

Calgary



Block Party Guide

for Neighbour Day 2022



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What is Neighbour Day & Why a Block Party?

The City of Calgary designates the third Saturday in June every year as Neighbour Day. This year it is Saturday, June 18. While you can throw a Block Party any time, holding your event on Neighbour Day comes with the advantage of your neighbours anticipating this annual event.

Strong neighbourhoods are important to the health and well-being of our whole city. When neighbourhoods thrive, the people who live there thrive too. Neighbour Day started in June 2014 to celebrate the incredible outpouring of support and generosity neighbours demonstrated after the 2013 floods. We want to continue to celebrate one of the things that makes

Calgary such a great city – our strong and caring communities. Neighbour Day now provides the opportunity for Calgarians to celebrate our community spirit, kindness and resilience.

A block party is a citizen-initiated event held on a city street within a specific block in a community for entertainment purposes. A permit

is required to close roadways for the event. It is powerful! Few things have the power to connect neighbours like a well-planned party. This is an opportunity to get to know your neighbours and where they live. Friendships are formed, a sense of belonging and pride on your block increases, and you open the door to all kinds of other benefits from building a strong neighbourhood.



Getting Started & Applying for a City Permit

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Pick your time

Best place to start is to just commit to a time! Don't worry too much about it needing to work for everyone. If it works for at least a couple neighbours then worst case scenario is you will get to know those neighbours really well. Block parties may only occur between 10 a.m. and 10 p.m., so you can pick a broad window to accommodate more people. As an example, if your block has lots of young children, picking from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. might work best. If it's mostly older children or just adults, maybe from 5pm to 10pm is a better time. If you would like to avoid "eating" times, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. is a great option!

Pick your location

If you are planning a party in a back or front yard of someone's house then there is no need for a permit. If, however, you would like to close your street or alley, you will need to get a block party permit for your party.

Getting a block party permit

Make sure you familiarize yourself with the rules for a [block party permit](#) by visiting the City of Calgary website and downloading the [Block Party Permit Procedures pdf](#). You will need to petition all neighbours affected by the road closure using the form provided in the procedures pdf. One of the benefits of this is it forces you and your fellow planners to go door to door! As you get the necessary signatures to shut down

traffic make sure you invite your neighbours to the party and any future planning meetings or group chats. Permits take at minimum 15 days to process. We strongly encourage planners aiming for Neighbour Day (June 18) to submit their permit request no later than the end of May, but the more notice you can give to your neighbours about this event, the better! Block party permits are always free.

Note: If you haven't done so already, you will need to register for a City myID.



Putting a Plan Together & Using City Resources

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You have a date, and your permits are taken care of (or are in progress)... Congrats! Now is time for the fun part: dreaming up a party with as many of your neighbours as possible.

Look for inspiration

Block parties have been done before. A simple browser search can find you all kinds of examples and advice for how to plan a great block party. A great party often starts with some great creative ideas. The more inspired you are during the planning the more likely your neighbours will get inspired alongside of you and bring great ideas and contributions to the planning.

Share the labour

Every block needs at least one party planner to get the ball rolling but we strongly encourage you to find as many neighbours as possible to help out. The more you share, the more possibilities you will unlock, and the more value the block party will have for you and your neighbours long term.

Have a meeting or a group chat

Do not plan your block party alone! When people have a say in something they immediately take more ownership of it and will be more interested in it. Invite your neighbours to sit around your dinner table, fire pit, or porch/deck to dream together about what your block party could be. Make sure someone takes notes! Bring a notepad and pen and do as much of the planning together as time allows. Too busy to gather before the event? Start a group chat! This is also a great place to chat in the future about a suspicious activity or when you need a cup of sugar. Discuss what each of you can contribute. Whether it's an activity like face painting, water balloons for a water fight, or making the event a potluck, having everyone share the load helps to share the cost.

Activity Ideas

- ▶ Kids and adult activities to consider: A bike parade, scavenger hunt, water fight, sidewalk chalk, etc.
- ▶ The City of Calgary Neighbour Day website has suggestions like [Neighbour Bingo](#) and making a [Neighborhood Wind Chime](#). See more ideas here: [Neighbour Day \(calgary.ca\)](#)
- ▶ Invite your City Councillor! Use their [contact form](#) to let them know you are hosting an event and would like them to attend. Give them as much notice as possible: Neighbour Day will be a busy day for them.

This is the place to be creative. Have fun dreaming up new ideas and using the resources that each of your neighbours bring to the table!

Safety Considerations & COVID-19 Precautions

When planning your block party, safety should be your first priority (with fun being a close second). Block parties are subject to Community Standard Bylaw 5M2004. Here are some overall safety points to consider:

Traffic

If your street is blocked off, this is largely taken care of. As per the permit, the “applicant agrees to obtain and place barricades (approved traffic control devices) in order to safely close the road at their own additional cost. Traffic control devices can be obtained from approved third-party vendors. Alternately, approved traffic control devices may be rented and/or set up by the City of Calgary at an additional cost if so desired” (more information in the [Block Party Permit Procedures pdf](#)). The extra space on the street is an amazing experience for kids to ride bikes, skateboards, and participate in other activities. Just keep in mind that they will get more and more confident with this newfound freedom and may venture past the barriers you setup if no one is watching.

Supervision

As the planner, you will know some of the things that could go wrong and will want to keep an eye on it all. But you need to have fun, too! Find other responsible neighbours to help monitor different activities. Make sure there is an adult close by a bounce house, watching the kids on the trampoline or supervising other higher risk activities.

Alcohol

It shows up at almost every social function. No alcoholic beverages are permitted on the city right-of-way and must be kept on private property. Here are some other suggestions to ensure a safe and fun party for everyone that includes drinking:

- ▶ The first thing you can do to help with this is ensure there are activities for people to participate in that mix the children and adults. There will be less heavy drinking if there is ball hockey, chalk murals, and other activities happening during the day.
- ▶ In your event planning, let the adults at the block party know when the drinking starts. You will not be able to enforce this and we don't suggest you try. A designated time in the plan should create enough of an expectation that any heavy drinking doesn't happen before then (we suggest after parents put the younger kids down).
- ▶ Have a water source available! As the party unfolds it will be helpful for everyone to have water readily available.

COVID-19 Health Precautions

It's important to keep the health of your neighbours a priority. Here are some tips:

- ▶ Have hand sanitizer in easy to access places, especially by food. The City can provide masks and hand sanitizer by request.
- ▶ If doing a potluck or food at the event, encourage the use of tongs and easily served single items. Having someone to dish out food is also a great solution to limit multiple people touching the food.
- ▶ When planning the event, let everyone know that they should not attend if they aren't feeling well or have any new symptoms.
- ▶ For the latest information on COVID-19 precautions, visit [COVID-19 info for Albertans | Alberta.ca](#)

Getting the Word Out

Expectations

If it is your first block party make sure you temper your expectations on attendance. Even on the most engaged and connected blocks you won't get everyone out. People are busy and it takes time to build momentum—on some blocks more than others. Your goal is to use the tools at your disposal so that everyone feels welcome. Here are some tips and resources for getting the word out.

Paper flyers

A hand-delivered paper flyer works SO well. A paper flyer put right into someone's hands with a friendly smile and personal invitation is even better! You want to communicate the main details on a flyer. Date, time, expectations (i.e.: bring a food item or activity), and we would suggest an invitation to a digital conversation as well! Casually dropping the flyers off as you are out walking a dog or doing yard work is a great way for anyone who has a hard time going door to door. Flyers can be used with a request to drop back their suggestions for the event in your mailbox and a way to communicate with them in the future.

Social media

Something like a Facebook group for your block can be a powerful organizing tool. We strongly suggest that you first see if one exists and/or create one alongside your block party planning. Once you have a group setup you can create an event for your block party. It can become a powerful tool for communicating and organizing your block party, and for communicating in the future.

After the Party

- ▶ You will need to clean up the space and make sure it can be open by the end of your permit's usage time. Make sure all garbage has been picked up, toys put away, and barricades taken down. You can help tidy messes created on your neighbours' properties and sweep any hard to pick up messes.
- ▶ If the barricades have been rented, make sure to return them.
- ▶ Discuss the event with neighbours and take note of feedback about what worked and what didn't.
- ▶ **Make plans for Neighbour Day 2023!**