



*Vermont Zen Center
Building Use Policy 2012*



Vermont Zen Center

Building Use of the Vermont Zen Center

The primary purpose of the Vermont Zen Center is to carry out its mission to create a peaceful and inviting environment in support of those who seek wisdom, compassion, joy and equanimity within a Buddhist context. Our programs and our Sangha (Buddhist community) are the top priority when it comes to the use of our facility. However, the Zen Center is pleased to expand its outreach into the community by offering the use of its facilities when appropriate and provided it does not interfere with our scheduled offerings.

This information has been prepared to help you plan a successful group single or multi-day retreat at the Vermont Zen Center. We look forward to discussing the arrangements with you in detail. For more information please call our Guest Master, Dr. Ramiro Barrantes, at 802-324-5337 or email him at ramiro@vermontzen.org.

Facilities, Policies, Rules, and Regulations

The Vermont Zen Center is a Buddhist temple and retreat facility of approximately 16,000 square feet overlooking the LaPlatte River in a rural setting of 75 acres. The buildings and grounds offer many features for contemplative retreats. During retreats, two of our three buildings are available to the public: the Sangha (community) building and the Dharma (teaching) building. The Buddha building is reserved exclusively for the use of Zen Center members.

Buddha Hall—This is the former meditation room of the Zen Center, now used for chanting services, ceremonies, instruction, talks, and other large group experiences. It contains an audio system, an altar, mats and cushions for meditation, and several chairs. It can accommodate approximately 50 people on mats and up to 90 on chairs. The altar cannot be moved nor may pictures be attached to the wall. Only water or tea used by a speaker is permitted in the Buddha Hall. Rearrangement of the Buddha Hall or any of the other rooms must be approved by the Center.

Common Rooms—On each residential floor is a comfortable lounge where you are welcome to hold small group meetings.

Dining Room—Our dining room can seat 60 people for meals, which are served buffet-style. The dining room can also be used as a meeting space for lectures and large group meetings.

Food—We serve healthy, tasty lacto-ovo vegetarian food and often offer vegan options. All of our meals are nutritionally balanced and prepared with care. We have very limited capacity to accommodate people with special dietary needs; those whom we cannot accommodate can serve themselves from what is offered or, in some cases, can bring their own food provided it is vegetarian—containing no meat, fish, poultry or their by-products. No meat, fish, poultry or their by products, such as food containing gelatin (e.g. marshmallows) or animal

stock, is allowed on the premises including outdoor areas and parking lots at any time for any reason. Food is not permitted outside the dining room. We ask that you remind your participants not to waste food.

Alcohol and Drugs—The serving, consumption, or use of alcoholic beverages, marijuana, or other controlled substances is not permitted at any time on Center property, including the outdoor areas and parking lots. Violation of this rule is sufficient ground for a Center staff member to withdraw immediately any group's use of the facilities and to deny use in the future.

Business Services—We can provide retreat groups in residence with access to an office, including a photocopier and fax, at an additional daily fee. We offer wireless high speed internet connection for computer users. **Please note:** guests must bring their own computer/laptop and be able to configure it to work on a wireless network.

Bedrooms—We provide single and double rooms, a limited number of triples and one quad. All rooms are located on the basement and second floors of the Sangha Building, with the exception of one handicapped-accessible bedroom and bathroom on the first floor of the Dharma Building. All rooms have windows. The buildings are not air-conditioned, though bedrooms have fans. Rooms are provided with sheets, a pillow, a blanket, a bedspread, and towels for each guest. There are 22 bedrooms at the Center, but not all of them are available for retreats.

Bathrooms—There are bathrooms on each residential floor that can be designated as needed. There are no rooms with private bathrooms.

Laundry Room—Laundry facilities are not available for the use of guests or groups except in emergencies.

Communication—There are no phones in guest bedrooms. Since we do not have someone answering the Zen Center's phone 24/7, we suggest that the group leader uses his or her cell phone for emergencies. Cell phone service varies on our property, but AT&T work well. Please note that cell phones are not permitted in the meditation areas.

Grounds—Guests are encouraged to enjoy our beautiful outdoor environment. We have one enclosed meditation garden with a sitting deck, a secluded rear garden dedicated to the Bodhisattva Jizo, and numerous walking paths throughout the property and over the LaPlatte River.

Silence—The Vermont Zen Center seeks to be a place of refuge, reflection, and peace. Each group using the Center for its own purposes will have its own discipline, which may include varying levels of silence. Whatever the practice of your group, guests should be respectful of the contemplative atmosphere of the Zen Center. Guests should not bring or use music players without earphones. Cell phones should not be used or turned on in any of the common spaces in the buildings, which includes the Buddha Hall, dining room, meeting rooms, lounges, or front lobby area. We do not have televisions, movie screens, or projectors. If you wish to show a video related to your spiritual discipline, you will need to bring whatever

equipment is needed.

Smoking—Smoking is not permitted in the buildings or grounds of the Zen Center. There is no designated smoking area. If there are smokers in your group, they must leave the grounds before lighting up.

Dress—Dress at the Vermont Zen Center is casual, however we do not wear sleeveless shirts, tank tops, short shorts, and overly tight or revealing clothing. Shoes are removed in the entryway and not worn anywhere in the buildings. House slippers may be used.

Children—During retreats, the Vermont Zen Center is a facility geared toward adults. We have no provisions for child care.

Pets—We love animals but cannot accommodate pets. We will permit certified companion dogs for seeing-impaired guests.

Incense & Fragrance—For the sake of those who are highly sensitive to fragrance, please do not use perfume or cologne, and please use only unscented, fragrance-free personal hygiene products. The Center uses high quality Japanese incense. Please do not burn other types of incense at the Center. Both incense and candles can only be used in approved places.

Decorations—All decorations require prior approval of the Center. Decorations may only be attached to wooden trim and doors with masking tape or other approved means. No decorating may be attached with nails, thumbtacks, or anything causing damage to walls or woodwork. All such decorations must be removed immediately following the event.

Recycling and Avoiding Waste—Recycling is a policy of the Zen Center. As a part of that policy, no Styrofoam cups, bowls, plates or other Styrofoam articles are to be used at the Center. Receptacles for recycling glass, metal, aluminum and paper will be available for your use. Please be mindful of water use—if people are staying at the Center, please remind them not let the tap run when brushing teeth or to take excessively long showers. Also, please do not waste food. Take only what you can eat, and eat all you take.

Breakage—All persons and/or groups using our facilities are expected to exercise reasonable care and judgment in such use in order to prevent defacement, damage, or breakage. The persons signing the Room Use Agreement shall be responsible for paying costs incurred by the Center in cleaning, repairing, or replacing any part of the building or its furnishings and equipment which in the judgment of the Board of Directors has been carelessly or irresponsibly subjected to more than normal wear and tear by the persons or group involved.

Parking—Parking in the Center parking areas or designated handicapped parking space is available only during the period of time that a group has contracted to use the facility. Parking is available on a first-come, first-served basis and excludes certain spots that may be specifically reserved at all times for staff of the Center. Any damage to vehicles is at the owner's expense; the Center is not responsible for theft or damage to personal property.

Security—Our Center works to maintain a safe and secure environment within the facility.

However, no systems are foolproof. We ask that all users pay close attention to personal property and valuables, not leaving them unattended. The Center is not responsible for theft or damage to personal property.

Advertisement—Approval of the use of the grounds and facilities does not constitute or imply endorsement of any group, its mission, or its positions. Groups approved to use facilities must not advertise the event in such a way as to imply endorsement by the Vermont Zen Center. No activities or advocacy may take place within our buildings or grounds that conflicts with the policies and the practices of the Vermont Zen Center.

Prices—\$90 per person per night and including 3 meals per day. Coffee, tea, and light snacks can also be available upon request.

Payment—**Payment is accepted in cash, check, or money order.** Credit card payment is through PayPal only, and there will be a 3% surcharge. Your group is responsible for paying the Zen Center in full **two weeks** prior to your event. Your group representative should give us a confirmed number of participants at that time. This is the minimum number for which we will charge you. This number can increase after the confirmation date. Please note that we have a very small staff and the advance notice is necessary so that we can make arrangements for your group's comfort.

Cancellation Policy—Full refund 2 weeks before the event; 50% refund up to 1 week before the event; less than 1 week, no refund.

Emergency Scheduling Conflicts—The Center reserves the right to pre-empt any facility use for its own in cases of emergencies, such as funerals. Notice will be provided as early as possible and full refund will be made.

Check-In for Retreats—Retreats begin with registration on opening day from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. We ask that guests arrive between those times to check in, get their room and get oriented. Dinner is from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. except on Tuesdays and Thursdays, when it from 5–5:45 p.m.

Check Out for Retreats—Retreats end by noon on closing day and usually include breakfast and lunch. We ask that guests check out of their rooms by 2 p.m. Please take a moment to read the housekeeping cards in your room that serve as guide for exiting your room and the building. Our policy is that personal belongings left at the Zen Center by guests will be given to charity.

Starting and Ending Times for Day Use

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday—8:30 a.m. through 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday and Thursday—7:30 a.m. through 5:30 p.m.

Saturday—8:30 a.m. through 6:30 p.m.

Sunday—1:00 p.m. through 6:30 p.m.

Check List for Guests

We encourage guests to bring:

- Comfortable shoes and modest clothing—for outdoor sitting, walking, hiking, etc.
- Bathrobe and slippers—for use in our communal bathrooms/hallways
- Extra towels—we provide one hand towel and one bath towel per guest
- Shawl or sweater—for use during meditation or evening walks
- Lightweight luggage—all bedrooms are accessible via stairs
- Medication, including aspirin if used regularly

We ask guests NOT to bring:

- Candles or incense
- Scented products
- Drugs or alcohol, including beer and wine
- Food products containing meat, fish, poultry, gelatin, or the like
- Pets—unless certified companion dogs for seeing-impaired guests
- Sleeveless shirts, tank tops, short shorts, and overly tight or revealing clothing

Room Use Agreement

Please Complete Entire Form

Name of Organization _____ Date _____

Name of Contact Person _____

Non-Profit Status _____ Federal ID No. _____

Address _____ Zip _____

Organization Day Phone _____ Cell or Evening Phone _____

E-mail _____ Fax _____

Organization's Purpose _____

Event Name and Description _____

Date(s) Requested _____ Start Time _____ End Time _____

Anticipated total number of participants _____ Will meals be needed? Yes No

TIME FRAME OF EVENT:

One day Multiple days—non-residential Multiple days—residential

WHICH DAY(S) OF THE WEEK?

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

ROOM(S)/SERVICES REQUESTED:

- Buddha Hall/Meditation Room (90 people max if both chairs and cushions are used)
- Dining Room/Social Hall (seating at tables for 60 max)
- Living Room (18 people max)
- Basement Common Room (20 people max)
- Sound System

RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATIONS (Please note that couples do not share rooms):

How many single rooms? _____ How many double rooms? _____ Mobility accessible room? _____

How many men? _____ How many women? _____ *(Please let us know a minimum of one week before event.)*

MEALS REQUESTED:

Breakfast: Number of people _____ Number of days _____

Lunch: Number of people _____ Number of days _____

Dinner: Number of people _____ Number of days _____

Snacks: Number of people _____ Number of days _____

If there are any special food requirements or allergies please give complete details in the section below.

SET UP INSTRUCTIONS, SPECIAL REQUESTS, ETC. (please attach additional pages if needed):

RELEASE AND INDEMNITY

This Release and Indemnity Agreement is between the above-named organization (“Organization”) and the Vermont Zen Center (“Center”).

Agreement

NOW THEREFORE in consideration of this Center permitting the Organization to use the Property and improvements described above, the Organization agrees as follows:

1. The Organization hereby releases, discharges, and covenants not to sue the Center or its Directors, administrators, agents, officers, members, volunteers, and employees, and releases them from any and all liability, claims, demands, losses, or damages arising out of the Organization’s use of the Property. If any member, guest, invitee, or participant of the Organization makes any claim against the Center or its Directors, administrators, agents, officers, members, volunteers, or employees, in connection with the Organization’s use of the Property, the Organization will indemnify, defend and hold the Center and its administrators, directors, agents, officers, members, volunteers, or employees harmless from any and all litigation expenses, attorney fees, losses, liability, damages, and costs arising out of such claim.
2. The Organization represents that it carries standard general liability insurance coverage with a minimum of \$500,000 per occurrence. Upon request, Organization will provide the Center with proof of liability insurance, and if requested, will add the Center as an additional insured under Organization’s general liability policy.

Acceptance of Responsibility and Payment

I agree to be responsible for the conduct of those coming to, or participating in, the activity for which this application is being made, and for any damage beyond normal wear and tear that may occur as a result of this activity. I will remove all signs and decorations posted by my group immediately after the meeting/event has ended. I further agree that the Center property will be used in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of the Board of Directors, and I hereby consent to the Release and Indemnity Agreement.

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Title: _____