



Community Services Block Party *a how-to guide*

everything you need to know for planning a block party



COMMUNITY SERVICES
active · healthy · connected

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Chestermere Block Party Planning Guide

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1. Introduction

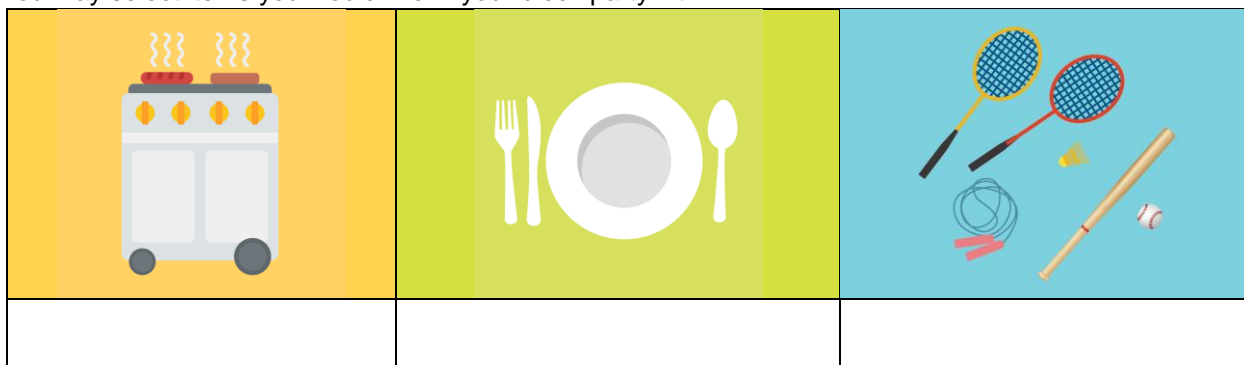
Block parties are a great way to introduce yourself to neighbours, creating a homey feeling throughout the neighbourhood. Getting neighbours together for fun and food enables a renewed friendship among people in your area. Block parties provide an avenue for neighbours to get together, meet each other, 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 Community Services, a department of The City of Chestermere, as well as generous community partners – Thank you Eric's No Frills and the Lake Ridge Community Church !

If you have any concerns, comments, questions, or feedback, please contact Craig McLeod, Community Development Facilitator at (403)207-7094 or cmcleod@chestermere.ca

2. How to book a block party kit from Community Services

1. Call Community Services (CS) 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 CS. All block party kits come with barricades, sandwich boards, and gift certificates (if available). For a detail guide on planning a block party, please refer to Appendix A.
2. You may select items you would like in your block party kit:



3. Complete the block party registration form and submit it to Community Services.

3. General bylaw and regulation

- Alcohol is only permitted on private property, not on city streets or in parks.
- Food cannot be sold on city streets unless proper permits have been obtained.
- Hours amplified music is allowed:
 - Monday to Thursday 11:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.
 - Friday and Saturday 11:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.
 - Sunday 1:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

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: items from Community Services for your Block Party (sandwich boards, barbeque, etc.) must be picked up and returned back to the Facilitator

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Appendix A – Planning your block party

1. Planning Your Block Party

2. Getting started

The idea of a block party is bringing 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
- Creating a rainy-day plan
- Looking after food and local donations
- Organizing costs and admission fees to alleviate party expenses
- Organizing games and activities for kids, youth, and adults
- Setting up a cleaning plan
-

3. 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.

4. 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.)
- Ask attendees to provide their own food for their own families.
- Host a potluck.

Below is a table about the different types of block parties:

| Type | Barbecues | Picnics | Pot Luck | Cultural Potluck | Eco-friendly |
|---------|--|--|--|--|--|
| Details | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organizers purchase all that is needed and neighbours provide the money• Everyone brings their own meal | <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 |

5. 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 the party to prevent it from going too late.

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Ensure that your gathering isn't being a nuisance to those trying to sleep, should your party run into the evening. You can draft guidelines, if you'd like, and post them somewhere for people to see.

As per the City of Chestermere's bylaw, amplified music is allowed during the following hours:

- Monday to Thursday 11:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.
- Friday and Saturday 11:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.
- Sunday 1:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

6. Barricades

Registering your Block Party with the city ensures you will receive barricades for your street. Barricades can be used to direct the flow of traffic around your Block Party, while increasing safety for your guests. You do not need to make calls or special arrangements for these barricades as they will be dropped off by the City of Chestermere's Public Work Staff on Friday afternoon, then picked up on the following Monday.

7. Including everyone

Get to know your community better by inviting members from local community groups, businesses, and organizations. A Block Party is a great way to get to know those who have influence and contributed in your Neighbourhood, community, and Chestermere. Contact Community Services as we will be more than happy to help you connect with these people. Possible community member invitations are listed below and may be added to your contact form when booking:

- City Councillors
- Fire Department
- Mayor
- RCMP / Peace Officers
- Block Party Sponsor

8. Getting the word out

It's important to keep neighbours informed about your event. Most local newspapers and organizations will allow you to advertise through them, free of charge, as it's a community event. If necessary, complete the Sign-Off Form. This can be filled out by going door to door indicating that neighbours have no objections to the street being blocked off.

Here are some others suggestions:

- Invitations are available through Community Services, however you can make up some of your own as well.
- Invitations can be specific, such as asking each family to bring something or do up a follow-up invitation with details and give to those who've RSVP'd.
- Distribute flyers / invites requesting for feedback / RSVP 3-4 weeks before the event. This will give neighbours plenty of time to prepare for the party.
- Information and suggestions can be gathered by going door to door. This will add to the personal touch and people are more likely to offer help. A casual approach can be used to inform neighbours as you see them out doing their lawns, walking their pets, etc.

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9. 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 <p>Note: A gift certificate is provided to purchase food (if available at the time of booking)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tables and chairs • Barbeques* and propane (*Community Services has 1 barbeque that can be borrowed, if date is available) • Tents (for shade and in case of poor weather) • Sound system – music • Coolers for perishable foods • Tubs with ice for beverages • Garbage, recycle, and compost containers • Decorations such as helium balloons |

10. Games and Activities

Consider the layout of the event and plan different stations for different ages. Ensure you have games and activities for all age groups. Plan a few activities geared at breaking the ice for those neighbours who live at opposite ends of each other. Encourage the talent of your Neighbourhood to come forward – you may be living next to a musician, artist, storyteller, dancer, or singer!

You may also want to consider having the RCMP, Peace Officers or Fire Dept, etc attend, by checking it off on the Registration Form. they could perhaps conduct a mini hands on for the kids. This will create memorable experiences as well as learning about safety tips.

Below is a table with examples of activities for different age groups.

| <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 |

11. Clean up – before, during, after

Before the party, make sure the party area is clean. 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.

12. Helpful tips for setting up

- When setting up tables and chairs for the event, make sure that emergency vehicles can still access the streets.
- Consider using a sign-in book for records for next year. This can help develop a contact list for the Neighbourhood.
- Name tags and pens for writing.
- Tables for food and have a few garbage cans nearby.
- Consider a bathroom policy “everyone uses their own”, so that home security is monitored.
- Consider a pet policy

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13. Important reminders and regulations

Below are some things to keep in mind during your block party:

- Remember when setting up tables and chairs, emergency vehicles may need to access the vicinity.
- Post signs the day before the event, this will remind everyone about the party and to remove their cars for street closures.
- Food cannot be sold on city streets unless proper permits have been obtained. Alcohol is only permitted on private property, not on city streets or in parks.
- Make sure barbeques are a safe distance away from kids and activities.
- Neighbours should observe security precautions, keep back doors locked and equipment in sight.
- Loud music is prohibited.
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14. Sample Checklist

- Choose a date and confirm with Community Services (403-207-7094) for your Block Party kit.
- Forms to complete: Block Party Registration Form & Waiver of Liability and Release; Community Services Barbeque Rental (if applicable); and Event Evaluation Form.
- Plan the time of day. Do you want a pancake breakfast? An afternoon BBQ?
- Location: Do you plan to use the street, a backyard, a cul-de-sac, or a rented location? Ensure all proper permits and documentation are completed for your event.
- Plan the guest list. This may include residents of the same street or cul-de-sac, or surrounding farms or acreages. Avoid excluding residences. Decide if guests may invite friends, or if it will be restricted to people on the block.
- Designate the main contact person who will:
 - book the Block Party with Community Services
 - provide their contact information on the invitations and organize promotion of the event
 - answer questions of neighbours and residents
- Designate the food and refreshment coordinator, who will pick up supplies, arrange for food the day of, & ensure that tables, utensils, cutlery, coolers, etc. are provided and set up for the event.
- Designate an activity coordinator to plan games and activities for all ages and skill levels (toddlers, kids, youth, adults, etc.) and that these activities are in a location away from food preparation and busy streets. This person could take pictures, with the proper consent forms, and send it to the Community Services Facilitator, if desired !! Could also distribute prizes.
- Clean up coordinator: this person will be responsible for putting out garbage, recycle, and compost bins; ensuring bins are returned to their owners after the event; 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.

15. Contact us

If you have any concerns, comments, questions, or feedback, please contact Craig McLeod at 403-207-7094 or cmcleod@chestermere.ca

Our office hours are Mondays to Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**Please note: items from Community Services for your Block Party (sandwich boards, barbeque, etc.) must be picked up at the time that is arranged with Facilitator.*

Thank you for contributing to the bonding of neighbours and the building of safe, friendly communities. We hope you have a great party!

Neighbourhood Block Party

1. Sign-Off Form (Optional)

If there is concern regarding objections to the street being blocked off for the Block Party, this form can be filled out by going door to door indicating that neighbours have given consent to the blockage.

| | Name | Address | Contact info | Signature |
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Neighbourhood Block Party

2. Barbeque Maintenance and Cleaning Instructions

Usage

We want the barbeque to be used for many future events, so please make sure to use it respectfully and with care. If you notice any damage to the barbeque before you use it, please let a Community Services staff know as soon as possible. If you've notice the damages after rental pick up, take pictures for record keeping.

Please note, our barbeque does not come equipped with propane. You will have to supply your own propane – regular sized propane tanks are compatible with this unit.

Pick up

Determine a pick up time with Community Services for you to pick up the barbeque. You will need 3-4 strong individuals to lift the barbeque; it can be transported in a regular-sized pick-up truck. Make sure to secure the barbeque, knobs and drip-trays, or they can be lost in transport.

Please note: items from Community Services for your Block Party (sandwich boards, barbeque, etc.) must be picked up at the arranged from Community services on the week of your event.

Return

Ensure you have established with Community Services the return date and time of the barbeque. Return all parts of the barbeque as well as all items loaned (utensils and cleaning equipment). You will be supplied with a BBQ cleaning kit containing cleaning items and a cleaning spray.

Cleaning

Before cooking:

- Preheat the grill or griddle cook-top before you place food on it.
- Before you place food on the hot surface, cover the surface with a light layer of cooking oil (e.g., canola or olive oil), to prevent sticking.

After cooking:

- Burn off food residue on grills and clean with the stainless steel brushes supplied.
- When the barbeque has cooled, empty the grease / drip-tray and wash with soap and water (e.g., garden hose or power washer).
- Remove the cooking grate / grills and spray them with the degrease, and clean.
- Be sure to rinse all equipment with a garden hose or power washer.

Any damage occurring after your use of the barbeque must be reported and may be up to you to repair.