper.
2. Provide directional orientation (North arrow).
3. Include the team name and 2026 space number on the drawing.
4. Clearly mark the dimensions of all tent structures and the placement of those structures within the team space.
5. Indicate exit locations, their width, and the distance between each exit for each tented structure.
6. Mark dimensions and locations of all items inside the tented structure, including, but not limited to, tables, chairs, bars, stages, storage, pits, cooking appliances, fryers, and grills.
7. Clearly mark all other structures and items located outside the tented structure but within the space, including, but not limited to, tables, chairs, bars, stages, storage, pits, cooking appliances, fryers, and grills.
8. Calculate the occupancy load of the tented structure as drawn. Show both the calculation and the load number.

Calculating Occupancy Load

Each team using a tented structure in their space will be required to calculate the occupancy load of the tented structure.

1. The occupancy calculation and the load number must be included on the space layout.
2. The calculation and number must be available for immediate inspection by the Fire Marshal, WCBBQ Committee member, and Show officials. Failure to fully cooperate with the Fire Marshal or Show officials may result in immediate expulsion from the Contest and forfeiture of future invitations.
3. Teams must provide a 24" x 24" sign stating the occupancy load.
 - Sign must be placed inside the tent and near the main entrance or exit, in a highly visible location where it may be easily identified and read.
 - The occupancy load must be printed in 4" red letters on a white background.

To calculate the occupancy load:

1. Divide the square footage of the floor area of the tented structure using a number based on the contents of that square footage of the tented space.
2. If the square footage of the tented area has:

Tables, Chairs, Stage, Bars.....divide tent square footage by 15
 Dance floor and chairs only..... divide tent square footage by 7
 Standing space only.....divide tent square footage by 5

3. Example: If you have a 1,200-square-foot tent and the square footage is used as follows:

<u>Area Usage</u>	<u>Square Feet</u>	<u>Calculated Occupancy</u>
Bar	50	50 / 15 = 3
Standing space	50	50 / 5 = 10
Stage	200	200 / 15 = 13
Tables and chairs	450	450 / 15 = 30
Dance floor	<u>450</u>	<u>450 / 7 = 64</u>
Totals	1,200 square feet	120 occupants

Monitored Occupancy Count

Each team will be required to station a doorman who will use a counter to monitor headcount inside the tented structure and will restrict entry if the headcount reaches maximum occupancy. The Fire Marshal may request a count at any time. Occupant load of tents may be reduced if deemed unsafe by the Fire Marshal. Failure to fully cooperate with the Fire Marshal may result in immediate expulsion from the Contest and forfeiture of future invitations.

Exit Space Instructions

Each team using a tented structure in their space will be required to meet the following rules with respect to the number of exits and the placement of exits. The Fire Marshal will be on-site to review exit placement. No exceptions to the rules below will be granted. Failure to fully cooperate with the Fire Marshal's inspection and requests for modifications may result in immediate expulsion from the Contest and forfeiture of future invitations.

Required Exit Space

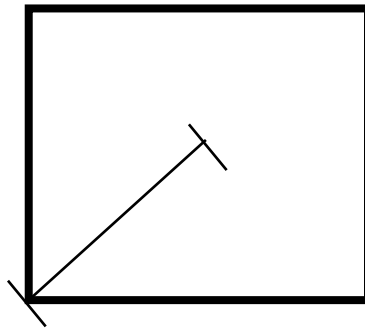
Each tent with flaps or hard wall boundaries MUST have the appropriate number of entrances/exits based on the occupancy calculation.

Occupancy	Minimum Number Entrance/Exits	Minimum width
Up to 199 people	two	six feet each

200 to 499 people	three	six feet each
500 to 999 people	Four	eight feet each
1000 to 1999	Five	ten feet each
2000 to 2999	Six	ten feet each

Exit Spacing

Exits must be spaced at least half of the tent diameter apart if they are placed on the same wall. (Example: If a tent is 40 ft. X 40 ft., then the diameter is 57 ft. Half the diameter equals 28.5 ft., so the exits must be spaced at least 28.5 ft. apart if they are both on the front wall of the tent.)



Following is a sample list of the MINIMUM exit-spacing requirements. **Teams are required to meet these standards in their space layout and tent design.**

Tent Size	Minimum Exit Spacing
20' x 40'	22.5'
30' x 30'	21.5'
30' x 40'	25'
40' x 40'	28.5'
40' x 50'	32'
40' x 80'	45'

Other Exit Requirements

1. In limited cases with written permission, teams may be allowed to utilize an emergency exit along the back wall closest to the utility aisle. This exit will only be opened to the public in an EMERGENCY situation, and the team will be required to station security at that exit at all times to ensure it is not used at any other time. If a team feels this option is necessary to comply with the fire code, the team must submit a variance request to the WCBBQ Office.
2. The required minimum width of each exit and equivalent pathway leading to the exit must be kept clear at all times.
3. Exit flaps will not be laced closed.
4. All exits must be marked with a **battery back-up luminous** or **self-luminous** exit sign.

TENT INFORMATION

1. The Show does not have a designated tent provider for the Contest.
2. All teams are required to provide the Show with a 24/7 phone number and monitored email address for the team's contracted tent company. The **Tent Information Form** can be found on the team's online account and is due by February 1, 2026. The Tent Information Form should be submitted online.
3. All tents must have a fire-retardant certificate attached to the tent from installation to tear down. It is the team's responsibility to ensure this is provided by the tent company of your choice at the time of installation. The Show does not require you to submit a copy of this certificate to the WCBBQ Office.
4. See the move-in section for specific timeline and rules regarding tent setup.

VARIANCE REQUESTS

Teams requesting a variance (for porches, façades, exits into utility aisles, use of area behind team space or other structures or equipment that will cause the team to extend beyond its assigned boundary) must submit a Variance Request Form online.

The Variance Request Form is located on the team's online account. Please follow the online instructions to complete the form.

The following information will be required:

- Space number(s).
- Clear description of how the variance will be used.
- Detailed drawing of the full space layout with variance request, including dimensions. You will be required to upload the drawing online upon submission of the Variance Request Form.

These layouts will not be returned. Teams must keep a copy of the layout for use as needed and have a copy on-site during move-in and the Contest.

Variance consideration will not be given to any team who has not followed these procedures.

1. All variance requests must be submitted online by November 1, 2025.
2. Variance requests submitted to any other party or after the due date may not be given full consideration.
3. Upon receipt, the variance request will be reviewed by Show management and Committee leadership. If there are questions about the variance, or if additional information is needed, the team will be notified via email by the WCBBQ Office. The **Team Coordinator** will be notified by email of the decision regarding the variance request no later than December 1, 2025.

4. Variance requests must be submitted annually, and approvals are not grandfathered. An approved variance request from a previous Contest year does not guarantee approval of the variance for the 2026 Contest.
5. Questions regarding your 2026 variance request should be directed to the WCBBQ Office (wcbmq@rodeohouston.com).
6. Teams that extend outside their assigned space without an approved variance will be required to remove all structures, equipment, supplies, etc., from the space. Failure to cooperate may result in immediate expulsion from the Contest and forfeiture of future invitations.
7. Teams that extend outside their assigned space without an approved variance will be required to pay twice the current variance square foot price.
8. Port-o-cans are not to be visible to the general public. They are not allowed in any visible variance space.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Grease Disposal

Grease-disposal bins are provided in the Contest area. Teams must provide their own containers to facilitate disposal of used cooking oil or fats in the designated grease-disposal barrels.

1. Teams must ensure they have adequate disposal containers and procedures to address the quantity of grease generated by the team's operations.
2. Teams are responsible for ensuring that their members are fully trained on safe handling of grease and disposal.
3. All grease should be disposed of in the designated grease disposal barrel.
4. Do not dispose of grease in trash receptacles.
5. Do not dispose of grease via the sewer system (culverts, drains, etc.).
6. Do not put other trash or materials in the grease disposal bins.
7. **DO NOT** dispose of used cooking oil in any manner on the Show grounds except into the appropriate grease barrels. Violation could result in immediate expulsion from the Contest, revocation of future invitations to the Contest, and/or written citation(s) issued by the Health Department.

Waste Water/Gray-Water – Texas Outhouse is the exclusive provider for the 2026 Contest.

Teams must properly dispose of waste water.

1. Waste water should be contained in a gray-water tank (if applicable). Teams requiring a gray-water tank or pumping services should contact our new provider to schedule these services.
2. Teams must keep hoses, wastewater, and other materials away from the storm drains and manholes.

Port-a-lets – Texas Outhouse is the exclusive provider for the 2026 Contest.

Port-a-lets and hand-wash stations are available for rental through Texas Outhouse.

1. Links to the order forms will be posted on the online WCBBQ Contest page at www.hlsr.com on November 1, 2025.
2. Teams may not move the Show's port-a-lets from public areas to their team space. Texas Outhouse and Committee personnel will monitor the number of port-a-lets in each team space.
3. Please make every effort to have the appropriate number of port-a-lets for the comfort of guests and sanitation of team space.

Number of guests expected:	Recommended port-a-lets:
100	2
150	3
250	4
500	6
1000	8

4. One hand-wash station is recommended for every 250 guests.
5. Pump-truck service runs will begin at 1 a.m. Thursday, Friday, and Saturday mornings and should be complete by 7 a.m.
6. To report a missed service, contact Texas Outhouse.
7. For additional pump service or to have an RV pumped, purchase pump-truck service from the onsite provider trailer located near Gate 7.

Recycling

Aluminum recycling is an important function of the World's Championship Bar-B-Que Contest. The HLSR Recycling Committee is responsible for the following throughout the Contest:

1. Recycling containers for aluminum (including, but not limited to, cans and clean cook pans) will be placed in each team's space.
2. Liners will be replaced in each team's receptacles that are used specifically for recycling aluminum. These liners are not to be used for regular trash cans.
3. Recycling will be collected from each team space.
 - Aluminum recycling bags should be left inside the team space to avoid accidental pick-up by the trash crew. **Normal trash should continue to be set outside cook areas.**
 - Recycling bags will be picked-up on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at 8 a.m., noon, 3 p.m., and 11:30 p.m. at all cook team areas, facilities, and gates.

Trash

1. Each team must provide at least FOUR (4) 55-gallon trash drums per team space.
2. The team is responsible for supplying the trash container liners.
3. It is the team's responsibility to empty the receptacles into the garbage truck when the truck comes by the team space.

- Collection times will be continuous between 7 a.m. and 3 p.m. on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.
 - At all other times, teams are responsible for depositing their trash in the dumpsters provided on the Contest grounds.
4. During move-out, all trash must be taken to the dumpsters provided on the Contest grounds.
- Teams may not block streets or aisles with trash.
 - Teams may not leave trash in team space.

CITY AND COUNTY REGULATIONS

FIRE CODE

The following rules are mandated by the City of Houston Fire Marshal. No exceptions to these rules will be granted. Adherence to these rules is a condition of participation in the Contest. Any team failing to cooperate with the Fire Marshal is subject to immediate expulsion from the Contest and forfeiture of future invitations.

1. **Smoking is not permitted inside of any tent structure or within 20 feet of a tent structure. No Smoking signs shall be posted at the entrance and within the tent. A minimum of one sign is required on each 40 feet of interior wall space.**
2. Each team will include the number and location of all cooking appliances (including, but not limited to deep fryers, pits, and grills) and entrances/exits on their space layout.
3. Each team will have a propane cylinder large enough to supply cooking for the whole weekend without disconnecting to change bottles. Up to two (2) 100-lb. cylinders manifolded together and one (1) 20-lb. cylinder for starting wood fires is recommended.
4. LP-gas cylinders shall be in approved locations and away from the public. Protective barriers are required to keep the public at least 3 feet away from LP-gas cylinders and cooking surfaces (this includes electric and charcoal cooking).
5. All propane LP-gas cylinders and equipment must be inspected prior to move-in (inspections are good for one full year and can be done by your local gas company).
6. **All propane LP-gas connections must be inspected and tagged by the Show's plumbing service contractor before the equipment is turned on.** If the fuel container is changed at any point during the Contest, it must be retagged.
7. LP-gas cylinders in service must be secured to prevent tipping over (this can be in milk crates or secured to the tent posts).
8. LP-gas wood starters will be of an approved type (for example, a roofing torch or similar style with the prop or footrest only and automatic shut off).
9. All charcoal will be started with an electrical starter designed for this purpose. No liquid starters will be permitted (self-starting charcoal is recommended). Approved LP-gas wood starters are also acceptable.
10. **Fire extinguishers** shall be provided by each team per the following:
 - 200-500 square feet of floor area: One (1) 2-A:10-B:C rated portable fire extinguisher.

- 501-1000 square feet of floor area: Two (2) 2-A:10-B:C rated portable fire extinguishers.
 - Each additional 2000 square feet of floor area or fraction thereof: One (1) 2-A:10-B:C rated portable fire extinguisher.
 - At least one (1) 3A 40B:C rated portable fire extinguisher shall be provided by each team for each kitchen, mess hall, power generator, or transformer and at locations where flammable and combustible liquids are used, stored, or dispensed, and as required by the Fire Marshal.
 - A type K extinguisher is required for all locations where deep frying is being conducted.
 - All extinguishers must be inspected and have a current inspection date tag attached (this includes new extinguishers).
11. **All tents, canopies, tarps, and decorations must be flame-retardant or be treated with an approved material. Fabric decorations must be treated by a certified fabric company that provides a flame-retardant certificate. Spray can retardant is not acceptable.**
On-site testing may be necessary to determine if the material is flame-retardant. A flame-retardant certificate must be available on-site at all times during the Contest set-up, event, and move-out, and provided to the Fire Marshal, WCBBQ Committee member, or Show officials upon request. This is the team's responsibility, not the tent company's responsibility.
 12. Combustible materials such as hay or straw may not be used inside or outside of any team space. Trash and rubbish shall not be allowed to accumulate.
 13. All fuel for heaters (i.e., kerosene, diesel) will be limited to 5 gallons and must be in an UL-approved safety container with spring-loaded closer and flashback guard. The fuel containers must be located in an approved location. Approved locations are outside the tent, away from the public, and in a secured area away from the walls of the tent and propane area. **Gasoline is not allowed.**
 14. **All heaters shall be approved and listed for indoor use.** Any heaters requiring propane must be connected properly with the propane container located outside the tent. The connection must be inspected and tagged by the Show's Plumbing Representative. If the fuel container is changed at any point during the Contest, it must be retagged.
 15. Outside generators that are not a permanent part of the pit or motor home will **not** be allowed.
 16. All electrical cords on the ground shall be protected as per the City Electrical Code (NEC).
 17. The required minimum width of each exit and pathway leading to the exit must be kept clear at all times.
 18. Pits, heaters, or other heating/cooking/combustible equipment shall not be located adjacent to passageways, exits, or other combustible walls or materials. Gas and liquid-fuel burning equipment may not be directly under any tent or temporary membrane structure.
 19. A metal pan constructed of a minimum of 18-gauge sheet metal shall be provided and placed under the firebox of bar-b-que pits to catch live coals that may fall onto the ground. The dimensions of the pan shall be such that it will provide complete coverage beneath any openings under the pit firebox.
 20. All compressed-gas cylinders **MUST** be kept outside tented areas. Only approved pipe or hose can be used to bring gas into the tented area. All compressed-gas cylinders must be secured to prevent them from falling.

21. Teams using hot coals must have a metal container with a lid to dispose of any hot embers.
22. Strings of lights may not come in contact with any metal objects, including staples. Plastic cable ties or similar may be used to secure lights.
23. Pyrotechnics of any kind are strictly prohibited.

HEALTH REGULATIONS

The following guidelines are mandated by the City of Houston Health Departments. All teams are required to adhere to these guidelines.

1. A cover is required over all open food-preparation areas.
2. Hairnets or hats must be worn by servers and workers. Sun visors are not acceptable.
3. Three containers of water must be utilized at all times, each a minimum of one gallon:
 - a. First Bucket – Soap and water for washing, unless a sink and running water are available and usable.
 - b. Second Bucket – Clean water for rinsing, unless a sink and running water are available and usable.
 - c. Third Bucket – One cap of bleach per gallon of water for sanitizing.
4. A gravity-fed hand lavatory is required and will consist of a 2.5-gallon container of water with a spigot, plus a catch bin, liquid soap, and paper towels.
5. All waste water must be contained in a gray-water tank if applicable.
6. Keep hoses, waste water, and other materials away from storm drains and manholes.
7. Keep all food covered.
8. Keep food, paper products, and equipment that are not stored in a waterproof container at least six inches off the floor.
9. Keep cold food stored on ice or refrigerated at all times. The food temperature must be maintained at 45 degrees Fahrenheit.
10. Heated food should be maintained at 140 degrees Fahrenheit on a pit or stove. If you are reheating cooked or refrigerated foods, reheat rapidly to 165 degrees Fahrenheit (use pit).
11. Smoking tobacco of any kind in food or drink serving areas is not permitted.

ALCOHOL MANAGEMENT

Each team must comply with all pertinent laws and ordinances, including, but not limited to, Texas Alcoholic Beverage Code and any additional rules of the Show. Failure to comply with laws, ordinances, and rules will result in immediate expulsion from the Contest and forfeiture of future invitations.

Individual Responsibility

The Team Owner and Team Coordinator will be held responsible for the conduct of team members, guests, and any persons who are or have been in the team space. Any behavior deemed inappropriate by the Show may result in immediate expulsion from the Contest and forfeiture of future invitations.

Requirements

1. **Teams serving alcohol in their team space must secure their spaces with the appropriate number of uniformed peace officers, licensed by the state of Texas, unless the team meets ALL the following criteria:**
 - the team operates in a single 40' x 40' space and has no relationships with teams in other spaces, **AND**
 - there are never more than 75 people in the team space at the same time, **AND**
 - the team serves only beer and wine.
2. Teams qualifying for the exemption outlined in item 1 will immediately lose the exemption if there is a security incident in the team space at any point in time during set-up, the Contest, or teardown.
3. It is recommended that teams required to secure officers for their space have a minimum of one (1) officer per each 40x40 space.
4. The officers must be on duty during all hours that the Contest is open to the public.
5. The team must submit the Team Security Form online by February 1, 2026. The form can be found on the team's online account.
 - The Team Security Form must be complete prior to submitting online; all requested information must be provided.
 - All requests are subject to approval by the Show.
6. Teams serving alcohol in their team space are required to use an appropriate number of TABC-certified bartenders. The team is responsible for determining the appropriate number and should follow these guidelines:
 - The Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission strongly feels that trained servers and managers are better able to identify and prevent service of alcoholic beverages to minors and intoxicated persons. The agency has certified courses for seller/server training. These courses cover the laws applicable to the service of alcoholic beverages to minors, intoxicated persons, and others and teach techniques to identify these persons and prevent sales to them.
 - Recommendations for certified bartenders include at least one certified bartender per every 5 feet of bar space (always round up) or for every 100 people.

- The appropriate number of certified bartenders must be on duty during all hours that the Contest is open to the public. Teams are encouraged to have certified bartenders on duty whenever alcohol is served.
- Teams utilizing self-service must ensure certified bartenders are present in the team space during all hours that the Contest is open to the public.

Prohibited Behavior and Activities

Certain activities related to alcoholic beverages are strictly prohibited. Teams found to be engaging in prohibited behavior or activities will be removed from the Contest and will not receive invitations to participate in future Contests.

1. Teams may not distribute alcoholic beverages of any nature (e.g., Jell-O shots, etc.) outside their physical boundaries. Teams found to be engaging in the service of alcoholic beverages to any persons outside their space will not be issued an invitation to participate in future Contests.
2. At no time may a person under the age of 21 be served alcohol of any nature.
 - The Show prohibits service to a minor, even in the presence of a legal guardian, under its private-club license.
 - Teams found to be serving minors, or teams not prohibiting access to alcohol by a minor, will be immediately expelled from the Contest and will not be issued an invitation to participate in future Contests.
 - Teams violating these rules may face legal action under Texas Alcoholic Beverage Code.
3. Alcoholic beverage service **must end at 11 p.m. each night** of the Contest and is not permitted at any time during Contest move-in or move-out.
4. Teams may not charge for beverage service, including “mandatory donations or tips.” Voluntary tip jars are permitted.
5. **Teams may not sell tickets to be redeemed for beverages, either prior to or during the event.**

SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

EMERGENCY PLAN

The objective of the Emergency Plan is to provide information, procedures, and a plan of action to protect life and property in the event of an emergency during Show operations. Emergencies include fire, bomb threat, explosion, severe weather, and other accidents and/or disasters.

Reporting an Emergency

In the event of an emergency, the first individual at the scene should immediately contact the Show's Safety Office at (832) 667-1300. Be prepared to provide:

- your name and contact number;
- the type of emergency;
- the location of the emergency; and
- whether or not emergency medical help is necessary.

In the unlikely event that the Safety Office line is busy or not answered, contact the Show's Security Office at (832) 667-3636. If necessary, call 911.

Team Representatives are encouraged to take advantage of speed-dial features and to program these numbers for rapid access.

In the event cellular service is not available, Team Representatives should immediately seek Safety and Emergency Personnel and provide them with specific information about the emergency situation. Safety and Emergency Personnel include licensed, uniformed law enforcement officers, Houston Fire Department officials, and HLSR Safety Committee members and are further described in the "Personnel" section below.

First Aid Locations

The Show's Safety Committee provides first aid services at multiple locations on the NRG Park grounds during the Contest.

NRG Arena

- Located in the southwest corner of the Arena proper, just inside the west glass doors.

Carnival

- Located near the southeast corner of the Stadium outside the Amegy Bank gate.
- Located northwest of NRG Arena.

WCBBQ Contest

- Located near the intersection of Bill Bailey Boulevard and Committee Street, directly behind space D650.

- Located near the intersection of Bill Bailey Boulevard and NRG Stadium Way, directly behind space A504.

Personnel

The Show has two distinct groups responsible for managing emergency situations. These groups are Security and Emergency Personnel, and Emergency Management Contacts. Both groups are described below and may be collectively referred to as the “Emergency Team.”

Security and Emergency Personnel

“Security and Emergency Personnel” are those individuals designated to give direction in the event of an emergency. The Show’s Security and Emergency Personnel include:

1. Licensed law enforcement officers, primarily uniformed Houston Police Department and Harris County Sheriff’s Department officers;
2. Houston Fire Department officials;
3. HLSR Safety Committee members (Safety Committee volunteers can be identified by their tan vests).

Emergency Management Contacts

The Show’s senior management team members are designated as “Emergency Management Contacts.” While primary direction in emergencies will come from Security and Emergency Personnel, Team Representatives may also receive direction from the Emergency Management Contacts listed below. These individuals can be identified by a credential that includes the Show year and the individual’s name, title and photo.

Chairman of the Board:	Pat Mann Phillips
President/Chief Executive Officer:	Chris Boleman
Chief Show Operations Officer:	Kyle Olsen
Chief Financial Officer:	Katie Grahmann
Chief Technology Officer:	Steve Gumerman
Chief Mission Officer:	Julie Bass
Chief Marketing Officer:	Lisa Gagnon
Chief Volunteer & HR Officer:	Melinda Underhill
Chief Strategic Planning Officer:	Peter McStravick

Notification Methods

There are several methods of notification that will be used in the event of an emergency during the World’s Championship Bar-B-Que Contest.

1. An outdoor warning system may be used to warn visitors to take shelter in the event of an emergency, such as a severe weather event. The system consists of strategically placed speakers that emit warning signals and an automated/manual audio system.
2. Verbal instructions may be provided by the Emergency Team.
3. Notification by HLSR and NRG Park staff members, identified by NRG Park credential.

Team Representatives are required to follow evacuation and any other instructions issued via the methods listed in items 1 through 3 above; no exceptions. Violators are subject to removal from the current and future Shows and/or arrest by law enforcement.

Advance Planning

To ensure their personal safety as well as the safety of the general public, all Team Owners and Team Coordinators should take the following precautionary steps upon arrival at NRG Park.

1. Familiarize themselves and all Team Representatives with the Emergency Plan.
2. Be prepared to immediately evacuate their exhibit space by identifying how to quickly secure inventory, cash, valuables, etc.

Team Owners and Team Coordinators will be held accountable for securing their areas of responsibility. As part of advance planning, teams should also:

1. Identify the nearest building for safe shelter in place. Each team should have displayed in their team space a muster map (see Appendix A) designating their specific muster location.
2. Ensure that all tents and other structures and signage are securely set and anchored.
3. Implement a plan to quickly store or secure all other equipment, including, but not limited to, chairs, tables, inventory, cooking equipment, awnings.

The Team Owner is responsible for ensuring that all Team Representatives are informed of what action to take in the event of an emergency. The Team Owner is responsible for ensuring that all Team Representatives are safely evacuated and accounted for in the event of an emergency.

SEVERE WEATHER PLAN

The Severe Weather Plan identifies actions to be taken at the Contest when it is evident a severe weather event may occur during Contest hours. Flexibility must be exercised when implementing this plan due to the various circumstances associated with each weather event, and the Emergency Team may exercise discretion where necessary to ensure people's safety.

General Information

NRG Park staff monitors local weather reporting stations through the command post located in NRG Center. The Center command post operates continuously during the entire Show, and Security and Emergency Personnel are kept up to date on the current weather conditions. In the event of a severe weather event, the command post will determine which, if any, safety measures are needed. These measures may include, but are not limited to, closing any temporary venues such as tented structures, carnival and/or other outdoor venues, or complete grounds evacuation.

After a severe weather event has occurred, HLSR management, staff, and contractors will inspect the grounds and facilities for damage. Necessary repairs will be made to any damaged facilities and equipment before the general public will be allowed back into the area and the Show resumes operations. Once it is safe, an announcement will be made giving the all-clear for patrons, volunteers, and exhibitors to return to their normal scheduled events.

Notification

In the event of a severe weather emergency, information and instructions will be communicated via the methods described in the Notification Methods section above.

Lightning and Thunderstorms

Team Representatives can remain safe during lightning episodes and when thunderstorms are overhead or in the vicinity of NRG Park by evacuating to the Park's buildings while the storm is in the area. When a team becomes aware of lightning or thunderstorms, Team Representatives should activate their Advance Plan to secure their area and go to safe shelter immediately. Unless otherwise advised by Emergency and Security Personnel, seek shelter in either NRG Stadium or NRG Arena, whichever is most accessible.

Windstorms

When a windstorm event is indicated, the Emergency Management Contacts will assess the situation and confirm the appropriate course of action. Instructions will be issued to all patrons via the methods detailed in the Notification Methods section above.

If sustained winds reach 25 miles per hour:

1. Team Representatives are responsible for ensuring that all tents, tent sidewalls, facades, and other equipment are secured.
2. Scheduled events may be cancelled and a voluntary evacuation announcement may be issued.

If sustained winds reach 35 miles per hour:

1. All outdoor exhibits may be closed and outdoor scheduled events may be cancelled as necessary.
2. A mandatory evacuation may be issued for all people within the area, as necessary.
3. Team Owners and Team Coordinators should activate their Advance Plan to secure their area and go to safe shelter immediately. Unless otherwise advised by the Emergency Team, seek shelter in either NRG Stadium or NRG Arena, whichever is most accessible.

Tornadoes

To remain safe during a tornado, Team Representatives should put as many walls between themselves and the tornado as possible. This means inside buildings with interior bathrooms, hallways, and closets on the lowest floor are the best place to be.

When tornadoes threaten, Team Representatives should activate their Advance Plan to secure their area and go to safe shelter immediately (see Appendix A).

Team Representatives whose safe shelter is **NRG Arena** should proceed to:

- bathrooms located on the first floor of the building;
- office and storage rooms, as directed by emergency personnel;
- a first floor stairwell foyer; or,

- the arena area and stand as near a permanent structural wall or the arena wall as possible.

Team Representatives whose safe shelter is **NRG Stadium** should proceed to:

- bathrooms located on the service and concourse levels of the building;
- office and storage rooms, as directed by emergency personnel;
- a first floor stairwell foyer; or,
- the hallways on the service level, away from any glass.

After arriving at the safe shelter point, people should:

1. Use their arms to protect head and neck in a “drop and tuck” position.
2. Stay away from windows.

If caught outside, people should:

1. Lie flat in a ditch or depression.
2. Use arms to protect head and neck in a “drop and tuck” position. Use jacket, cap, backpack, or any similar items, if available, to protect face and eyes.
3. Avoid sheltering in small buildings, under isolated trees, under tents or near fences or poles.

FIRE SAFETY

General Information

Team Representatives should report a fire emergency to the Show’s Safety Office at (832) 667-1300. Be prepared to provide:

- your name and contact number;
- the fire location;
- the type and/or cause of the fire, if known; and,
- whether or not emergency medical help is necessary.

In the event cellular service is not available, Team Representatives should immediately seek Safety and Emergency Personnel and provide them with specific information about the emergency situation.

1. All fires, no matter the size, must be reported to the Safety Office.
2. If the fire is small and contained, attempt to put it out with a fire extinguisher. **Do not jeopardize personal safety to do so.** Never allow the fire to come between you and the exit.
3. If the fire cannot be contained:
 - Evacuate the area and report to your designated Muster Area (see Muster Procedures section below).
 - **Do not attempt to save possessions or equipment at the risk of personal injury.**

Evacuation Procedures

In the event that evacuation orders are issued by audio system or by Security and Emergency Personnel, **Team Representatives will immediately follow the evacuation order, no exceptions.** Violators are subject to removal from the current and future Contests and/or arrest by law enforcement.

Upon evacuation, Team Representatives will follow the Advance Plan formulated by their Team Owner.

The Team Owner or Team Coordinator must report to their designated Muster Area:

1. The Team Owner and Team Coordinator are responsible for ensuring that all Team Representatives are safe and accounted for prior to reporting to the Muster Area.
2. WCBBQ volunteers will be stationed at each Muster Area.
 - The volunteers will hold a sign that states “WCBBQ Muster Area” and includes the Muster Area location number (see chart below).
 - The volunteers will confirm with each Team Owner or Team Coordinator that their personnel are safe and accounted for.
 - The volunteers will confirm to the WCBBQ Staff that all Team Owners or Team Coordinators have checked in at the Muster Area.
3. Team Representatives will remain in the Muster Area until further instructions are received from the Emergency Team.

Muster Areas

Muster areas are assigned based on the location of the team space; the assignments are detailed below. The Team Owner or Team Coordinator should report to their primary Muster Area unless the emergency has rendered the Muster Area unsafe, in which case the Team Owner or Team Coordinator should report to any Muster Area that can be reached safely and quickly.

Exhibit Location	Muster Location Number	Muster Area
Section A	1	NRG Stadium Bud Plaza Gate (see map on Appendix A)
Section B	2	NRG Arena Performance Arena, West End (see map on Appendix A)
Section C	3	NRG Stadium Bud Plaza Gate (see map on Appendix A)
Section D	4	NRG Arena Performance Arena, East End (see map on Appendix A)

OTHER EMERGENCIES

In the event of any other emergency, such as a bomb threat, explosion, or other disaster, instructions will be issued via one of the notification methods described in the Notifications section above.

When instructions are issued by audio system or by Security and Emergency Personnel, **Team Representatives will immediately follow the instructions; no exceptions.** Violators are subject to removal from the current and future Contests and/or arrest by law enforcement.

If Team Representatives are ordered to evacuate, they should follow the team's Advance Plan. The Team Coordinator or Team Owner should ensure all Team Representatives are safely evacuated and then proceed to the Muster Areas, following the same procedures described above in the Fire Safety section.

MOVE-IN DATES AND PROCEDURES

MOVE-IN TIMELINE

Move-in times for the 2026 Contest are:

Date	Times	Permitted Move-in Activities
Saturday, February 21, 2026	8 a.m. – 5 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large item move-in, including pits, loaded trailers, storage containers, refrigeration units, pieces/parts for façades, or other similar large items that might need to be in place prior to tent setup. Must coordinate with the tent company. All teams should enter Gate 6 off the 610 feeder road between Fannin and Kirby. Check-in at the 610 Lot is NOT necessary. This is stop-and-drop only—all items must be dropped inside the team space. Setup is NOT permitted. Teams are solely responsible for securing any and all items within their team space; HLSR is not responsible for the security of these items. Tent companies may begin setting up structure tents ONLY, so long as the setup work of the Power Provider is not impeded.
Sunday, February 22, 2026	8 a.m. – 5 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structure tent setup ONLY continues (no frame tents)
Monday, February 23, 2026	8 a.m. Noon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structure tent setup continues, if needed. Frame tent setup begins at noon
Tuesday, February 24, 2026	7 a.m. – 5 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular team move-in begins. Check-in at 610 Lot is required for all vehicles.
Wednesday, February 25, 2026	7 a.m. – 6 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular team move-in continues. Check-in at 610 Lot is required for all vehicles.
Thursday, February 26, 2026	7 a.m. – noon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular team move-in continues. Check-in at 610 Lot is required for all vehicles.

In addition to the above move-in times, vehicles will be allowed to make deliveries (restock) on Friday and Saturday mornings during the Contest using **Gate 6** only.

Delivery and restocking times for the 2026 Contest are:

Date	Times
Friday, February 27, 2026	8 a.m. – 11 a.m.
Saturday, February 28, 2026	7 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.

No vehicle will be allowed to remain in the compound once move-in or deliveries are completed. Any vehicle remaining in the compound once the World's Championship Bar-B-Que Contest is opened to the public will be towed at the owner's expense.

Bands delivering and removing equipment must do so during move-in and delivery (restocking) hours, or after the Contest closes in the evening. Equipment may NOT be delivered when the Contest is open to the public.

Teams may not bring supplies or equipment through the public gates after the Contest has opened to the public. The Gatekeepers Committee volunteers will deny access; teams not cooperating with the Gatekeepers Committee are subject to disciplinary action including removal from the current and future Contests.

MOVE-IN LOGISTICS

Tent Setup

1. If sections are released prior to the scheduled date and time for **structure tents**, the tent company, Team Owners, and Team Coordinators will be notified by email. **It is very important that you include a monitored email address from the tent company on your Tent Information Form.**
2. If the setup of frame tents is available prior to Monday at noon, the tent companies, Team Owners, and Team Coordinators will also be notified by email.
3. If the tent setup needs to be temporarily halted or adjusted to accommodate the Power Provider's work, the WCBBQ Logistics Subcommittee will advise the tent company.
4. A Team Representative must be present at the time of tent setup to help avoid mistakes. Please note: team vehicles during tent setup should be limited to as few as possible, and stage for as short a time as possible, so as not to block aisles and other team tent setups.
 - It is each team's responsibility to ensure their tent is placed correctly before staking or driving pins. If a tent is staked incorrectly, including encroachment into the neighboring team space or utility aisle, corrections will be at the expense of the team.
 - If the tent dimensions do not conform to space dimensions, the team should seek a variance by the variance deadline so that the space may be marked appropriately. The WCBBQ Logistics Subcommittee should be contacted before staking or driving pins if

the tent does not conform to the marked space so that we may be involved in setup adjustments.

- The Team Representative should ensure the tent company has posted company identification inside of the tent (4" X 8") at eye level near the main tent exit, including the name of the tent company (owner), owner representative, and a 24/7 contact phone number.
 - The Team Representative should ensure that the team has a copy of the flame-retardant certificate on hand at all times during move-in, the Contest, and move-out.
5. No tent drops or assembly is permitted in the aisles. The aisles must remain clear for traffic at all times.
 6. The power easements must remain clear at all times. No encroachments of any kind are permitted.
 7. Vehicles:
 - Vehicles are not permitted to drive over power cables not protected by a cable cover at any time.
 - Tent company trucks may not block aisles. Tent companies must stagger parking to allow the passage of vehicles. Once unloaded, the trucks should be moved to open areas while the company continues with the setup work.
 - No vehicle parking is permitted in team spaces and vehicles may not be left unattended. All vehicles on the grounds before the official team move-in should have a card or sign on the vehicle windshield or dashboard with the name and contact number of the driver so that vehicles that impede setup may be moved quickly. Be courteous to other teams and their hired contractors.
 8. Tent Stakes/Pins:
 - All stakes and pins are to be driven perpendicular to the ground, not angled out into the adjacent space, power alleys, or public areas. If your tent company feels they need an exception, consult with the WCBBQ Logistics Subcommittee.
 - No tent poles may come into direct contact with the surface. A wooden or plastic block must be placed under each pole.
 - All tent stakes and pins must be capped.

Vehicle Access

Once team move-in begins, all vehicles must report to the 610 Lot staging area **before** they will be allowed on the World's Championship Bar-B-Que Contest grounds. This includes vehicles returning to the Contest grounds after having been previously admitted.

- Only vehicles with a large number of items to be delivered will be allowed entry into the Contest grounds. After the vehicle is unloaded, it must be moved off the Contest grounds to a parking lot.
- Teams **MUST** access NRG Park from the gate associated with their move-in pass.

Tuesday

- Teams may park in the Green Lot (until 5pm) or 610 Lot on Tuesday until 5 PM at no charge.
- Vehicles with few or small items will need to park in the Green or 610 Lots and hand-carry the items across the bridge using self-provided dollies or hand carts.
- All vehicles must be removed from the Green Lot by 5 p.m. on Tuesday.
- Vehicles may remain in the Green Lot after 5 p.m. ONLY if a pre-purchased Wednesday parking pass is properly displayed inside the vehicle.

Wednesday

- Teams may park at no charge in the 610 Lot or in the Green Lot with a pre-purchased Wednesday. There is no shuttle or tram service from these lots to the Contest grounds.
- Vehicles with few or small items will need to park in the 610 or Green Lot and hand-carry the items across the bridge using self-provided dollies or hand carts.

Thursday - Saturday

- Team vehicles must be parked in the lot associated with their daily parking pass for Thursday through Saturday of the Contest. Parking is also available on a first come first served basis in the 610 lot for \$25.

610 Lot Procedures

1. Vehicles arriving at the 610 Lot location must enter through Gate 19 off of Bellfort Road and will be directed to a staging area by WCBBQ Committee members.
2. Once positioned, the driver will exit the vehicle, proceed to the check-in area, and receive the gate move-in pass that will allow access to the Contest grounds. **You are required to list your name and cell phone number on the gate move-in pass so that we may reach you if your car is blocking access for other vehicles.**
3. After receiving the gate move-in pass, the vehicle will remain at the 610 Lot staging area until a WCBBQ Committee member releases the vehicle to proceed to the Contest grounds.
4. **Only two vehicles per space will be permitted on the Contest grounds at any one time.**
5. Once released from the staging area, please proceed to your assigned entry gate noted on your move-in pass.
 - Entry gates are assigned according to your space number. Please see Appendix B in this Handbook for your gate assignment.
 - Your gate assignment will also be listed on the move-in pass.
 - Please notify all your team members and delivery companies of your entry gate.

On the Contest Grounds

1. When approaching the Contest grounds, you must prominently display the gate move-in pass and corresponding team space number to gain entry. The move-in pass must be completed with the driver's name and contact information so that we may reach you immediately if needed. Any vehicle found without a move-in pass, or with the wrong side of the pass displayed, may be towed.
2. Each vehicle will be allowed 30 minutes to unload. **Once a vehicle is unloaded, it must leave the compound area.** This is a practical consideration for additional vehicles waiting for entry.

3. If you are asked to move your vehicle and it is not moved in a timely manner, it will be towed at the owner's expense.
4. **Unattended vehicles left inside the compound will be towed at the owner's expense.**
5. Vehicles must leave the compound area through the designated exit gate.
6. Gate passes will be surrendered to WCBBQ Committee members when you exit the Contest grounds.
 - When you exit, WCBBQ gate personnel will contact the 610 Lot to allow your team's next vehicle to enter.
 - Each trip to the Contest grounds requires a new gate move-in pass from the 610 Lot staging area.

Vendors Making Multiple Team Deliveries

Vendors making deliveries to multiple teams (e.g., tent companies, food suppliers) may report directly to the Contest grounds via Gate 6 off the 610 feeder road between Fannin and Kirby.

Team Check-In and Safety Inspections

1. There is no required official check-in of teams. The Team's Contestant Supervisor will meet the team at the team space during the move-in period and be available to assist the team with move-in questions.
2. The WCBBQ Committee's Safety and Security team will perform a booth inspection of all team spaces. All teams must be prepared for the inspection by no later than noon, Thursday, February 26, 2026.

CONTEST SERVICES

ACCESS

1. Committee members (with committee-related business), Show management, law enforcement hired by the Show, and the City of Houston Fire Marshal shall have access to a team space at all times, with proper identification.
2. Teams are NOT required to provide general access (non-business access) or food/other refreshments to WCBBQ Committee members or Show staff.

CONTESTANT SUPERVISORS

Each team will be assigned a Committee volunteer who will act as the team's Contestant Supervisor.

1. The Contestant Supervisor acts as the liaison between the team and the Committee and is available to help the team with questions concerning the Contest Rules and Team Handbook, logistics, safety and security, etc.
2. The Contestant Supervisor conducts damage inspections at move-in and move-out. Teams are liable for any damage caused to the surface of the parking lot as well as damage to Contest equipment, other structures, and other property, including landscaping.
3. There is no required official check-in of teams. The Contestant Supervisor will meet the team at the team space during the move-in period and be available to assist the team with move-in questions.
4. Upon the team's arrival, the Contestant Supervisor will notify the Beverage Inventory team of the team's arrival and help facilitate the delivery of preordered beverages and ice.

NEWSLETTER

The WCBBQ Committee produces and distributes *Smoke Signals*, a daily newsletter, during the Contest. Teams are invited to share story ideas with a member of the Publicity team or through the WCBBQ Office (wcbmq@rodeohouston.com).

PHOTOGRAPHY

Go Texan and Metro Team Photographs

1. The Communications-Editorial Committee will be taking photographs of Metro and Area Go Texan teams on Friday, February 27, 2026, from 10 a.m. to noon.
2. Only three (3) people per picture will be allowed (Chief Cook and two team members).

Winner Photographs

Details to Follow.

MOVE-OUT DATES AND PROCEDURES

Please carefully review the following timeline and plan the team's move-out accordingly. Teams must notify equipment and tent vendors of move-out deadlines.

1. Each team is responsible for ensuring that all equipment, structures, and trash are removed from the team space upon move-out. Any team failing to comply may forfeit future invitations and may be billed for clean-up services.
2. Teams may not completely block the aisles at any time during move out. All aisles should remain passable to vehicle traffic.
3. All trash should be placed in the dumpster prior to leaving the Contest grounds. Trash should not be left in the streets to block vehicle traffic.
4. Failure of a team to adhere to the move-out timeline and rules may result in forfeiture of future Contest invitations.
5. It is the team's responsibility to ensure their hired contractors are familiar with all Contest rules.

MOVE-OUT TIMELINE

Move-out times for the 2026 Contest are:

Date	Time	Activity
Saturday, February 28, 2026	11 p.m.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contest closes 2. Alcoholic beverage service ends 3. Music ends 4. ALL public and team guests and non-working team members must exit team tents and Contest area.
Sunday, March 1, 2026	Midnight – 4 a.m.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teams may break down INSIDE team space ONLY. 2. Teams may NOT bring vehicles onto the Contest grounds. 3. Vehicles already inside the Contest grounds must remain inside the team space and may NOT be moved. 4. All public walkways, utility aisles, and other common spaces must be left free and clear of team equipment, trash, supplies, etc.
Sunday, March 1, 2026	4 a.m.	Gates open for teams to bring in vehicles with a move-out pass only.

Date	Time	Activity
Sunday, March 1, 2026	4 a.m. – 4 p.m.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Team move-out must be complete by 4 p.m. 2. Any equipment not removed from the Contest area by this time is subject to removal and disposal by the Show. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Show is not liable for any damage or loss to equipment left in the Contest area after 4 p.m. • The team is responsible for costs incurred to remove and/or dispose of any equipment left in the team space.
Sunday, March 1, 2026 – Monday, March 2, 2026	4 p.m., Sunday – 2 a.m., Monday	<p>Gates open to tent companies and other vendors to begin removal of team tents and other rental equipment.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All team tents must be removed by 2 a.m., Monday, March 2, 2026. 2. If team tents are not removed by the designated time, the tents will be removed by the Show’s tent contractor at the team’s expense. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Show is not liable for any damage to or loss of tents left in the Contest area after the designated removal time. • It is the team’s responsibility to ensure their tent has been removed. • Failure to remove tents in a timely manner may result in forfeiture of a team’s invitation to future Contests and the tent company may be removed from the approved tent vendor list.

Vehicle Access

1. Move-out procedures will be the same as move-in procedures.
2. Teams will be issued gate move-out passes to access the Contest grounds once gates are opened to the teams. Teams will report to the 610 Lot to receive their move out passes.
3. Teams arriving at the 610 Lot locations will be directed to a staging area by WCBBQ Committee members.
4. Once positioned, the driver will exit the vehicle, proceed to the check-in/check-out tent, and receive the gate move-out pass that will allow access to the Contest grounds. **You are required to list your name and cell phone number on the gate move-out pass so that we may reach you if your car is blocking access for other vehicles.**
5. After receiving the gate move-out pass, the vehicle will remain in the 610 Lot staging area until a WCBBQ Committee member releases the vehicle to proceed to the Contest grounds.
6. **Only two vehicles per space will be permitted on the Contest grounds at any one time.**
7. The entry and exit gates for move-out will be assigned according to your space number. Please see Appendix B in this Handbook for your gate assignment.
8. Your gate assignment will also be listed on the move-out pass.
9. Please notify all your team members and delivery companies of your assigned gate.
10. All other team members should park in the 610 Lot and walk over the pedestrian bridge to gain access to the Contest grounds. This is a practical consideration to reduce congestion on the grounds.

Tent Move-Out

1. It is the responsibility of the Team Owner to ensure the surface of the lot, within your assigned team space, is left in the same condition as it was prior to move-in.
 - This includes removal of all tent stakes and properly filling, capping and sealing all stake holes and/or other surface damages.
 - Any damage to the lot that is not repairable should be immediately reported to the Team's Contestant Supervisor **and** the WCBBQ Office (wcbbq@rodeohouston.com).
 - Non-compliance with tent stake hole repairs will result in a penalty of \$500.00 plus \$10.00 per hole, to be invoiced via the Team's online account, and payable at the time of assessment.
 - Additionally, any team found to be non-compliant with this rule will be placed on a probationary status, which could result in revocation of future invitations to the World's Championship Bar-B-Que Contest.
2. Aisles shall remain passable at all times. Do not block aisles with your vehicles at any time.
 - Noncompliance may result in your vehicle being towed.
3. All contractor vehicles must identify the owner/driver with a windshield placard with the drivers name and onsite contact number.
 - Noncompliance may result in your vehicle being towed.

GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

ANIMALS

Animals are NOT permitted on the grounds except for Seeing Eye dogs or certified “human assistance” dogs. Any team member with an assistance animal must comply with the following guidelines:

1. The team must submit a copy of the paperwork demonstrating assistance animal certification to the WCBBQ Office by February 1, 2026, in order for the animal to gain access to the grounds.
2. The assistance animal must remain on a leash and with the person requiring assistance at all times while on the Show grounds.
3. To protect the health and well-being of all animals on the Show grounds, the team must provide current health records, including vaccination records, to the Show’s veterinarian at move-in.

GIVEAWAYS

Giveaways by teams to persons outside of their spaces are generally not permitted, except for teams owned by official Show sponsors. Exceptions must be approved in advance by the WCBBQ Office (wcbmq@rodeohouston.com).

1. All requests must be received in writing with samples or artwork attached 60 days prior to the Contest.
2. Giveaways inside the team’s assigned space to guests invited to team private parties do NOT require approval but MUST NOT be of a political, religious, discriminatory, or lewd nature.
3. The Show, as a non-profit organization, is precluded from engaging in political activity. Additionally, the Rodeo does not tolerate discriminatory practices. The Rodeo has the right to prohibit or require the removal/cessation of any giveaways or other materials/behaviors they determine, at their sole discretion, detract from the general character of the Show. This includes, but is not limited to, items having a political, discriminatory, racial or lewd nature, such as the Confederate flag and items for/against political parties or candidates.
4. Giveaways may not include any of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo logos or “marks” without prior permission of the Show’s marketing department.

MOTORIZED VEHICLES

Teams, guests, or general public are not allowed to bring golf carts, motor vehicles, Segway personal transporters (or similar two-wheeled, self-balancing electric vehicles), bicycles, roller skates/blades, skate boards, remote-controlled toys, or any other motorized vehicle/apparatus, except wheelchairs or personal scooters, onto the Contest grounds.

MUSIC

1. Amplified music must be set to entertain the guests inside the team space only.
2. Horns or public-address systems are prohibited.
3. Teams playing excessively loud music will be asked to turn it down or off.
4. All music ends at 11 p.m.
5. Failure to cooperate with requests regarding music when made by WCBBQ Management or Show officials may result in immediate expulsion from the Contest or forfeiture of future invitations.

OTHER

1. Shoes and shirts are required at all times.
2. Clothing may not be of a political, discriminatory, or lewd nature, such as the Confederate flag and items for/against political parties or candidates. Any person wearing inappropriate clothing or not wearing appropriate clothing, as determined at the sole discretion of Show officials, will be asked to leave the Contest grounds.
3. Any unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and remotely piloted aircrafts (RPA), commonly known as drones, are strictly prohibited from the Contest.

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

Teams may not engage in the following activities:

1. Teams may not provide special entertainment or activities for the general public (i.e., promotions, gaming, registrations, band shows, demonstrations, contests, etc.) without prior written consent from the WCBBQ Office (<mailto:wcbqq@rodeohouston.com> or 832-667-1210).
2. Teams may not fundraise, sell memberships, or solicit contributions while on Show grounds.
3. **Teams may NOT charge door admission to their spaces or sell ANY item, including food and drink, from their space or any location within the Contest area during the Contest, move-in, or move-out.**
4. No gambling of any kind is permitted.
5. Stickers for any purpose are prohibited.

CONTEST INFORMATION

AWARDS

The following awards will be given in the listed categories:

Category	Award	Recipients
Brisket, Chicken, Ribs	Buckle, trophy and banner	Grand Champion Overall Grand Champion Go Texan
Brisket, Chicken, Ribs	Trophy and banner	Reserve Champion Overall Reserve Champion Go Texan
Brisket	Trophy and banner	Champion Brisket 2 nd Place Brisket 3 rd Place Brisket
Chicken	Trophy and banner	Champion Chicken 2 nd Place Chicken 3 rd Place Chicken
Ribs	Trophy and banner	Champion Ribs 2 nd Place Ribs 3 rd Place Ribs
Brisket, Chicken, Ribs	Finalist banner	All 30 meat Finalists (Top 10 in each category)
Dutch Oven Dessert	Trophy and banner	Champion Dutch Oven Dessert 2 nd Place Dutch Oven Dessert 3 rd Place Dutch Oven Dessert
Open Contest	Trophy and banner	Champion Open Contest 2 nd Place Open Contest 3 rd Place Open Contest
Other Categories	Trophy and banner	Best Façade Best Overall Theme Best Skit
Other Categories	Banner	2 nd Place Best Façade 2 nd Place Best Overall Theme 2 nd Place Best Skit
Chief Cooks	Pins	Each team will receive four (4) Chief Cook pins

OPEN CONTEST JUDGING

Participation in the Open Contest is optional.

1. Each team, regardless of the total number of team spaces, may only turn in one (1) entry to be judged and scored. Entries in the Open Contest should not be dessert.
2. All entries MUST be cooked at the Contest.
3. Teams should declare their intention to compete in the Open Contest by February 1st by completing the Cook Information Task in their team's online account.
4. Each entry must be enough for at least six (6) samples (enough for five (5) judges and a tie break, if necessary). Teams may turn in as much as desired within the confines of the sample container provided.
5. Each team must use the sample container provided; no other containers will be accepted, judged, or scored.
6. The container MUST NOT be marked in any way (e.g., with a good luck kiss with lipstick, a thumbprint of the cook, etc.).
7. Unlike the meat judging contest, the samples may be arranged, decorated, or garnished as the team sees fit for judging and scoring.
8. A higher score is more desirable. The high and the low score of the Open Contest entry will be removed and not utilized in calculating the sample average. The average of the remaining three scores are multiplied by four to achieve a 100-point grading scale. Open contest entries will be scored by five judges on the basis of:
 - a. Presentation (1 – 10 points)
 - b. Taste (1 – 15 points)
9. The turn in time is 1:00 p.m. through 2:30 p.m. on Friday, February 27, 2026.
10. Entries will be turned in at the same location as the WCBBQ meat contest entries in the northwest corner of the Committee Headquarters tent area. Committee volunteers will be out as you walk up to guide and assist you with turn-in.
11. Each entry will be checked at turn-in and coded for judging.
12. Judging will begin promptly at 1:30 p.m. and continue until all entries are scored.
13. Scores will be tallied, and an Open Contest Champion will be selected.
14. Three (3) chief cook finalists will be selected and notified before the Contest Awards Presentation Saturday in the Garden. The three (3) chief cook finalists will join the meat contest finalists on stage to receive their award.

DUTCH OVEN DESSERT JUDGING

Participation in the Dutch Oven Dessert Contest is optional.

1. Each team, regardless of the total number of team spaces, may only turn in one (1) entry to be judged and scored.
2. All entries MUST be cooked at the Contest inside the Dutch oven and may not be cooked before the Dutch oven is tagged.
 - The Dutch oven may not be used directly on the parking lot surface as it may result in damage to the lot.
 - The oven must be placed in a small pit or grill in order to contain the coals during the entire cooking process.

3. Teams should declare their intention to compete in the Dutch Oven Contest by February 1st by completing the Cook Information Task in their team's online account.
4. Each entry must be enough for at least six (6) samples (enough for five (5) judges and a tie break, if necessary). Teams may turn in as much as desired within the confines of the sample container provided.
5. Each team must use the sample container provided; no other containers will be accepted, judged, or scored.
6. The container **MUST NOT** be marked in any way (e.g., with a good luck kiss with lipstick, a thumbprint of the cook, etc.).
7. Unlike the meat judging contest, the dessert may be arranged, decorated, or garnished as the team sees fit for judging and scoring.
8. A higher score is more desirable. The high and the low score of the Dutch Oven Dessert entry will be removed and not utilized in calculating the sample average. The average of the remaining three scores are multiplied by four to achieve a 100-point grading scale.
9. Dutch Oven Dessert entries will be scored by five judges on the basis of:
 - a. Presentation (1 – 10 points)
 - b. Taste (1 – 15 points)
10. The turn in time is 2:30 p.m. through 4:00 p.m. on Friday, February 27, 2026.
11. Entries will be turned in at the same location as the WCBBQ meat contest entries in the northwest corner of the Committee Headquarters tent area. Committee volunteers will be out as you walk up to guide and assist you with turn-in.
12. Each entry will be checked at turn-in and coded for judging.
13. Judging will begin promptly at 3:30 p.m. and continue until all entries are scored.
14. Scores will be tallied and a Dutch Oven Dessert Champion will be selected.
15. Three (3) chief cook finalists will be selected and notified before the Contest Awards Presentation Saturday in the Garden. The three (3) dessert chief cook finalists will join the meat contest finalists on stage to receive their award.

MEAT JUDGING

Participation

1. Every team **must** participate in the meat judging contest.
2. A team shall consist of a Team Owner, Chief Cook, Assistant Cooks as necessary, and a pit.
3. Teams will be defined based upon registered ownership status as listed on their lease agreement/account. HLSR/WCBBQ decisions on team ownership will be final.
4. Contest entries **must** be cooked within the team's assigned space, on a specified pit, and by the Chief Cook designated by the team owner.

5. Teams **MUST** cook their contest meat entries on the specified pit within their assigned space by their designated Chief Cook. Teams sharing tents may not place their pits in one team space only.
6. Any team or individual associated with a team violating these rules will be immediately disqualified from the Contest, as well as the possibility of future Contests.
7. Each team, regardless of the number of team spaces, is allowed to turn in not more than one entry in each contest meat category for a maximum of three entries per team. While not required to enter all contest meat categories, each team **must** submit at least one contest meat entry in the category of their choice.

Cooking Equipment

1. Each team **must** have at least one pit, but may use any number as they deem necessary.
2. Teams may not share pits with other teams.
3. Team pit(s) may be located anywhere within the lease agreement area of that team, subject to Fire Marshal and WCBBQ Committee approval.
4. Fires **must** be of wood, wood pellets, or charcoal. Gas and electric heat sources shall not be permitted for cooking or holding. Propane and electric devices are permitted as fire starters, provided the contest meat entry is not in/on the pit. Electrical accessories such as spits, augers or forced air draft are allowed. No open pits, fire pits or fires built on the ground are permitted.

Chief Cook

1. Each team **must** have one designated Chief Cook. The Chief Cook must cook or oversee the preparation and cooking of all meat entries. The Chief Cook may delegate preparation and cooking tasks to Assistant Cooks as necessary.
2. A Chief Cook cannot cook for multiple teams.
3. Contestant Supervisors will monitor the cooking and witness the tagged contest meat entry for each Chief Cook.
4. Under no circumstances will a Chief Cook for one team be allowed to cook or monitor the cooking of another team's contest meat entry, even on a separate pit. Violations will result in disqualification from the Contest and the possibility of future Contests.

Contest Meat Categories and Tagging

1. Categories for the meat contest are chicken, pork ribs and beef brisket. Meat entry samples for judging must consist of **no less than**:
 - ½ of a fully joint whole chicken with skin on
 - 9 full spare, St. Louis style or baby back pork ribs
 - 10 full or partial slices of beef brisket. Burnt end are not allowed.
2. Tagging for contest meat entries will take place from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Thursday. Two samples of each meat will be tagged by the contestant supervisor.

3. Prior to tagging, the meat may not be salted, seasoned, marinated, or cooked. Pre-trimmed brisket is allowed.
4. Specified turn-in times for contest meat entries will be given to teams during tagging.
5. Turn-in times will be assigned to teams so that consideration is given to the location of the team space in relation to the judging area and also to allow contest meat entries to be judged as they are received in the judging area.

Contest Meat Collection

1. All contest meat entries **must** be cut from the tagged meat in the presence of a Contestant Supervisor.
2. Each team must use the turn-in container provided by the Contestant Supervisor. No other containers will be accepted, judged or scored.
3. Sauce or glaze **must** be cooked onto the contest meat entry. No pooled sauce, side sauce or liquids are permitted in the turn-in container.
4. Use of aluminum foil inside the turn-in container is optional, but it must be fully contained within the container. Garnish or other objects of any kind are **not allowed** inside the turn-in container.
5. The contest turn-in container **may not** be marked in any way (e.g. a good luck kiss with lipstick, a thumbprint of the Chief Cook, pen marks, etc.).
6. Turn-in times for contest meat entries on Saturday will be as follows:
 - Chicken turn-in will begin at 10:00am and conclude at 11:30am
 - Pork ribs turn-in will begin at 12:00pm and conclude at 1:30pm
 - Brisket turn-in will begin at 2:00pm and conclude at 3:30pm

Contest Meat Turn-in

1. Teams will receive their turn-in times during meat tagging. Teams are expected to be on time submitting their contest turn-in container to the judging area.
2. Upon submission, the turn-in container will be inspected to ensure that it contains the correct type of meat sample, there is an adequate amount of samples for judging, and that the meat collection rules have been followed.
3. The tag containing the team name, space number and turn-in time will be removed from the contest turn-in container and a coded number will be assigned and marked on the container.
4. Each contest turn-in container will be randomly placed into insulated storage boxes until the judging process begins.

Judging Process

1. There will be one judging round of 85 judges for each meat category of chicken, pork ribs and beef brisket.

2. The contest turn-in containers will be randomly taken from the insulated storage boxes and placed on the judging tables. The WCBBQ Committee will monitor the judging process to assure that:
 - contest meat entries are not discussed by the judges
 - all contest meat entries are judged
 - the judging slips are completed correctly
3. Judges are provided fresh plates and utensils for each meat entry as well as food to cleanse their palate between samples.
4. Each contest meat entry is evaluated on its own merit, not compared to other entries.
5. Contest meat entries will be scored by five judges on the basis of:
 - sight/texture (1 – 5 points)
 - smell (1 – 10 points)
 - tenderness (1 – 15 points)
 - taste (1 – 20 points)
6. A higher score is more desirable. The high and the low score of each contest meat entry will be removed and not utilized in calculating the sample average. The average of the remaining three scores are multiplied by two to achieve a 100-point grading scale.
7. Teams with the top 10 scores in each contest meat category will be declared a Finalist and notified by their Contestant Supervisor.
8. The highest score in each meat category will be awarded Champion for that category.
9. The highest cumulative overall score will be awarded Grand Champion Overall.
10. The same process is used to determine the Grand Champion Go-Texan.

Contest Results Presentation

1. The Contest Awards Presentation will be held Saturday at 7:00 p.m. on the main stage in The Garden.
2. Only the Chief Cook from each Finalist team will be allowed on stage for the Contest Awards Presentation. Other team members must remain in the audience.
3. Finalist teams will be announced for each contest meat category, according to the registered team name. Individual Chief Cook names will not be announced.
4. Upon completion of the presentation, Chief Cooks receiving awards, along with their teams, will go to the photography area for a team photo. The WCBBQ Committee will be available to assist.

APPENDIX A

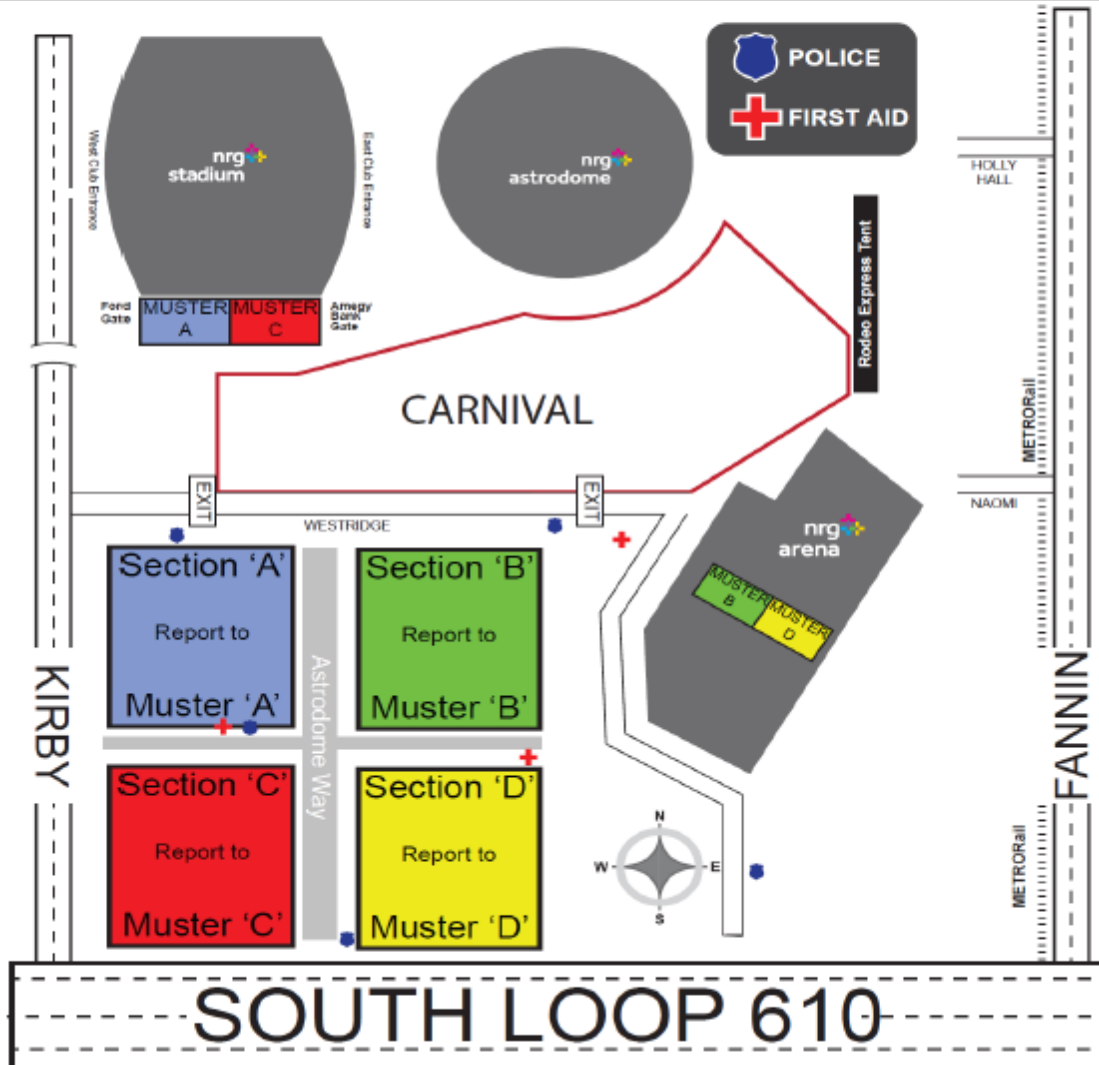
Emergency Muster Areas



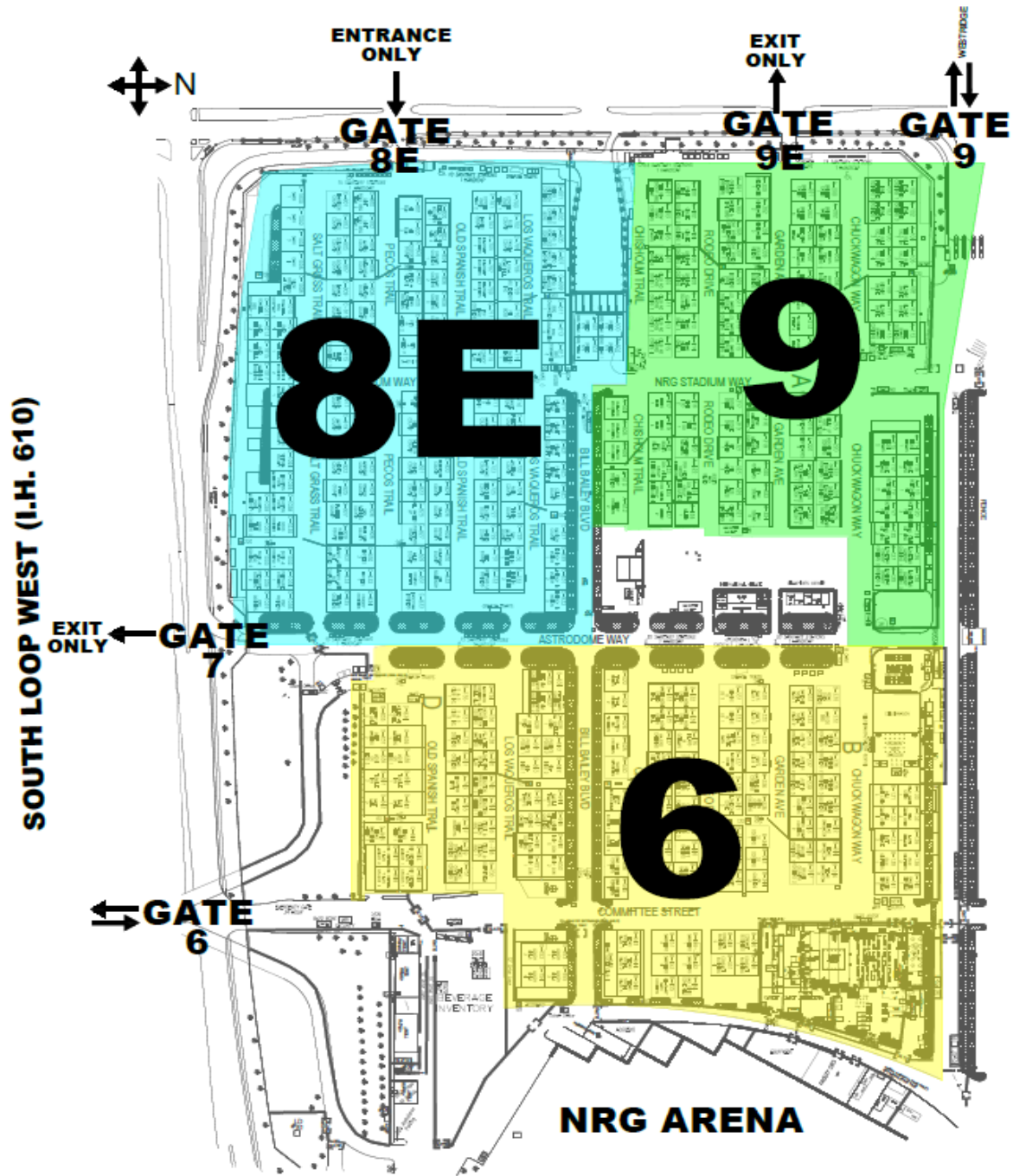
WCBBQ
Emergency Evacuation

Safety: 832.667.1300 • Security: 832.667.3636

WCBBQ Emergency Hardline: 832.667.3838

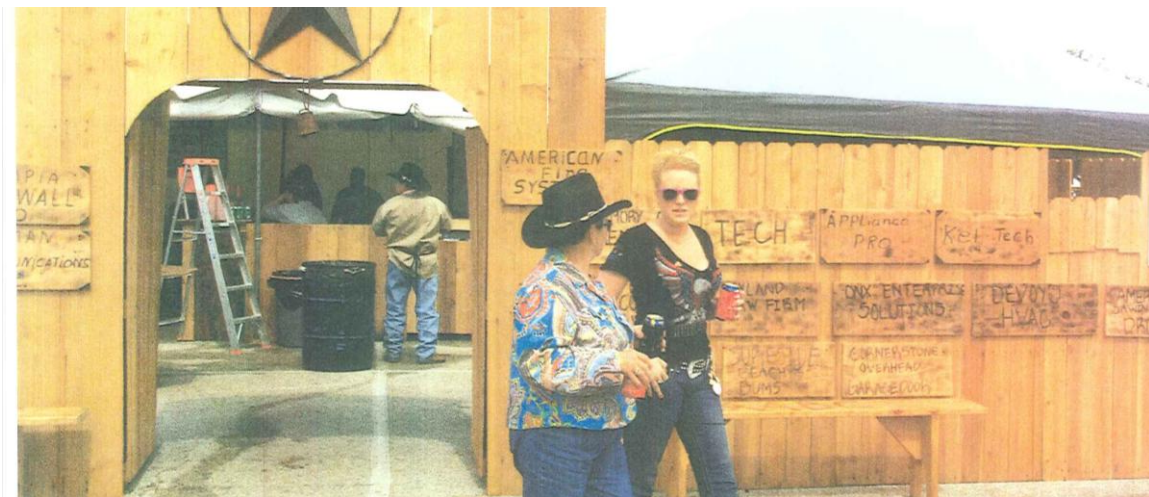


APPENDIX B
Move-In/ Move-Out Gate Assignments



APPENDIX C

Correct Donor Signage



APPENDIX D

Incorrect Donor Signage

