

PARADE ENTRY GUIDE

A GUIDE TO COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS AS A PARADE PARTICIPANT

Share this document and all information with all members of your group who will be participating in the parade.

DATE, TIME, ROUTE INFORMATION

1. What is the date and time of the 2026 Downtown Parade of Lights?

- Saturday, December 5, 2026, 6:30pm

2. Where does the parade take place?

El Presidio Neighborhood and Jacome Plaza: The parade route officially **starts** at Granada and Franklin and ends at Church and Franklin.

As you enter downtown, please be aware of underpasses that have height limits! For example, the Stone Avenue underpass has a height limit of 13'.

3. Mandatory Meeting

All entrants are required to attend a mandatory meeting to review parade terms, conditions, staging information, arrival times, safety information, and more.

The meeting will be on Thursday, November 19, 6PM. A link will be emailed to you.

STAGING INFORMATION

4. Where is the parade staging?

- Staging takes place in Lot 175 located at 100 W. Franklin Street and the meters around the lot.
- Lot 175 will have rows of staging and will be assigned to you by the Parade Committee.
- Leave room for other entries to get into their staging area.
- Do not park non-parade cars in the staging area.
- Each entry will receive an allotted time to get into their staging position.
 - For example, if you are on Row 5, you may be required to arrive at your staging area between 4PM and 4:30PM.

5. Which way does the parade go when we leave the staging area?

Parade marshals will direct entries from the staging lot to the official parade start at Franklin and Granada.

- The first entry is on Court Avenue.
- The last entry (Santa) is on the southwest side of the lot.
- Each row follows the last entry from the previous row.
- Rows flow out onto Franklin Street, turning west onto Franklin.
- Franklin Street is a 'Quiet Zone'. Do not practice instruments or have music turned on.

6. We are participating in the parade. Where do we go on the day of the event?

- Parade participants will receive staging information, including staging numbers and maps, the week before the parade. The staging number indicates which row you will be staged on in Lot 175.
- Example: Row 5. You are located on Row 5 in the staging lot.
- On the day of the event, go directly to your staging area.
- If you are walking in the parade but driving to the staging area, [park in downtown garages or lots](#). You cannot park a non-parade vehicle in the staging area or in the neighborhood.
- Entry staging is done by the Parade Committee. Do not change your entry position.

7. Where do I receive a staging number?

- All entries must provide their own staging number. A piece of paper with the number written in black marker is sufficient.
- You **MUST display your staging number** on the windshield of the **FIRST vehicle in your entry**. This is to assist with staging and ensure the emcee reads the correct description as you pass by each emcee.
- If you do not have a vehicle in your entry, you MUST display the staging number on the first walkers/cyclists/etc., in your group.

8. How soon can I begin to set up?

- Each entry will receive an allotted time to get into their staging position.
 - For example, if you are on Row 5, you may be required to arrive at your staging area between 4PM and 4:30PM.
- Entries can begin to set up at 3pm.
- Staging ends at 5:45pm.
- The Downtown Parade of Lights determines entry placement in the parade.

- Do not change your entry position.

9. When do I need to be in my staging area?

- Entries must be in their staging area *no later* than 5:30pm.
- No late entries will be accepted.
- All entries will be inspected to ensure the safety of the entry, drivers, and spectators. A request may be made by Event Staff to make changes to your entry. If the request is not fulfilled, you may not be eligible to participate. Again, this is for the safety of everyone involved.

10. Can I park vehicles that are *not* in the parade in my staging area?

- Staging can become very busy and congested. Each entry can have one vehicle at a time in the staging area to unload equipment. All support vehicles **MUST** be removed from the staging areas immediately once their staging is complete.
- There are **NO** entries or vehicles permitted inside the staging areas after 5:30pm.
- Please park all **non-parade vehicles** outside of the neighborhood to allow for actual entries. Parking for non-parade vehicles can be found in [parking garages](#) or in metered parking that is **not** along the parade route.

11. Staging Instructions

- [Read the Staging Instructions](#)

12. Parade Instructions

- The parade route includes some forks in the road.
 - Alameda: Stay to the right or south side of the road
 - Pennington and Church: Do not use the turn lane to turn south on Church Avenue. Make a big right turn in the intersection.
 - Church Avenue: Stay to the left or east side of the road

13. What happens when we finish the parade route?

- Entries must go back to the staging lot at Church and Franklin (where the parade ends).
- **DO NOT STOP.** Continue into the staging lot, pulling all the way into the lot. Do not go back to your original staging position, except Rows 1 through 3.
- You will be in reverse order of the original staging, except Rows 1 through 3.

- You must remain in the staging lot until the last entry (Santa Claus) returns from the parade route.
 - ***YOU CANNOT LEAVE THE STAGING AREA UNTIL THE FINAL ENTRY IS BACK INTO THE STAGING AREA.***
- Parade marshals will assist with exiting the staging lot once the parade is finished.

14. I'm lost and unsure where my group is- help!

Don't worry! We have volunteer marshals to help you find your group. Volunteers will be wearing bright yellow, reflective vests.

15. Parade Pacing

Entries cannot stop, except for safety reasons, while on the parade route. Please keep a reasonable distance between you and the other entries. Pacing is important and is key to ensuring there are no large gaps and that entries are not too close to each other. DO NOT STOP ALONG THE PARADE ROUTE.

16. Lighting Guidelines

- All entries, including marching bands, walking groups, etc., must have safe holiday lighting on their entries.
 - Please try to use battery-powered or LED-powered lights.
- While driving your vehicle, *do not* have the flashers on. Only use your flashers if you stall or need to pull off the parade route.
- All lighting must be secured to your float, vehicle, person, etc.

17. Entry Limitations

- All entries must be appropriate, tasteful, and festive, and promote the holiday spirit.
- Absolutely NO political signage or themes.
- NO advertising other than the name of your organization. For example, you cannot display signage indicating 'limited-time sales' on your entry.
- Religious expression is not prohibited, but proselytizing is prohibited.
- Horses are not permitted.
- Dogs and other animals must have a person and a clean-up system to pick up waste.
- Each vehicle entry can only have a maximum of 3 vehicles per entry. This is strictly enforced. If you have more than 3 vehicles, you will be asked to reduce your vehicles to 3 or be removed from the parade.
- Absolutely no stopping during the parade to perform stunts or to rev up a vehicle/off-road vehicle.
 - For example, no stopping to skateboard off of ramps.

- Entrants understand and agree that Parade Staff and Volunteers may remove any entry if found in violation of this rule or in any other dangerous situation as deemed by Parade Staff and Volunteers.
- Absolutely no handing out candy, flyers, etc. If Parade Staff observe you handing out ANYTHING, you will be removed from the parade immediately.
- Height restriction 13'

SAFETY INFORMATION

18. Can I hand out information to spectators?

- For the safety of the parade spectators and entries, **absolutely no items** are to be thrown, tossed, launched, or handed out to the crowd.
- If groups are seen handing out *anything* to crowds, Parade Staff and Volunteers will ask them to stop, and they may not be admitted into future events.

19. What happens if my vehicle stalls or something else happens to my vehicle while on the parade route?

- All vehicles must contain a minimum of one 2A10BC-type fire extinguisher and jumper cables.
- If your vehicle stalls while on the parade route, put your flashers on and carefully pull off to a side street to allow other parade entries to pass you.

20. Drivers and Passengers

- Only individuals 18+ years old are permitted to drive the parade route and must possess a valid motor vehicle operator's license and be trained to drive their assigned vehicle.
- All entries riding in a vehicle are required to be buckled and safely secured to the float/vehicle.
- Drivers must have an unobstructed view of the road in front and on the sides.

21. General Safety Information

- Batteries must be secured with no loose connections.
- Fuel tanks must be secured and without leaks.
- Spare fuel must be secured and stored away from any heat source.
- All wiring must be properly secured to prevent mechanical damage and injury to float riders.
- Portable generators or compressors used on the float must be securely mounted on a vehicle or other substantial base. A minimum of 12 inches of clearance must separate any part of the generator/compressor from combustible fabrication material.
- A portable generator may not be secured or braced in an enclosed space with the driver or rider.
- All entry materials must be flame-retardant.

Downtown Parade of Lights © Festival

- Fire and flammable props are prohibited.
- Generator exhaust must be properly vented and not in contact with anything combustible.
- Franklin Street is a 'Quiet Zone'. Do not practice instruments or have music turned on.

ENTRY APPROVAL & QUALITY STANDARDS

Vehicle-based entries should be transformed into a festive parade display rather than simply serving as transportation or advertisement. Participants are encouraged to create a float-style entry; however, vehicles without a traditional float must demonstrate a high level of creativity, decoration, and lighting.

Vehicle entries should incorporate elements such as:

- A float structure, trailer display, or added decorative elements
- Extensive lighting throughout the vehicle and/or entry
- Decorations visible from multiple sides of the parade route
- Props, displays, or creative features
- Costumed riders or participants
- Music or other elements that enhance the parade experience
- A thoughtful and intentional presentation created specifically for the Downtown Parade of Lights

Examples of entries that may not meet approval standards:

- Vehicles with only a single strand or minimal amount of lights
- Standard vehicles with little to no additional decoration
- Company vehicles displaying only logos, banners, or advertisements without a creative parade element
- Entries relying primarily on headlights, existing vehicle features, or everyday vehicle appearance

All vehicle entries should clearly demonstrate effort and preparation to create an engaging experience for parade attendees.

WALKING GROUPS & PERFORMANCE ENTRIES

Walking and performance entries are encouraged as they bring energy, entertainment, and community spirit to the parade.



Walking and performance entries should incorporate elements such as:

- Lights, glow accessories, or illuminated elements
- Coordinated outfits, costumes, or themed attire
- Music, dance, or performance elements
- Props, banners, signs, or handheld decorations
- Characters, mascots, or interactive elements
- Creative elements that showcase the organization, group, or community

Examples of walking entries that may not meet approval standards:

- Groups walking without any lights, decorations, costumes, or planned presentation
- Participants wearing everyday clothing with no festive elements
- Groups using the parade solely for advertising or promotion without contributing to the overall experience

All walking groups should demonstrate preparation and contribute to the festive atmosphere of the Downtown Parade of Lights.

ENTRY PHOTO APPROVAL REQUIREMENT

To assist with the approval process, all applicants must submit a photo or example of their planned parade entry.

Submitted materials should show:

- Lighting plans
- Decorations
- Vehicle/float design (if applicable)
- Overall entry concept

Final approval is based on the completed application and submitted entry materials. The Parade Committee may request additional information or modifications before confirming participation.

GENERAL INFORMATION

22. Can I have a Santa Claus in my entry?

NO! You cannot have a human Santa Claus in your entry. There's only one Santa at the end of the parade- we don't want to confuse small kids (or big ones).

You are allowed to have an inflatable Santa in your entry.

23. I have to go to the bathroom!!!

Bathrooms are located at Jacome Plaza and along the parade staging areas and route.

24. Are there photographers at the event?

Yes, we have hired photographers to photograph parade entries. If you do not want your photo taken, kindly tell them that you do not want to be photographed.

Photos will be used for future marketing purposes as well as displayed in a gallery that you can view at www.DowntownParadeOfLights.com

25. Misc. Information

- The event goes on rain or shine, so dress and prepare for the weather.
- Bring water, snacks, and chairs for your participants.
- No alcohol or live flame is allowed during setup or on your entry.

26. Social Media

Engage your friends, family, businesses, and organizations through social media!

Downtown Parade of Lights Facebook -

<https://www.facebook.com/tucsonparadeoflights>

27. Who do I contact on the day of the event?

Please contact the [Parade of Lights Coordinator](#) should you have any questions or concerns.

MOST IMPORTANTLY - BE SAFE AND HAVE FUN!!