

Neighbourhood Block Party Planning Guide

An Easy How-To Guide to Organize a Neighbourhood Block Party

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1. Why Have a Block Party?

A neighbourhood block party is an opportunity for neighbours to get together, meet each other, have some fun, and maybe work together on a neighbourhood activity

Block parties are a great way to build social connections and improve your community.

Knowing your neighbours can make a difference:

- It's easier to get help from neighbours we know in a medical or other emergency than from a friend 10 minutes away.
- Research shows that when neighbours know and trust each other, streets are safer and people are healthier and happier.

5 Reasons to Have a Block Party

1. To have fun
2. To get to know your neighbours
3. To establish new friendships
4. To increase the sense of belonging in your neighbourhood
5. To strengthen neighbourhood spirit and encourage residents to look after the neighbourhood

Connected neighbours leads to positive individual and community well-being. As friendships grow, so do safe, caring and inclusive neighbourhoods that create an overall sense of belonging.

2. How To Organize a Block Party?

Our community is growing increasingly diverse, which is a benefit to everyone. It is important that we provide opportunities to learn about the other people in our community. We need to have neighbourhoods that are welcoming and inclusive for all people, including those from different cultures, backgrounds and ways of life.

In this guide, you will find a step-by-step process for planning your event, along with templates that can be used.

Getting Started

You can choose to host a party in your back yard, or garage. If you choose to do this, it is on private property, so you have more flexibility in what you choose to do.

If you decide to host a party on public property, you will need to adhere to the guidelines set out in the “City Guidelines” section of this document.

It is recommended that your first step is to engage one or two neighbours to help plan the event. You might decide to send out a flyer with some information about neighbourhood block parties, and ask for volunteers. Or, you might just invite a few neighbours to get things started.

Create an organizing committee. It is important to include everyone in the decisions about the event.

Plan to enlist as many neighbours as possible to help out with the event. More hands make light work, and those involved in the planning will be assured of participating. Try to do as much as you can “with” the residents in the neighbourhood, as opposed to “for” them.

If this is your first neighbourhood block party, keep it simple. You can build on your success! Planning for a large event for the first one might make people feel like it is too much work and discourage them from participating.

Pick a time and place: Whether you live in a house or an apartment, your block party can take place in a variety of locations: on a street, common room, lobby, backyard, park, school, or community centre.

Depending on where your party is, there are a couple of steps you'll need to take:

- To have your party on the street, you will need permission to close it. For instruction on how to close your street for a block party, go to the *Closing your street* tab.
- If your party is not on the street, and you have limited communal space, there are a number of other options you can look into. For ideas, go to the *Location ideas* tab.

How Big Should It Be?

It is recommended that you start off with a smaller event. It can always grow.

In selecting who to invite, use natural neighbourhood boundaries where possible (Example: end of the block). If you are planning a street or cul-de-sac party, you need to invite everyone from that area.

Decide early and make it clear in your promotion if this will be a block party restricted to those on the street/block, or whether people can invite friends/relatives (if yes, how many). Also decide and make clear if pets are allowed.

Location, Date, Time

Location

Keep in mind that using a public space will increase the likelihood of shared responsibility for the event.

Public spaces could include the street, alley, or a nearby park.

Safety for all participants needs to be an important factor when determining a location.

Special Note: If you do use public space, City Guidelines (see section in this document) must be followed.

Date/Time

Choosing a date and time that works for most can be challenging. Many approaches can be used:

Flyers can be distributed to all homes on your street asking for date and party suggestions (see Tools and Templates for a sample Questionnaire)

Going door to door to discuss date and party suggestions. This certainly adds a personal touch

Phone or email (if you have that information)

To reach neighbours in townhouses, apartments or condos, it is best to approach the manager. The manager will let you know how to get in touch with the residents

When choosing the time of the event, consider the residents in the area (example: lots of small children), and make certain that the times align. You should plan your neighbourhood block party between the hours of 10 AM and 10 PM.

Create alternate plans in case the weather is inclement. Make a plan to communicate this to residents

Mid-May to end of September are ideal times to host a neighbourhood block party, but winter can also be fun as well.

Once the date has been determined, make sure everyone knows! Take every opportunity to talk it up in the neighbourhood as often as possible prior to the event.

Advertising

Here are some ideas:

- Flyers can be used with a request to drop back their suggestions for the event in your mailbox
- Going door to door. The personal touch is always preferred. If you have new neighbours in your area, it would be particularly important to make personal contact with them
- A casual approach as you see them out in their yards
- Poster on local notice board (if available)
- Phone calls or email (if you have this information)
- Contact the managers of townhouses, apartments or condos for resident information

Set Up

Create a sign-in book with contact information for records for the next block party.

Provide name tags for everyone. Decide what you want written on the name tags (first and last name; house number).

Line up the tables and chairs that will be required. Determine if you want everyone to bring their own chairs and tables, or whether or not that will be provided for.

Make sure there are garbage and recycling containers available.

If you are in a park or area away from residences, determine what might be needed for bathroom facilities.

Let everyone know what is planned for food and drinks (barbeque, pot luck), and what is needed for cutlery and cups. Be aware of possible food allergies in your planning.

Let everyone know what activities are being planned, and what they might need to bring to participate.

Ensure that there is emergency access, and plan to have a first aid kit and fire extinguisher. Make sure that the area is safe for participants.

Plan for clean up at the end of the event.

You may wish to do an evaluation at the end (see Tools and Templates).

Neighbours should observe security precautions and keep back doors locked and equipment in sight during the event.

Be sure to advise RCMP and Community Safety Officers of the date/time/location to ensure they know what is happening.

Criteria For Success

How will you know if you have had a successful neighbourhood block party?

- 👍 If you meet at least one new person in your neighbourhood that you did not know before
- 👍 You get a good participation from the neighbourhood
- 👍 You have some fun!
- 👍 Be courteous. Loud amplification of music can be disruptive to others. Noise levels must be reasonable
- 👍 Consumption of alcohol is not permitted on City or public property (public space)
- 👍 Your neighbourhood block party should be organized between the hours of 10 AM and 10 PM
- 👍 Make sure you clean up after the event

3. City Guidelines

Attachment "D-2" to Schedule "D" Temporary Street Use Permit BLOCK PARTY APPLICATION

LOCATION OF PARTY: _____

From: _____ **To:** _____ (Street, Avenue, etc.) (Street, Avenue, etc.)

Date: _____

Start Time: _____

Finish Time: _____

SKETCH (Placement of barricades)

FEE: Block Party Application Permit \$ _____

Deposit on Barricades \$ _____ x _____ No. of barricades

APPLICANT

Name _____

Address _____ Postal Code _____

Telephone _____ (home) _____ (work) _____ (fax)

IMPORTANT - READ PRIOR TO SIGNING

In consideration of the granting of this permit, the Applicant agrees to save harmless and keep indemnified the City of North Battleford from all actions, causes of actions, claims and demands whatsoever which may be made against the City in consequence of the granting of this permit or anything done thereunder by the Applicant, the Applicant's employees, or agents, and to pay the City for all damages done to any pavement, sidewalk, curb and gutter, or for any damage to any property belonging to or under the control of the City of North Battleford, while used by the Applicant.

Signature of Applicant

Date

BLOCK PARTY CONTACT PERSON

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____

Telephone No(s): _____

BLOCK PARTY POLICY

1. The applicant must make application to temporarily close the street or alley a minimum of three (3) weeks prior to the requested date of the block party.
2. The block party permit application can be picked up at the Public Works Department, City Hall at 1291 101st Street or by contacting 445-1730 to have the information forwarded.
3. All information requested on the permit must be provided. Please note the Noise Bylaw comes into effect at 10:00 PM.
4. Two-thirds (2/3) of the households in the blocked area must be in agreement with the block party. The attached petition must be signed by one person of majority age representing the household that is in agreement.
5. The fee for the permit must be paid at time of application. Arrangements for the pickup and return of the necessary barricades will be done by the permit applicant prior to the event. The barricades should be picked up the day prior to the event by the applicant and dropped off the next working day. There will be a \$35.00 charge for any barricade damaged or stolen during the event and will be recoverable from the permit applicant.
6. Block parties are only allowed on streets which are not bus routes or major arterials.
7. Absolutely no alcohol is permitted on any portion of City property.
8. Upon approval of the block party permit, the contact person will be notified and provided with an approved copy.
9. The most recent edition of The City of North Battleford Traffic Bylaw, Saskatchewan Highway Traffic Act and Saskatchewan Occupational Health and Safety Act shall be used to settle any dispute regarding rules and regulations.

4. Tools and Templates

Checklists

- ✓ Start 6 – 8 weeks in advance
- ✓ Ask a few neighbours to help start the planning
- ✓ Determine the level of interest in the neighbourhood
- ✓ Once the level of interest has been established, create a planning committee
- ✓ Make decisions about location, date, time, food, activities
- ✓ Communicate that information to the neighbourhood
- ✓ Make necessary applications to the City (see City Guidelines)
- ✓ Make arrangements for the items identified in Set Up (bathroom facilities, garbage cans, clean up)
- ✓ Enjoy!

Block Party Questionnaire

A few neighbours have been talking and thought it would be fun to have a “get together”. It would be an opportunity to meet each other and to have some fun! To get this event underway, we would like to know what you think.

Are you interested in participating in a neighbourhood party? Yes No

If Yes, what is the best time of day and best date?

Date	Day	Times	Indicate your choice
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_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Which of the following suggestions would suit your family the best?

- Bring your own burger, meat, buns for a barbeque
- Bring your own picnic
- Bring one dish to share
- Other suggestions:

If you or a family member would like to help organize, plan an activity or set-up, please let us know

Yes No

If you have a talent to share, please let us know:

Please give us your name and contact information so we can contact you directly and keep you informed.

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Email: _____

Please return this questionnaire by _____ to
_____ at

Thanks Neighbour!

Block Party Evaluation Form

Your feedback is appreciated to help plan our future block parties

What were the 3 best things about the block party?

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

What 3 things would you recommend for the next party?

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

How would you like to maintain the neighbourhood connection that was started at the block party during the rest of the year?

Are you willing to help with the planning of a future neighbourhood event?

- Yes No

If yes, please leave your name and contact information

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Email: _____

Thanks Neighbour!

Other Resources

Other communities have some great resources for planning neighbourhood block parties.

Please check out the links below:

<http://www.lethbridge.ca/Things-To-Do/Special-Events/Pages/Block-Parties.aspx>

<http://www.parklandcounty.com/Assets/Recreation/Block+Party+Kit.pdf>

<http://www.reddeer.ca/media/reddeerca/recreation-and-culture/community-programs-and-information/Block-Party-Planning-Guide.pdf>

<http://stalbert.ca/living-here/family-and-community-support-services/neighbourhood-development/block-parties/>

5. Activity Suggestions

General Suggestions:

Visit and eat. Over the centuries, food has always had a very social component in societies.

Take time to introduce one another. This could be done formally, or as part of an activity or game.

Do your best to make everyone feel comfortable and welcome.

Encourage the talent in your neighbourhood to come forward.

Consider who will be attending your event. Try to arrange activities that everyone can participate in.

Encourage intergenerational and intercultural participation. Communities thrive when we all celebrate together, across our lines of identity.

Ensure that the event is accessible for everyone, including individuals with mobility challenges.

Take the opportunity to talk about common issues that are relevant to your neighbourhood (neighbourhood clean-up; vehicle traffic in the area).

In addition to games and activities for event participants, consider inviting presentations from various community groups or organizations

Let your imagination go – be creative and have fun. The sky is the limit!