

Santa Claus Parade

Float Building Tips



First Steps

PREPARATION:

1 - Gather a Committee

Start by creating a team or committee, define roles and split various tasks up. We suggest all members help fund, design, and build the float. Later on, determine the roles of each member on the day of the parade such as the driver, those walking in front, and those on the float.

2 - Plan Early!

The first and most important aspect of building a float is to plan early! Building a successful float takes lots of time and lots of planning starting the process early can help immensely.

3 - Theme

Keeping with the overarching theme of the holiday season, but try and make your float unique and try to incorporate your cause/business/community group into the design of your float to help it stand out.

4 - Set a Budget

Sit down with your committee and determine how much you would like to spend on your float. Then determine how this goal will be met and where the funding will be coming from.

5 - Design & Sketch

Come together and draft up an idea of what you want your float to look like. We encourage participants to build something on their float. Having more than just a banner, skirt, and people on your float is beneficial for your committee and the Santa Claus Parade.

6 - Select the Base

After you have come up with the design, begin planning what you will use as the base of your float. Make the decision based on the materials available to you within your group or if you will have to rent something.

7 - Material List

Once your budget and design have been decided, your team can determine exactly how much of each item and material they will require or your float.

BUILDING AND SAFETY:

7 - Gather Materials

Now that you have your budget and materials list, you can go and shop for the items and see if your budget is sufficient. Hardware and craft stores are great places to start.

8 - Build the Base

Work with your group to determine how to make your trailer's float sturdy and safe to support your structures and team. Use wood, PVC piping, chicken wire and plywood to build light yet strong structures for your float.

9 - Decorate the Outside of your Skirt

Use streamers, fringe, tissue paper, card stock and any materials you'd like. Covering the area between the trailer and the road makes for a great float.

10 - Assemble Structures

Once the base and skirt of your float is complete, next create and decorate your floats structures out of light yet sturdy materials.

11 - Assemble & Decorate your Float

Add any finishing touches to your float. This also is a good time to practice setting up and taking down your float like you will on the day of the parade.

12 - Safety Check

When your float is fully set up it is crucial to perform a safety check. This means ensuring your float is safe for people to stand on top of, that the driver can see clearly, and that no parts of your float will fall apart during driving or turning.

13 - Don't Forget to Promote your Float

Make sure to let your entire organization, friends, family, and colleagues about your participation in the parade and to attend and support your tremendous effort!

MOST IMPORTANTLY - CREATIVITY

Please do not let these recommendations and guidelines hinder your creativity. If you have any questions about your float and whether or not your idea can be used do not hesitate to contact us, we'd love to see your ideas come to fruition.

Building the Base

HOW TO PREP YOUR TRAILER TO BE A BASE FOR YOUR FLOAT

Suggested Types of Trailers:

Low Boy Trailers, Hay Trailer, Truck Flatbed, or any transport trailer. If you don't have a trailer, the bed of pick up truck can also be used.

Float Size Requirements:

Your float must be built on a trailer that is less than is 53 feet in length.

Your float cannot be wider than 12 feet (1.5 lanes).

Your float cannot exceed 15 feet tall.

Step 1- Fill your trailer/truck bed with pallets to make the float level and fully visible. Fasten the pallets to the trailer with nails, zip ties, or a stapler gun.

Step 2 - Use plywood to cover your trailer to make a uniform platform for your floats structures and participants to stand safely on.

Step 3 - Next is time to cover up the skirt of your float. We recommend using more plywood to make the skirt. The most secure and safe option to secure the skirt plywood to the float base is with "L" brackets that can be found at any hardware store. Make sure to leave at least 14 inches between the plywood skirt and the road.

Step 4 - Next we recommend you use vinyl sheets, banners, streamers, and frilly tissue paper, to cover up the skirt.

Step 5 - Add streamers or any material that fits your theme to the skirt to cover the wheels and the space between your float and the ground.



Building Tips

FLOAT STRUCTURES BUILDING TIPS:

Here are some suggestions when making structures for your float -

- Build the frame of the structure/object with wood, PVC pipe, rigid cardboard or chicken wire.
- Use cardboard, paper mache, card stock, or cloth to cover and shape your structure.
- Combining multiple materials can help create sturdy yet light structures.
- Then paint and decorate your structures as you please while keeping to the theme of winter festivities.

Miscellaneous Tips for a Successful Float -

- Those on your float are decorations too! Make sure all who are on your float are dressed and lit up.
- Moving parts of your float catch people's attention, whether it is an electronic or part of your committee, movement makes for a great show!
- Electronics are welcomed at the Santa Claus Parade, smoke machines, animatronics, sounds, music and lights are all encouraged.
- Balloons are cheap easy, and effective. Ensure they are fastened down correctly!
- Original decorations help you and your committee floats stand out in the parade.
- Consider the distance from where participants will be watching the parade from. Make sure that all parts of your float are easily digestible at a range.
- Use massive fonts if you have writing anywhere on your float.
- Your float must keep with the Santa Claus/Christmas theme to some extent. We recommend using the colors red, white, and green as well as including fake snow and Christmas lights if you so choose. Please remember that there is only one Santa in the parade and float entries are not permitted to have Santa as a part of their floats.
- Be creative! Silly and wacky floats make for an interesting parade.
- We encourage our parade participants to opt to use recycled or recyclable materials when possible.
- Use LOTS of lights - remember BWG's parade is a night time parade!
- Ensure that no part of your float will obstruct your driver or other float driver's vision.

Memorable Float Examples

