

NEIGHBOURHOOD



Block Party

KIT

"Building communities one block at a time!"

**AN EASY HOW TO GUIDE TO
ORGANIZE A NEIGHBOURHOOD
BLOCK PARTY**



Town of Coalhurst
www.coalhurst.ca

INTRODUCTION

A neighbourhood block party is the opportunity for neighbours to get together, meet each other, have fun and maybe work together on a common activity

10 TOP REASONS TO HAVE A BLOCK PARTY



- To have fun - no excuses or reasons are needed to celebrate.
 - To provide an opportunity to know your neighbours and where they live.
 - To establish friendships.
 - To increase that sense of belonging to a community.
 - To meet neighbours on your block that might be able to help you with a gardening problem, or lend you that needed ingredient for your recipe.
 - To encourage neighbours to look after the neighbourhood.
- To help with safety/crime prevention by knowing who lives where and who does not.
 - To learn a little about each other and know who might need a little extra help from time to time.
 - To increase security by knowing each other's schedules.
 - To develop an opportunity to meet some of the old time neighbours and learn about your community history.

As friendships grow, so do opportunities for borrowing and sharing of tools, sugar, information etc.

PLANNING YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD BLOCK PARTY

Things to consider when organizing your event.

1. GETTING STARTED

- The idea of a neighbourhood block party is to bring neighbours together. It's a good idea to find 1 or 2 neighbours to help you with the event.
- One can take the "Lone Ranger" approach, and it can be a great event. However, it may make it more difficult to find someone else to organize it next year.
- The first step is to create an Organizing Committee. It is important to include everyone in the decisions about the event.
- If this is the first time you may want to send out a flyer to explain what a Block Party is, encourage attendance, perhaps share some of the benefits, get opinions on how to handle the food, and possible dates and times to have the event.
- Enlist as many neighbours as you can to help out. Someone can type the flyer; someone else can collect them. You may want to ask some kids to drop the flyers in the mailboxes.



2. TYPES OF BLOCK PARTIES

Which type of block party will work best in your neighbourhood?

- barbecues - organizers purchase all that is needed and neighbours provide the money;
- everyone brings his or her own meat.
- picnics -- everyone brings their own meal;
- pot luck - everyone brings one dish;
- catered -- everyone shares the cost and the food is purchased.



*Try not to go overboard, it can make people feel the event is too much work.
Keep it simple!*

3. HOW BIG TO MAKE IT

- Start off with a smaller event rather than a large one. It can always grow, but it is hard to shrink it.
- In selecting who to invite, use natural neighbourhood boundaries where possible (i.e. end of the block). If you are planning a street or cul-de-sac party, you need to invite everyone from that area.
- Decide early and make it clear in your flyer if this will be a block party restricted to those on the street/block or whether people can invite friends/relatives (if yes how many).

4. LOCATION



- Alley*
- Street*
- Park*

Because these locations are on public lands, a permit is required (see permit information below). Safety needs to be an important factor in planning!

Other Options:

- A neighbour's backyard
- House
- Garage (rainout)
- Common room in a condo unit

It is recommended to use a public space, if at all possible. This will increase the likelihood of shared responsibility for the event.

5. TOWN OF COALHURST BLOCK PARTY APPLICATION

- An application is required from The **Town of Coalhurst** when a block party is being held - for example, streets, back alleys, cul-de-sacs or parks. The Block Party application is required to block off the street.
- Signatures from all your neighbours in the party zone are required on the permit to show support for the event, whether or not they plan to attend. This must be attached to the application along with any further details you wish to submit.
- The application must be submitted at least 2 weeks before the event.
- See your application in the kit which can be found on the Town web site www.coalhurst.ca or call the **Town Office** at 403-381-3033.

- **Alcohol consumption is not permitted on Town roads or public property.** For further inquiries regarding liquor licenses contact Alberta Gaming and Liquor 1-800-272-8876.
- Check the following Bylaws and make sure they are followed (also found on the Town web site www.coalhurst.ca): [Dog Control By-Law](#); [Noise Bylaw](#); [Traffic Bylaw](#)
- No vehicles are permitted on the park site if using a park.
- Remember that at the end of the function, the site needs to be clean.
- **Liability Insurance** is required for parties on Town parkland. Check with the Town Office about this. If your event is a sponsored Town event, their insurance may cover you. If not, you may wish to check with your home insurance.

Don't let obstacles stand in your way. In organizing the event, be creative!

6. THE TIMING TO GET THE EVENT PLANNED



- For a first time block party, distribute the first flyer requesting feedback 4 to 5 weeks before the event.
- Adjustments may need to be made if a neighbour already has an event of their own planned.
- Once the Committee has looked at all the suggestions, the final flyer with date, time and what to bring should go out 3 weeks before the event.
- Mid-May to end of August is a good time.
- A weekend date or holiday is often the best times for the event.
- Have an alternate rainout day planned, just in case.
- Keep in mind who lives in the neighbourhood when setting the hours for the party. If young children or seniors are living near the party area plan to finish by 9:00 pm.

7. GETTING THE WORD OUT

It is important to keep neighbours informed. Here are some ideas:

- Flyers can be used with a request to drop back their suggestions for the event in your mailbox.
- Information can be gathered from your neighbours by going door-to-door. This adds a personal touch and people often offer to help.
- A casual approach can be used to inform neighbours as you see them out doing their lawns.
- Neighbours can be called on the phone.

- Make an extra effort to get your new Canadian neighbours out to the event (see the handout in the kit for some ideas).

Take every opportunity to talk it up in the neighbourhood as often as possible prior to the event.

8. ROLE OF THE ORGANIZERS

- Make decisions about the set up.
- Act as a greeter at the event.
- Introduce new neighbours and help them make connections.
- Make sure the clean up is done. (You may wish to inspire clean up by rewarding the children with a prize.)

9. SET UP

- Set up a **sign-in book** for records for the next year, and it can help develop a contact list for the neighbourhood.
- **Nametags** are important.
- Decide what you want neighbours to write on their name tags (e.g. -first and last names, house numbers).
- Line up **tables** for the food and have a few **garbage cans** available.
- Decide whether you will coordinate or everyone will bring their own

Tables and chairs

Plates, cutlery and cups

Beverages.

If using **barbecues**, who will bring them?



- Institute a bathroom policy "everyone to use his or her own", so that home security is maintained.
- Decide if **pets** are allowed. (Follow Town Bylaws)
- Be ready to oversee the **clean up** after the event.
- You may wish to do an **evaluation** at the end of the event to collect any new ideas. (*See sample in the kit.*)

10. ACTIVITIES DURING THE EVENT

What should we do during the event?



- Visit and eat. Over the centuries, food has always had a very social component in societies.
- Games for kids (some organized, some they can plan themselves).
- Take time to introduce one another and point to one's house. This can be done in a game format.
- Encourage the talent in your neighbourhood to come forward such as musicians, magicians.

Fire Pits:

Especially during September neighbours have asked if a fire pit is allowed.

- Check with the Town Office for regulations/restrictions on allowing fire pits.

OTHER WAYS TO GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOURS

- Perennial exchange
- Garden tour party
- Group garage sale



Allow the majority to determine the event.

FINAL REMINDERS

- Neighbours should observe security precautions by keeping back doors locked and equipment in sight.
- Loud music is prohibited.
- Remember when setting up tables and chairs that emergency vehicles may need access.
- You may wish to post signs the day before the event to remind everyone to remove cars for the street closure.

QUESTIONS

If you wish to discuss your event or if you have questions please call the Coalhurst Town Office at 403-381-3033.

CHECKLIST OF FLYERS

- ✓ Block party application
- ✓ Planning check list
- ✓ Block party questionnaire and sample of an invitation
- ✓ How to welcome your new Canadian neighbour to the Block party
- ✓ Block party sign-in sheet
- ✓ Suggested activities to learn about your neighbours
- ✓ Ice breaker game - Bingo
- ✓ Evaluation

*"A special Thank You to the
Community Service Department, City of Edmonton
for sharing their wonderful ideas with the Town of Coalhurst"*

APPLICATION TO HOLD A BLOCK PARTY
(Please complete all fields in as much detail as possible.)

Date of Application: _____
Name of Applicant: _____
Mailing Address: _____
Telephone Number: _____ (h) _____ (w) _____ (c)

Organization (if applicable): _____
Executives (names, addresses, telephone numbers):

Block Party Details

Day/Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End: _____
Location: _____
Road Closure: _____
Approx. Number of Participants: _____

Size and number:

Flags: _____
Banners: _____
Placecards: _____
Signs: _____
Other: _____

Wording on above: _____

We, the undersigned will be in control of the Block Party and undertake to be responsible for the good order and conduct of the participants.

Signature: _____
Name (print): _____
Address: _____

DECISION

Approved without condition: _____ Refused: _____
Approved with the following condition(s): _____

Date: _____ Chief Administrative Officer (CAO): _____

Copy Forwarded to: Public Works: ___ Fire Chief: ___ By-Law Enforcement: ___ RCMP: ___

DECISION APPEAL

The applicant may appeal the decision of the CAO by signing below and bringing it to the Town Office

Date: _____ Signature: _____