

# MERCER BOTANIC GARDENS

## PROFESSIONAL AND GROUP PHOTOGRAPHY GUIDELINES

Professional photographers and non-professional groups larger than five individuals who desire an organized photography session, like all visitors to Mercer, must comply with the *Rules and Regulations for County Parks in Harris County, Texas* (“Rules”), which were approved and adopted by the Commissioners Court of Harris County, Texas, on August 11, 2015. You may obtain a copy of the Rules in the Visitor Center at Mercer or online at [www.hcp4.net](http://www.hcp4.net).

We direct your attention to certain provisions of the Rules, which are of particular import to you, and offer guidelines on how to comply.

### Rules

Section 5, Park Use: No person shall use a park, or any area or facility therein, for any purpose other than for the purpose for which it was designed or designated. **Any activity that will disrupt the normal purpose of the park is prohibited. Anyone seeking to use the park facilities for the purposes of video recordings and/or photography for profit is strictly prohibited without proper permission from designated park personnel.**

Section 6, Park Hours of Operation: No person shall enter into or remain within a park at any time other than during such time as the park is open to the public as designated on the sign posted at or near the entrance of the park, unless given prior written approval by the County Commissioner of the precinct occupied by the park.

Section 9, Plant Life: No person shall willfully destroy or remove any tree, shrub, vine, wildflower, grass, fern, moss, leaves, cones, dead or downed wood, or any other plant life within a park without the consent of or under the direct supervision of the Superintendent.

Section 19, Dumping and Littering: The disposal of rubbish in any manner other than by depositing it in trash cans provided for this purpose; the willful destruction of or damage to or theft of County property; the creation of any hazard to persons or things; and the climbing upon plant bedding areas or any part of a public building are prohibited. No person shall bring into a park any trash, refuse, or waste material.

Section 20, Solicitations and Sale of Goods and Services: The solicitation or sale of goods and services, or the seeking of donations for a cause, is prohibited unless the person receives the prior written approval of Commissioners Court.

Section 24, Special Provisions: **Mercer Botanic Gardens. Professional photographers or videographers, or groups larger than five individuals, shall register with the park director prior to any photography session at the park.**

Section 27, Effect on Existing Law: These Rules and Regulations are in addition to, and not in lieu of, all federal, state, and municipal laws, rules, and regulations applicable within a park.

Section 28, Enforcement: The Superintendent or his designee shall be authorized to remove any person who violates any of these Rules and Regulations from the park. In addition to removal from the park, charges may be filed against a violator under Section 32.

Section 32, Offenses: In accordance with section 320.0455 of the Texas Local Government Code, a violation of these Rules and Regulations is an offense punishable as a Class C misdemeanor.

### **Guidelines**

You may obtain a registration form in the Visitor Center at Mercer or online: [www.hcp4.net](http://www.hcp4.net) Each professional photographer, and not the studio, must register. The form asks for your name and that of your studio/group, as well as your contact information. Upon return of the completed form to the Visitor Center, you will be issued a badge, which must be worn during your photography sessions at Mercer. At the conclusion of each session, retain your badge, which will be needed for your next scheduled session.

Photography sessions may be scheduled in person at the Visitor Center or by calling 713-274-4160 during operating hours. Sessions are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis and reservations must be made at least two weeks, but not more than three months, in advance. You will need to specify the area of Mercer in which you wish to have your session, the number of persons involved, and that they will comply with the Rules during the session. Due to high demand and to alleviate overcrowding, each professional photographer is limited to one session per day, which may be no more than one hour in length. Scheduling must allow for completion of the session before Mercer's closing time.

You may use hand-held cameras and a single tripod, but not reflector shields, diffusors, or any other ground-based equipment. Tripods may not be placed in planting areas.

You must stay on the walkways, trails, or lawn areas. Do not block pathway access for other visitors to Mercer, and stay out of wooded, planted, bark, and pine-straw mulched areas. Climbing on trees or structures is prohibited.

You may not use furniture or other ground-based props. Blankets, however, may be placed on lawn areas. Do not attach anything to plants or structures, and do not move any garden furniture, ornament, signage, or plant label.

You may not use balloons, confetti, glitter, or any other potentially airborne materials. Do not mark on plants or structures with chalk or any other substance.

Mercer is a family park, and proper attire is required at all times. Models may change clothes in the blue restroom building, which is adjacent to the Staff Building, but not in the Visitor Center

restrooms. Clothing must be kept in the model's possession at all times, and unattended articles will be removed. Mercer is not responsible for lost or damaged items.

Limousines, coaches, and oversized multi-passenger vehicles must be parked in the lot adjacent to and south of Baldwin Boettcher Library after passengers are dropped off.

You and the others in your group may be removed from Mercer for violating the Rules.