

Neighborhood Block Party

Here are some basic guidelines for organizing a block party. The specific legalities will vary by township or city ordinances.

Three Months Before

- Form a Block Party Committee consisting of several households and hold an organizational meeting.
- One member should become the main contact person, responsible for sending out invitations, arranging publicity and answering questions.
- Assign one person to handle permits, insurance and other legal requirements. Check with the township office or public works department to get this information.
- Put another person in charge of organizing food and refreshments.
- Appoint another person to be activity coordinator.
- Don't forget to put someone in charge of the clean-up committee!
- Survey the neighborhood to select the date for the party. Send out petitions to all affected residents, if required by ordinances.
- Decide how the food will be handled: Will the Committee purchase food and beverages and simply charge attendees a flat fee? Will the Committee plan a menu and assign recipes to each household? Will you ask everyone to bring a main course and beverage for their own family, and a side dish to share with others? Will you be serving alcoholic beverages and are any special permits or insurance required?

One Month Before

- Send out invitations. This can be done as part of a neighborhood newsletter or as a separate mailed notice.
- Apply for necessary permits.
- Investigate noise ordinances and see whether any permits are required to keep the party going into the late night hours.
- Make arrangements to get barricades to block off the streets surrounding the party.
- Purchase any necessary insurance to cover the event.
- Make arrangements for toilet facilities, if necessary.
- Reserve equipment you will need to rent such as tables, tents, sound system, etc. Ask everyone to bring their own chairs.

One Week Before

- Publicize the party. This can be signs posted throughout the neighborhood, ads in local newspapers or a phone call chain.
- Confirm all arrangements that have been made with emergency, police and fire departments.
- Confirm arrangements for barricades, entertainment, food, refreshments, tents, tables and any other equipment that will be rented or borrowed.

Activities and Other Things to Plan

- Invite the local police and fire departments to visit and give safety demonstrations and tours of their vehicles.
- Organize contests such as a dance contest; a food-eating contest; three-legged races; potato sack races; basketball shooting contests; volleyball tournament. Kick off the day with a parade comprised of floats for the little children and a dressed up bike parade for the older ones.
- Hire a clown or magician to entertain the children with balloon sculptures, magic and face painting.

Don't Forget...

- Nametags - they may seem geeky, but it's a lot easier than trying to remember everyone's names or doing self-introductions.
- A bullhorn if there will be organized contests and activities.
- Tubs with ice for chilling beverages.
- Coolers for storing perishable foods.
- Store meats separately from other food to protect against contamination.
- Clean up when you're done!