



Community Services Block Party *a how-to guide*

everything you need to know for planning a block party



Block Party Planning Guide

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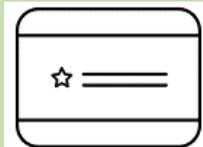
1. Introduction

Block Parties are a great way to introduce yourself to neighbours, creating a homey feeling throughout the neighbourhood. Getting neighbours together for fun and food enables a renewed friendship among people in your area and can also create safer communities. Block Parties provide an avenue for neighbours to get together, meet each other, have fun, and collaborate on common activities. As friendships grow, so do safe and caring neighbourhoods and communities.

Block Party Kits are proudly brought to you by South East Rocky View FCSS, as well as generous community partners. If you have any concerns, comments, questions, or feedback, please contact FCSS as at 403-207-7094 or cmcleod@chestermere.ca.

2. How to Book a Block Party Kit from FCSS

1. Call Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) to schedule your date and select items for your Block Party Kit. Please note your Block Party date is not reserved until completed waiver forms are received by FCSS. Block Party Kits may come with a gift certificate (if available). For a detail guide on planning a Block Party, please refer to Appendix A.
2. Please select items you would like in your Block Party Kit:

| | | |
|--|---|--|
|  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dishware (plates, cups, napkins, cutlery) | <input type="checkbox"/> Toys (such as sidewalk chalk, bubbles, sports equipment) | <input type="checkbox"/> A gift certificate, if available |

3. Complete Block Party waivers and return to FCSS, see Appendix B.

3. General bylaw and regulation

- Alcohol is only permitted on private property, not on streets or in parks.
- Food cannot be sold on streets unless proper permits have been obtained.
- There is a noise bylaw in place for Rocky View County restricting all noise after 10 pm, every day of the week. Noise must also be within reasonable levels during daytime hours only (Mon to Fri: 7am–10pm, Sat to Sun: 9 am–10pm). For more information, see the County website.
- Specific to Langdon, the curfew for unaccompanied minor is from 12:01 pm – 6 am.
- Residents are expected to be abide by Rocky View County Bylaws in their entirety, and should any change or difference occur, the bylaws on record will supersede any presented in this document.

4. Thank you!

Thank you for building neighbourhoods and safe, friendly communities. We hope you have a great party!

We are always looking for ways to improve our programs and services. Please complete our survey form when returning Block Party items.

Please note: Facilitator will make contact with you for pick up arrangements.

The personal information is being collected for activities related to applying for, creating, distributing, and tracking permits for South East Rocky View FCSS, and as such is deemed to be an activity of FCSS. The personal information is collected under the authority of Section 33(1)(c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and will be used only for the purpose identified. If you have any questions or concerns about the collection or use of information you may contact the FOIP coordinator at the Municipal Office, 105 Marina Road, Chestermere, AB T1X 1V7 or call 403-207-7050

Appendix A – Planning your Block Party

1. Getting started

Block Parties bring neighbours together. Talk to your neighbours and see if they're interested in helping you organize the event. It is important to include as many interested people as possible in planning and organizing your event, so enlist as many volunteers as you can.

Responsibilities volunteers can help with may be:

- Being a point of contact to follow up and answer questions
- Setting a theme, this gives your event a direction which eases planning details
- Sending out invitations and flyers, and responding to RSVPs
- Looking after food and local donations or organizing costs to alleviate party expenses
- Organizing games and activities for kids, youth, and adults and a rainy day plan
- Setting up a cleaning plan

2. Size of Block Party

Start with a smaller event rather than a larger one. It is easier to grow it than to shrink it. In selecting who to invite, use natural neighbourhood boundaries where possible. If you are planning a street or cul-de-sac party, you'll need to invite everyone from that area.

3. Types of Block Parties

Food and beverage can vary depending on the number of attendees and the type of event. Make sure food is properly labelled and ingredients are clearly identified for those with allergies /dietary restrictions. If meats are prepared for the whole group, designate a cook and make sure the meats are stored properly. Below are few options to off-set costs:

- Determine and purchase the amount of food and beverages needed from the invitation responses. Require everyone to pay a flat fee when they attend. (If you are charging a fee for the event, make sure it's noted on invitations and reminders).
- Have a potluck or ask attendees to provide their own food for their own families.

Below is a table about the different types of Block Parties:

| Type | Barbecues | Picnics | Pot Luck | Cultural Potluck | Eco-friendly | A Fun Theme! |
|---------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Details | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizers purchase all that is needed and neighbours provide the money • Everyone brings their own meal • Surf & Turf | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone brings their own meal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone brings a dish | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each family to bring a traditional dish; you will have an array of foods while learning more about your neighbours | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone brings their own dinnerware, which they can then wash and reuse | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kids' Carnival, • Water Fight, • Tropical • Kiddie Pool • Baseball • Sports Challenge |

4. Setting limits

It is important for guests to know the expectations and safety rules for the event – especially when entering houses or feeding pets. You may also want to set a time limit for they party to prevent it from being a nuisance to those trying to sleep, should your party run into the evening. Draft your guidelines and set it up at the sign-in station and in key areas such as the food station.

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5. Getting the word out

It's important to keep neighbours informed about your event. Most local newspapers and organizations will allow you to advertise free of charge, as a community event.

Here are some other suggestions:

- Flyers or invitations with an RSVP can be distributed 3-4 weeks before the event. This will give neighbours plenty of time to prepare for the party.
- Invitations can be specific, such as asking each family to bring... or a follow-up invitation with details can be sent to those who've RSVP'd.
- Consider going door to door, or use a casual approach to engage neighbours as you see them out doing their lawns, walking their pets. This will add a personal touch and people may be more likely to offer help.

6. Supplies

Try to get neighbours to bring as many of their own things as possible (lawn chairs) for ease and convenience. Make sure items brought to the event are labelled, so they can be returned to their owners after the event.

Most of the supplies for your Block Party will be in the Neighbourhood Block Party Kit.

| <i>Items in the Block Party Kit</i> | <i>Other supplies you may need</i> |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper plates • Paper napkins • Plastic cutlery (forks, knives, spoons) • Plastic drinking cups • Toys and sports equipment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tables and chairs • Barbeques* and propane • Tents (for shade and in case of poor weather) • Sound system – music • Coolers for perishable foods, or tubs with ice for drinks • Garbage, recycle, and compost containers • Decorations such as helium balloons |

7. Games and Activities

Plan a few ice breaker activities, and/or consider the layout of the event and plan different stations (games/activities for different age groups). See the table below.

| <i>Age group</i> | <i>Toddlers</i> | <i>Kids</i> | <i>Youth</i> | <i>Adults</i> |
|-------------------|--|---|--|---|
| <i>Activities</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toys • Colouring books • Duck, duck, goose | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Side walk chalk • Water fight • Hide and Seek | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts and craft • Capture the flag • Scavenger hunt | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cards • Charades • Bocce Ball |

Other fun ideas: Encourage the talent of your neighbourhood to come forward – you may be living next to a musician, artist, storyteller, dancer, or singer! Ask the local RCMP or fire department to attend. This will create memorable experiences while brushing up on safety tips.

8. Clean up – before, during, after

Before the party, check surrounding yards for trash, doggie debris, and anything that can be tripping hazards. During the party, ensure you have trash, recycling, and composting bins throughout the area. After the party, ask a couple of guests to help you tidy things up.

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9. Helpful tips for setting up

- Remember when setting up tables & chairs that emergency vehicles still need access
- Consider using a sign-in book. This can help create a contact list for the neighborhood, and assist next year's planning.
- Set out name tags & pens, tables for food and garbage bins nearby.
- Consider a bathroom policy "everyone uses their own", so that home security is not an issue.
- Consider a pet policy.

10. Important reminders and regulations

Below are some things to keep in mind during your Block Party:

- Check local bylaws. Permits and regulations may be required to sell food, have a bonfire, block off a street, place certain signs, etc. **You are responsible to know and follow the bylaws for your area.**
- Alcohol is only permitted on private property, not on streets or in parks.
- Barbeques must be a safe distance away from kids and activities.
- Neighbours should observe security precautions, keep back doors locked and equipment in sight.

11. Sample Checklist

- Designate the main contact person who will::
 - book the Block Party with FCSS
 - provide their contact information on the invitations and organize promotion of the event
 - answer questions of neighbours and residents
- Talk with neighbors and decide on a date and time. A pancake breakfast? An afternoon BBQ?
- Call **FCSS (403-207-7094)** for any assistance or complete your forms on our website: <https://www.chestermere.ca/585/Block-Parties>.
- Check into local bylaws and apply for any needed permits.
- Location: Do you plan to use a front yard, a backyard, a street, a green space, or a rented location? **Ensure all proper permits and documentation are completed for your event.**
- Plan the guest list. Use a map and plan which street(s) to invite. Include surrounding farms or acreages. Avoid excluding residences.
- Ask volunteers to help with the following tasks (if possible):
 - Food (gather supplies, plan the food for the day of, ensure that tables, utensils, cutlery, coolers, etc. are provided and set up)
 - Games (plan and set up the activities in an appropriate location away from the food and busy streets, take pictures This person would also take pictures, with the proper consent forms, and send it to FCSS for the photo contest! They might also distribute prizes.
 - Clean up. Put out garbage, recycle, and compost bins; ensuring bins are returned to their owners after; and organizing people to assist with general clean up before, during, and after the party.

*Although individuals can be assigned to coordinator roles, the roles can be a group effort. One person could fill all of these roles, but collaborating with others can reduce planning stress while ensuring most needs and sensitivities are met.

12. Contact us

If you have any concerns, comments, questions, or feedback, please contact FCSS at 403-207-7094. Thank you for contributing to the bonding of neighbours and the building of safe, friendly communities. We hope you have a great party!