

PREPARING A SANTA CLAUS PARADE FLOAT

Entering a float in the Grimsby Santa Claus Parade is a great community experience. It is fun, creative, team building and self satisfying to see the smiles of so many spectators. Here are a few tips that can improve your experience, and ensure that you have 'covered the bases':

Float Design

- Sketch out your design and make a list of materials needed. Then create an action list and timeline for your group so that you are well prepared.
- Keep in mind that it can be cold, snowing and/or windy on the day of the parade so plan accordingly.
- Use the theme as much as possible for your entry – but be creative. Sometimes the first thing that comes to mind .. is the same thought that 12 others have.
- Lighting is important for a night time parade. Use Christmas lights, flood lights, car lights, glittery and reflective items.
- Consider the height you are at – people may be looking up at you and we will be at least 8 feet away.
- Be creative – go big, get colourful and bright, be interactive and unique – this is your opportunity to show your community spirit !
- Walkers alongside your entry can be incorporated into your entry.
- Any wording used should be big and bold – and the message should be short and sweet.

Safety

- Consider safety in all aspects of your planning from the time that participants arrive until the time that they are picked up.
- Communicate with your group so that you have a well understood arrival and dismissal plan. Entries must determine a pick up location after the parade if children are on board – make sure all parents know what the plan is and have a contact number in case of miscommunications. EVERY YEAR there is a concerned parent who cannot find their child – so please bring attention to this.
- Consider the risks of your float – falls, trips etc.. – and address them accordingly.

- It is best to have people mostly stationary on the float while the vehicle is moving.
- Drivers should know exactly what they are doing and where they are going ahead of time. Drivers should be focused on driving – not interacting with the crowd.
- Candies and treats cannot be thrown from a vehicle for safety reasons – walkers are permitted to *hand out* candy.
- Do not use open flames on your float – it isn't worth the risks
- Tie down everything really well – you do not want anything getting blown into the crowd.

Final thoughts

- Interact and entertain as much as possible – this is what gets the spectators excited.
- Materials around your home can often be used to make a great float ..and they won't cost as much money.
- Double the time that you think you will need to prepare the float – there is always something that needs extra attention or gets missed.
- Communicate excessively with your group about the plans, especially day of.
- Turn parade day into a team building time and celebrate your efforts afterwards !

Thank you for being a part of the parade. People of all ages enjoy the parade each year - and it is only possible through your efforts.