



City of Raleigh's Motorized Parade Policy

Last updated June 18, 2024

Objective: To establish vehicle safety measures for all parades involving motorized vehicles that take place on City streets, with the purpose of promoting the general welfare of every person at the event, establishing minimum safety requirements for drivers, vehicles, floats, and participants, and establishing clear expectations for the event organizer responsible for ensuring that all requirements are met prior to any trailer, vehicle, or driver participating in the event.

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1. Definitions:

In addition to the definitions contained in the City Code and in the City Council's Special Events Policy, the following definitions apply to this Motorized Parade Policy:

- A. Entry or Parade Entry: A group or organization represented in a parade. A parade entry may include individual units such as marchers, vehicles, or floats.
- B. Evacuation: Rapid egress out of some or all of an event space in response to an unexpected situation that threatens the health or safety of guests which will require a greater degree of crowd management than a controlled and scheduled egress.
- C. Event Organizer: The parade sponsor and person or entity in charge of and responsible for the parade.
- D. Guardrail: Per 29 CFR 1910.22(d), a guardrail is a barrier secured to uprights and erected along the exposed sides and ends of platforms to prevent falls of persons.
- E. May: Denotes an action that this standard recommends that a user consider, depending on how reasonable it is under the circumstances of a given event.
- F. Must: Denotes a mandatory requirement, which is used here only when referring to a statute, code, or other requirement that carries the force of law.
- G. Parade Marshal: As used in this standard, a parade marshal is the head of operations for the parade during pre-event staging and on the day of the event. At the beginning of a parade, a marshal ensures that each unit is ready to proceed consistent with parade rules and enforces spacing between units as they enter the route. Along the parade route, other marshals may help enforce parade rules. These functions are different from a Grand Marshal, which is usually a ceremonial leader of the parade.
- H. Parade Unit: Each motorized or towed vehicle, parade animal, performance platform or float, or similar object used to transport people in a parade.
- I. Risk Assessment: A systematic analysis of reasonably foreseeable threats to determine the risk for each issue identified in the hazard identification process, including the frequency, likelihood of occurrence, and the potential severity of outcome.
- J. Should: Denotes a recommendation, as opposed to a requirement that one must perform.

2. General Requirements

In addition to the requirements set out in the City Code and Special Events policy, this Motorized Parade Policy provides additional requirements for any parade that includes a motor vehicle. A motorized parade might impose additional risks if operated in an unusual manner or involves unusual parade units. When timely notification has been given, the City

Manager or the Manager’s designee may require additional safety measures to address unusual circumstances.

3. Event Organizer’s Responsibilities

The Event Organizer is responsible for the operation of the parade. The Event Organizer must:

- A. Ensure compliance with all parade requirements, including the requirements of this policy.
- B. Conduct a risk assessment.
- C. Using the risk assessment and any other relevant information, create a written Emergency Action Plan. The Emergency Action Plan should address ways to mitigate risk for the event. It should also address communication issues, such as contact with parents or guardians in the event of an emergency involving a child.
- D. Select a proposed parade route for the City’s review and approval.

The parade route should mitigate the reasonably foreseeable health and safety risks to each parade unit, the spectators watching them, as well as the workers and public safety officers supporting the event. It should avoid broken pavement, speed bumps, railroad crossings, and construction zones, any of which can present trip hazards to marchers on foot or jeopardize the stability of parade floats and the people or materials riding on them. For parade units, hills along the route can create bottlenecks by slowing the parade pace, and sharp turns can be challenging for vehicles with wide turn radius requirements. Low-hanging wires, streetlights, and trees can create hazards from above. The parade route should ensure access for emergency vehicles to reach participants, spectators, or any other individuals or businesses who live or work along the route.

- E. Obtain insurance coverage for the event in the minimum amount of \$2,000,000 per occurrence/\$4,000,000 aggregate and list the City of Raleigh as an additional insured.
- F. Inform all parade participants of parade safety and participant rules required by this policy. Event Organizers may also establish their own instructions and rules of conduct that provide additional requirements for the event.

It is not sufficient for parade organizers to simply tell vehicle operators to “follow the unit in front of you,” or instruct float riders to “hang on.” Instead, organizers should provide clear written guidance, on the participant website and/or in a registration packet, explaining all the operational requirements parade participants will need to know. Then at the staging area, this guidance can be reinforced orally rather than being introduced for the first time in a busy environment where it is likely to be forgotten in the press of events.

- G. Collect and maintain records of required information from parade participants. The City Manager or the Manager’s designee will provide Event Organizers with a list of information that must be collected from each parade entry and may provide a proposed entry information form for this purpose. As a part of the initial entry process, parade

entries should be provided with applicable safety requirements contained in this policy. Required records must be maintained for three years and made available to the City on request. These records include:

- Parade Entry Information Form submitted by each parade entry,
 - Documentation that parade participants received the parade safety information as required by this policy,
 - Proof of insurance from each Vehicle Operator and for each vehicle,
 - Signed copies of the Operator Safety Acknowledgment, and
 - Signed copies of the City's Release, Indemnity, and Agreement Not to Sue.
- H. Create records showing that required training has occurred and that relevant safety information has been provided.
- I. Conduct the required first-time entry workshop, entry meeting, and meeting for drivers, marshals, and spotters.
- J. Supervise the parade. Event Organizers must be present to supervise the event throughout the parade.
- K. Establish the order of parade units. Event Organizers should label each parade unit with a number or letter designation so that parade units can be identified during the parade.

Units must be organized to provide reasonable distance between motorized parade units and units comprised of pedestrians or animals. Event Organizers must anticipate issues that may slow normal parade progress (e.g., heat) and establish an order that considers these factors.

- L. Provide a parade lineup and any other operational information needed by law enforcement.
- M. Ensure compliance with the required Points of Inspection for Motorized Vehicles in Parades for each parade unit before that unit leaves the staging area.
- N. Prepare for weather that may affect the parade.

Event Organizers should monitor the weather forecast and know how long it would take to notify entries and spectators that it is time to take shelter, and they should have a plan to communicate their weather decision to all parade stakeholders. These recommendations are intended to be scalable so small local parades may reasonably rely on weather apps, figuring that most people can evacuate quickly to their vehicles, homes, or businesses along the route. But larger parades with many people who lack an obvious place to shelter should consider the safety benefits of a professional consulting meteorologist for accurate and timely weather data. Similarly, high winds can negatively affect production

elements of even smaller parades, such as temporary viewing stands, portable restrooms, suspended inflatables, balloons, and other large props, and rain accumulation on floats and trailers can cause loads to shift or make them slippery for riders.

Once Event Organizers have obtained weather information and decided to respond, they must convey their intentions so spectators and parade entries can take timely action for their own safety. Lines of communication are important. Organizers can contact law enforcement who are participating in or supporting the parade, who can then help Event Organizers with evacuation and crowd management. Because parade routes tend to be spread out over a considerable distance, lower-tech means of communication such as bullhorns or even organizers on horseback or bicycles can notify spectators and participants along the route that it is time to evacuate, and where they should go.

4. Requirements for Vehicle Operators.

- A. Vehicle Operators must be experienced in operating the type of vehicle they will be driving during the parade. Prior to the day of the event, they must have obtained any training needed to safely operate the vehicle.
- B. Vehicle Operators may operate a unit during the parade only if they are well rested and sufficiently healthy to safely operate the vehicle.
- C. For at least twelve (12) hours before the parade, Vehicle Operators will not consume alcoholic beverages or take drugs or medication that will impair their ability to safely operate a parade unit.
- D. Vehicle Operators must be familiar with the parade route, including the location of turns, intersections, and where slowing is likely.
- E. Vehicle Operators may operate their parade unit only after confirming it is in good working condition and safe to participate in the parade.
- F. Vehicle Operators must have a valid driver's license of the type required for the vehicle that they are operating, .
- G. Vehicle Operators must ensure that valid liability insurance is in place for the vehicle they will operate during the parade.
- H. Vehicle Operators must confirm that the vehicle they are driving is rated sufficiently to tow any float and passengers riding on it that they are assigned.
- I. Vehicle Operators must be present with their parade unit in their designated location at the designated staging time.
- J. Vehicle Operators must know the signal for an emergency that occurs during the parade and must know the steps to take when the emergency signal occurs.
- K. Vehicle Operators must attend an orientation meeting for the parade and must attend any mandatory operator meetings that may take place.

- L. Vehicle Operators must familiarize themselves with walking marshals and/or spotters who are available to help unit operators safely navigate the parade route.
- M. Vehicle Operators must maintain visual and auditory communication with any walking marshal and/or spotter with the parade unit.
- N. Vehicle Operators must obey all instructions from Parade Marshals and law enforcement officers along the route.
- O. Vehicle Operators must ensure that their visibility remains unobstructed at all times when they are operating the unit.
- P. Vehicle Operators must ensure that they are informed of the intended pace/speed of the parade and must maintain that pace.
- Q. Vehicle Operators must refrain from cell phone use, eating, smoking, or any other form of distracted driving. Passengers assisting the Vehicle Operator may utilize a mobile device or two-way radio for event-related communication purposes only. The purpose and function of the passenger is to observe the surroundings, assist the driver with outside, event-related communication, and keep a proper lookout during the event.
- R. Vehicle Operators must know the route clearing process should they or another unit break down on the parade route.
- S. Vehicle Operators must ensure there are no riders on the unit except in the staging area and on the parade route.
- T. Vehicle Operators must maintain a distance of approximately 55 feet (two white or yellow lines on the road) from the entry before theirs and must maintain that spacing throughout the parade.
- U. Vehicle Operators must be at least 25 years old.
- V. All Vehicle Operators participating in the event must exercise good judgment and maintain a slow and reasonable speed based on the size of the vehicle and weather conditions.
- W. Vehicle Operators must not allow anyone within their parade unit to throw items, including candy, from their parade units.
- X. Before participating in the parade, including any pre-event staging, Vehicle Operators must sign the City's Parade Release, Indemnity, and Agreement Not To Sue and provide that agreement to the Event Organizer.
- Y. Before entering the parade route and as a requirement of the entry inspection process, each Vehicle Operator must review, sign, and provide to the Event Organizer an Operator Safety Acknowledgement indicating that they understand the safety requirements set out in this section and will abide by them. The Operator Safety Acknowledgement must be in a form that is acceptable to the City Manager or the Manager's designee.

5. Parade Unit Requirements (Vehicles, Floats, Objects Towed):

Event Organizers must provide a list of requirements applicable to parade units to all applicants as a part of the entry process. The following requirements apply to parade units:

- A. Recent Safety Inspection. As a condition of bringing a motorized vehicle, float, trailer, or towed object into the staging area, Event Organizers must be presented in advance with written or electronic evidence of a safety inspection by a qualified mechanic familiar with that type of powered vehicle, trailer, or other towed object. The safety inspection must occur no more than 30 days from the date of the parade. The inspection should include the operation of the vehicle's brakes, tires, lights, horn, emissions, and confirm a current registration, if required.

Vehicles that will carry individuals must be inspected to ensure that there are no trip hazards or exposed wires or cables on board, and that there is adequate fall prevention mitigation for all riders, such as access to a guardrail, tether, or harness for each rider. Holding onto something is better than nothing. Even riders sitting on the back of a classic convertible can wedge their feet under a lap belt if one is available.

B. Vehicle and Trailer Requirements.

- i. All applicable vehicles must have a current and valid vehicle registration plate issued by North Carolina or another state.
- ii. All towing vehicles that are registered in North Carolina must have a currently valid electronic inspection authorization as required by N.C.G.S. § 20-183.8(a). Vehicles registered in a state other than North Carolina must provide proof that the vehicle has the safety equipment required by Part 9 of Article 3 of N.C.G.S. Chapter 20. *(Including but not limited to properly functioning brakes, lights, horn, steering mechanism, windows and windshield wipers, directional signals, tires, mirrors, and exhaust systems.)*
- iii. All vehicles must provide proof of valid automobile and general liability coverage to the Event Organizer at least seven (7) days before the parade. All vehicles that are towing another vehicle or trailer must provide proof of valid automobile liability coverage that does not exclude towing vehicles or trailers.
- iv. All trailers must be registered with the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles and display a current North Carolina registration plate, as required by N.C. Gen. Stat. §20-111. (1). Trailers that are registered in another state must show proof of compliance with that state's registration requirements.
- v. All trailers or towed devices must be equipped with two stop lamps.

- vi. All trailers and towed vehicles must be equipped with properly inflated tires that are free from defects.
- vii. Trailers and towed vehicles must be firmly and securely attached to the towing vehicle with a properly functioning and sized coupling system (ball hitch, pintle hitch, etc.) that meets or exceeds the towing capacity of the towing vehicle and size and weight of the trailer or towed vehicle. The hitch used to attach a float to the vehicle must be a factory “receiver” type or a welded pick-up bumper. No “bolt-on” hitches are permitted.

All towed trailers or other vehicles using a ball hitch must be attached to the towing vehicle using safety chains or cables which shall be of sufficient strength to hold the gross weight of the towed vehicle in the event the primary towing device fails or becomes disconnected. Towing vehicle and trailer combinations using fifth wheel assemblies that include locking devices do not have to be equipped with safety chains or cables.

- viii. All vehicles and trailers must be equipped with a fire extinguisher that is stored securely. Float operators must know the location of the fire extinguisher, how to operate it, and how to shut off any electrical equipment.
- ix. Windshield and front driver and passenger windows must be clean, free of obstruction, and meet the North Carolina window tinting restrictions.
- x. Vehicles carrying individuals must have adequate fall prevention mitigation for all riders, such as access to a guardrail, tether, or harness for each rider.
- xi. No trip hazards or exposed wires or cables are allowed on board any float.

C. Points of Inspection. Before a parade unit may leave the staging area, the Event Organizer or its designee must confirm compliance with the Points of Inspection for Motorized Vehicles in Parades set out below.

POINTS OF INSPECTION FOR MOTORIZED VEHICLES IN PARADES

- 1. Valid **licensee** with required endorsements and/or restrictions.
- 2. Valid **registration** for vehicle (trailer also if applicable).
- 3. Valid **inspection** for vehicle.
- 4. Valid **insurance**.
- 5. **Brake lights** in proper working order and visible to rear.
- 6. **Coupling device** in proper working order (if applicable).
- 7. **Safety chains** (if required).
- 8. **Tires** in good condition.
- 9. Adequate **load securement**.

10. **Fire extinguisher** on each motorized vehicle towing a float and on any float that will carry a passenger.
11. Functional vehicle **horn**.
12. No objects may extend past the dimensions of the vehicle it is carried on or surpass 13' 6" in height. If a parade route passes under a bridge, the vehicle or objects must be sized so that they do not come into contact any portion of the bridge.
13. No more than 1 (one) gallon of flammable liquids, in an O.S.H.A. approved container to support auxiliary operations, can be carried on floats and must be adequately secured from spillage.
14. Vehicles have adequate mirrors that eliminate blind spots around the vehicle.

D. Passengers in Vehicles and on Floats

Event Organizers must provide a list of rules applicable to float passengers as a part of the entry process. Passengers in vehicles and on floats must comply with the following requirements:

- i. Passengers may be seated at the top of the back seats in a convertible. All passengers must stay seated and wedge their feet under a seatbelt if one is available. No standing is allowed in a convertible vehicle. Any minors seated on the top of a convertible vehicle must be accompanied by an adult. The total number of individuals in a convertible must not exceed the total number of seatbelts if the vehicle has seatbelts.
- ii. Passengers riding in the bed of a pickup truck must be seated inside of the truck bed and are not permitted to sit on sides of the truck.
- iii. Any additional seating in the bed of a pickup truck must be adequately secured.
- iv. Minors riding in the bed of a pickup truck must be accompanied by an adult.
- v. Number of occupants in the vehicle are not to exceed the number of seatbelts if the vehicle has seatbelts.
- vi. Children riding on floats must be supervised by an adult. The chaperone ratio for float passengers is not less than one (1) adult for every four (4) children. Children less than eighteen (18) years old may ride on or in a parade unit provided they are safely holding onto inspected harnesses or tether devices, standing behind inspected railings, or strapped into seat belts or car seats, as applicable. No strollers carrying youngsters are allowed.
- vii. Float riders may not mount or dismount the float or tow vehicle when it is in motion.
- viii. Rider seats must be secured to the float deck. For maximum protection, a guardrail barrier must be erected along the exposed sides and ends of platforms to prevent float riders from falling out of the float.

- ix. Float riders must remain in safety belts and/or holding hand-holds or other safety rails or barriers rails while the unit is moving. Riders may not jump, or dangle any body part over the edge of their float when it is in motion.
- x. Riders are prohibited from standing or riding on the edge of a float.
- xi. Any float with riders or articles hanging over the edge of the float is subject to immediate removal from the parade.

6. Safety Requirements for all Parade Participants

Before participating in the parade, including any pre-event staging, participants must sign the City's Parade Release, Indemnity, and Agreement Not To Sue and provide that agreement to the Event Organizer. All parade participants must follow the Parade Safety and Participant Rules set out below and any additional safety rules implemented by the Event Organizer. The Event Organizer must provide copies of the City's participant rules to every parade entry as a part of the initial application process.

Parade Safety and Participant Rules

1. To keep the Parade moving smoothly, entries **MUST NOT** stop for pictures or performances **EXCEPT** at designated areas along the route. For the rest of the parade, entries must keep pace with the entries in front of and behind them.
2. Parade units may not reverse course within their entry, drive from sidewalk to sidewalk to engage with spectators, or perform stunts. These activities raise safety issues and are likely to cause gaps between entries that detract from spectators' experience.
3. **Parade participants are strictly prohibited from throwing, tossing, or launching any objects into the crowd. This will prevent anyone from getting hit by a flying object and will reduce the likelihood of any spectators entering the parade route to retrieve an object.**
4. First-time Parade participants must attend the New Participant Orientation. Event Organizers will explain these rules and answer questions.
5. All entries must provide their own walking marshal to lead and manage their entry.
6. All parade entry groups involving minors must have adult supervision in the form of 'spotters' that walk with the group to supervise from all angles, including front, rear and side angles. Entries that have both motorized units and walkers must provide at least one additional spotter to ensure safe spacing between vehicles and pedestrians.
7. The chaperone ratio for walking groups is not less than one (1) adult for every fifteen (15) children. Children walking in the Parade must be not less than eight (8) years old.

8. Entries must maintain a moderate volume of sound effects and music that will not interfere with other parade entries (drivers and/or animals), or to be so loud that emergency auditory instructions or alerts cannot be heard by the driver and entry participants and does not violate City noise limitations.
9. All parade unit operators must participate in the Entry Operator's Orientation.
10. Equestrian or other animal entries must ensure all animals are healthy, behave well in crowded places, and do not react negatively to loud noise. Animal entries must clean and remove waste in the staging area, along the parade route, and in the destaging area. All animal waste must be disposed of appropriately.
11. All entries must be able to travel at a speed of one to two miles per hour for the entire parade route. The official parade pace is 60-75 steps per minute.
12. Failure to obey parade officials or law enforcement by a participant or their parents will result in that entry being removed from the parade.
13. If you suffer a breakdown during the parade, move the vehicle to the right side and allow the entries behind you to pass. If you can get your entry restarted, you may proceed down the route at the position you occupy once you are moving.
14. Parade spacing between each entry is approximately 55 feet (two white or yellow lines on the road). Entries must maintain that spacing throughout the parade.
15. In the event of an emergency, local public safety officials have management control of the parade and will provide parade management and entries with instructions.
16. Entries may not exit the parade route once the parade has begun. If there is an issue with your entry, safely pull out of the way so other entries can continue.
17. No one participating in a parade or proceeding along the route of a parade shall distribute any candy, prizes, or favors of any kind.
18. The dimensions of an entry must accommodate the route's street widths, turns, bridges, streetlights, and overhanging branches.
19. All fueling of combustible engines must be completed prior to the start of the parade. Excess flammable liquids (stored gas containers) are not permitted on any floats or towing vehicles.
20. All decorating materials used on the floats must be flame resistant.
21. Open flames are prohibited (e.g., no use of fire, flames, or fireworks).
22. No smoking is permitted on or near any float.
23. Any participants riding a bicycle, or any other two-wheeled apparatus must wear a helmet.
24. Alcohol consumption is prohibited by all parade participants during the event.

7. Required Meetings:

In addition to planning meetings and walkthroughs required of all permitted special events, the following types of meetings are required for Event Organizers and entries to ensure parade unit operators, marshals, and public safety officials understand and are trained to carry out their responsibilities to mitigate risk:

- A. First-time Entry Workshop: (six to eight weeks prior to event) This is an informational meeting conducted by the event organizer for first time participants and/or those interested in an in-depth look at the entry guidelines, and the entry inspection process. Return entries are welcome to attend to discuss updates and to share ideas and insight with newcomers.
- B. Entry Meeting: (two to four weeks prior to event) This is an informational meeting conducted by the event organizer for all entry representatives and walking marshals to review the staging and de-staging plans, receive the parade line-up, discuss any last-minute changes and announcements, as well as to pick up parade packets.
- C. Driver, Marshal, and Spotter Meeting: (one to seven days prior to event) This is an informational meeting conducted by the event organizer for all vehicle, float, or towing unit drivers to cover specific regulations.

8. Consequences of Policy Violations:

The Event Organizer is responsible for removal of parade participants that do not comply with these regulations and should take all reasonable steps to ensure compliance with applicable requirements. Law enforcement personnel may also remove parade participants not in compliance with these regulations as necessary. The City may also remove any parade unit or participant from the event if there is a clear violation of North Carolina vehicle safety requirements.

9. Annual Policy Review:

Each year City staff will review the Motorized Parade Policy in the light of the prior years' experience and solicit the input of stakeholders. Suggested changes, if any, will be forwarded to City Council for approval.

10. Accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act: The City Manager or the Manager's designee is authorized to make reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.