

# BLOCK PARTY TIPS FROM NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCES

## STEP #1 – Does anyone want to have a party?

### 1. How do I organize a block party?

- ☐ First, find some other neighbors to help you organize. It can be a lot of work all by yourself.
- ☐ Talk with your neighbors and determine if they would like to get together.
- ☐ Create committees to share in the planning.
- ☐ Pick a central location for the party – one in which people can walk or ride their bikes.
- ☐ Are you going to need to block off your street?
- ☐ Are people willing to host it in their front yard? Several neighbors' front or backyards work well and avoids the need for a permit.
- ☐ If you are not blocking off the street, how do you plan to guard the children from traffic?
- ☐ Plan for bad weather and have an indoor site ready – a garage works great.
- ☐ Decide how many neighbors you want to invite – is it just your block or several blocks?
- ☐ Remember to consider and plan for these other details as well:
  1. Date and time which is convenient for most of your neighbors.
  2. Are you going to block off your street? Begin that process at least 5 to 6 weeks in advance.
  3. Have you considered those neighbors who do not want to participate and how to plan so that your party will not infringe on their privacy?
  4. How many people do you expect?
  5. How much food will you provide and how much food will the neighbors bring to share?
  6. How will you pay for the party?
  7. If you and your committee are planning the food, set a deadline for an RSVP so you can estimate how many people will attend.
  8. Remember though, that many people do not RSVP, so consider a telephone tree or personal visits to determine the number of attendees.

### 2. How soon should I start planning for the block party?

- ☐ Begin planning at least six weeks in advance, especially if you plan to block off your street. The street permit takes about three weeks to process through all the City departments. See Step #2 for the details.
- ☐ Create committees early on to share in the work of planning and implementing the block party. Suggested committees include:
  - Publicity
  - Entertainment
  - Clean-up

- Food
- Set-up

## **STEP #2 – Okay, we’re gonna have a party. What permits do we need? How do we tell people?**

### **1. If we decide to block off the street, what are the steps?**

- ☐ You will need a Special Event Permit and additional items such as an event map – please refer to the [Special Event Guide](#) or contact Police Services at **970-221-6555**.
  1. It is critical to remember you need the signatures of EVERY affected neighbor (those living on the street you plan to close off) on your application whether they plan to attend or not.
  2. Plan on about three weeks for the application to circulate through the various city departments for their approval.

### **2. Helpful hints for filling out Special Event Permit Application**

- ☐ Download the [Special Event Permit Application](#) here or pick one up from Police Services, 300 La Porte at least 3 to 4 weeks in advance of your block party.
- ☐ The “Name of the Event” and “Complete Description of Event” needs to read: Block Party.
- ☐ Make sure you include a site map of the block. This can be a hand drawn map that lists each end address of the block and the names of several streets to each side.
- ☐ Be sure to include hours for set-up and take down on your permit.
- ☐ The “Route Information” section is not applicable unless you are planning a parade or race in conjunction with the block party.
- ☐ The “Application Fee” is waived for block parties.
- ☐ Make sure you fill out the “Indemnification Agreement.” Wait to sign this form when you turn it in to Police Services. A Notary Public is in that office and will sign and stamp it for you at there.
- ☐ Make sure you get everyone’s signature, address, telephone number and their approval or objection for the block party if they are located on the street which is to be barricaded off. If someone on the block disapproves, it does not mean you will be denied the permit. Police Services will call that person to further inquire and then make their decision for the issuance of the permit.
- ☐ Once the permit form is complete and you have all the neighbor’s signatures, submit the form to the Police Services, 300 La Porte Ave. Allow three weeks minimum for all required city signatures.
- ☐ When all appropriate city departments have signed the permit, the Police Patrol Secretary will send you the special event permit.
- ☐ The special event permit is to be kept at the event.

### **3. Can I block off my alley?**

- ☐ Your alley is considered a public thoroughfare.
- ☐ To block off the alley you must follow the same procedures as designated for blocking off your street.

#### **4. If we block off the street, who sets up and picks up the barricades?**

- ☐ You are responsible for setting up and taking down the barricades. That includes picking them up and returning them to the company from which you rented. There is probably an additional fee to have the company deliver and set up so consider asking what that service would cost.
- ☐ There are three rental companies in Fort Collins:
  1. Traffic Masters, Inc. at **221-3440**
  2. Rocky Mountain Safety Service at **532-3314**
  3. Quality Traffic Control at **493-0865**

#### **5. How do I inform my neighbors about the block party?**

- ☐ One of the easiest ways is by flyers on each neighbor's door.
- ☐ Create a flyer (copies can be made for free at the NRO) and distribute it around your neighborhood. Make sure to include:
  - Date                      - Location                      - Who to call for more information
  - Time                      - What to bring                      - Rain date time and location
- ☐ Find people to help distribute the flyers.
- ☐ Ask one person from each block to pass out the flyers on their block.
- ☐ You can also set up a phone tree where one neighbor calls three people who each call three people, etc.

### **STEP #3 – How do we feed and entertain everyone?**

#### **1. How do I get people to volunteer to make food?**

- ☐ Often all you need to do is ask.
- ☐ Then ask each person who agreed to help with food to ask one or two more people. Soon you will have more food than you need.
- ☐ Some people find it helpful to go by last name. For example, "If your name starts with A-L bring salad to share, if M-Z bring dessert to share."

#### **2. How do I make sure I have enough food?**

- ☐ Consider announcing an RSVP date – some people will call, although many will not.
- ☐ You might consider engaging a phone tree to better determine the number of attendees.

#### **3. How do I organize the food and beverages?**

- ☐ If you can, find someone who will take this task and organize it.
- ☐ Remember to consider all the different tastes – caffeine, no caffeine, dairy, nondairy, wheat, wheat-free, alcohol and nonalcoholic, vegetarian, poultry, beef, kosher, etc.
- ☐ Talk with your local grocery store. Chances are good that they will give you a gift certificate and/or donate some beverages, food, or paper products.

#### **4. What about alcohol?**

- ☐ You can serve alcohol as long as it remains a private function.
- ☐ The function cannot be open to the general public.

- ☐ Colorado State Law indicates:
  1. The alcohol must stay on your property.
  2. If someone walks across the street to another home with a cup of beer, that is considered a violation of the open container law.
  3. You cannot serve alcohol if you charge a fee.
  4. It is a crime to serve alcohol to someone under the age of 21.

**5. How can I get businesses to donate for our event?**

- ☐ Usually it is a matter of asking.
- ☐ Determine your exact party needs and give the business a letter explaining:
  - Who you are and why you are planning the event.
  - How much money or in-kind donation you are seeking.
  - How the money or donation will be utilized.
  - How many people will be attending the event?
- ☐ Be sure to send a thank you note after your event.

**6. Do I need portable restrooms?**

- ☐ You can rent portable restrooms if the party is going to be large.
- ☐ The average cost to rent a portable restroom is about \$75 for the weekend.
- ☐ Most waste disposal companies rent the restrooms and need a week's advance notice.
- ☐ Our suggestion is to ask people to open their homes.

**7. Can I get our local police officer to attend or stop by our event?**

- ☐ Yes, you can.
- ☐ Call [Police Services](#) at **221-6540** and they can make arrangements for you. Please provide as much advance notice as possible.

**8. What kinds of activities shall we do?**

- ☐ Try to develop activities for all ages.
- ☐ The [Neighborhood Resources Office](#) has a packet of games especially for the young at heart. Stop by 200 W. Mountain and pick up the packet.
- ☐ [Here are some more fun ideas.](#)
- ☐ Family games are always fun. People love mini tournaments such as basketball or volleyball.
- ☐ Just throw up a volleyball net, roll out the basketball hoop, set up croquet and badminton, lay out a few Frisbees and hula hoops, and we guarantee people will play.

**9. What are the city codes I need to be aware of, particularly with noise?**

- ☐ There is a noise ordinance that states “No person shall make, continue or cause to be made or continued any unreasonable noise; and no person shall knowingly permit such noise upon any premises owned or possessed by such person under such person's control.”
- ☐ Unreasonable is relative; however if your noise is loud, a neighbor may possibly call and a police officer will determine if it is unreasonable.

**10. What about respecting our neighbors who do not want to be involved?**

- ☐ Make them aware of your party and make sure they are invited. Remember that you do need their signature on the application to block off your street even if they don't approve of the event.
- ☐ Thank them after the party for their patience and acknowledge that you would like them to attend the next event.
- ☐ You may want to consider the location of your party and how close it is to the neighbors who are not participating.

**11. How do I set up on the day of the event?**

- ☐ Organize a set up committee.
- ☐ Start about 2 hours in advance so if anything is forgotten, there is time to go get it.
- ☐ Two Hours Before the Start:
  1. Block off your street or post signs for the traffic announcing a block party and list your hours.
  2. Double check your list and if anything is forgotten go out to get it.
- ☐ One Hour Before the Start:
  1. Bring the grills.
  2. Set up the tables for all the food – you will want to keep the food in a shady place.
  3. Ice down the beverages – have recycle bins close at hand.
  4. Pull out the gear for the games and activities and a portable ten for sun protection.

**STEP #4 – So the party's over, now for the clean-up.**

**1. How do I manage the clean up?**

- ☐ Try to develop a committee to oversee all the clean up.
- ☐ Provide plenty of trash and recycle bins during the event.
- ☐ Have everyone bring his or her own place setting.
- ☐ How about all that trash? You can leave the accumulated trash outside for pick up 24 hours in advance of your regular pick up. Any longer and you may get a notice to remove the trash yourself.

**2. How do I thank all those who helped?**

- ☐ You can send out thank you notes.
- ☐ Personal phone calls are quicker and sometimes easier.
- ☐ We also suggest a post party meeting to discuss what worked, what you might do differently, and when the next party is going to happen.

**STEP #5 – Print a copy of the Block Party Checklist and Committee/Contact sheets:**

## THE BLOCK PARTY CHECKLIST

Party Consideration	Date	Checked Off
Committees with Names and Phone Numbers	_____	_____
Flyers with all the correct information	_____	_____
Special Event Permit – If Blocking off Street	_____	_____
Noise Variance Permit - If Having Music	_____	_____
Food	_____	_____
Beverages	_____	_____
Donations	_____	_____
Activities	_____	_____
Set Up	_____	_____
Clean Up	_____	_____
Trash	_____	_____
Recycling	_____	_____
Grills	_____	_____
Safety Issues	_____	_____
Music	_____	_____
Restroom Arrangements	_____	_____

## COMMITTEE CONTACT AND DUTY SHEET

**Committee Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Check List of Duties:

Duty	Date of Completion	Name of Responsible Person and Phone

### Committee Members:

Name	Address	Work Phone	Home Phone

**Other Notes to Consider:**