



2026 Hats Off Day Parade Rules and Guidelines

The Hats Off Day Parade Committee's first priority is to ensure the safety of all Parade activities, volunteers, participants, community members, and event visitors. We expect all Parade entries (groups and participants) to abide by our Rules, Regulations, and Guidelines below.

The purpose of the Hats Off Day Parade is to **celebrate the best of our community, act as a unifier**, and to **bring enjoyment and fun** for all members of our community and attending visitors. We ask that Parade participants keep this purpose in mind when planning and participating for the event.

Parade Eligibility

Hats Off Day is hosted by the Heights Merchants BIA (business improvement area) as our way to take our "hats off" to our community and a day to give back to our customers. In spirit, it's a customer-appreciation day and a very localized community celebration - a day to celebrate the best of the Burnaby Heights district and invite others to enjoy everything our neighbourhood has to offer here. Therefore, **outside vendors, mobile vendors, food trucks, or other non-Heights businesses are not permitted to be in the festival or in the parade.**

Due to the space and time limitations of Parade assembly, duration, and dispersal, spots in the Hats Off Day are limited and a selection criteria is in place.

Those eligible to be in the parade are the following:

- a. **Heights Business Improvement Area (BIA)'s businesses** (that is, merchants from 3700 to 4853 Hastings that are commercial lease-holders and business license holders on the Heights).

- b. **Burnaby-based non-profit associations.** (Must be Burnaby-based and Burnaby-serving.)
- c. **Burnaby elementary and secondary schools** (Burnaby Heights and North Burnaby schools will receive priority)
- d. **Burnaby Heights community's places of worship** (Boundary to Gamma, north of Frances)
- e. **Hats Off Day approved sponsors**
- f. **Government Agencies that have been approved to be at Hats Off Day** (City government, or relevant provincial or federal government agencies)
- g. **Non Burnaby-based non-profit associations on a case-by-case basis** (for example, groups that are specific to this year's Hats Off Day's theme, or a specific cultural group that represents one of the cultures of North Burnaby).

Parade Application Process:

To be a parade participant, Parade groups and/or individuals must comply with the Hats Off Day Parade Rules and Guidelines in creating and executing a Parade entry that meets safety and logistical requirements of all activities within the law.

- a. Applications must be **completely filled** and use **a contact person's legal name**. An incomplete form will not be considered. **Please do keep in mind that application submission does not guarantee placement in the parade.**

*Note: Only **one (1) parade entry per organization**. An entry comprises **up to two** of the followings:*

1. *Large vehicle (e.g. Large Truck, with or without Semi Trailer or Float) If a large vehicle is selected, only one is permitted*
 2. *Small vehicle (e.g. Car or Pick-up Truck not pulling a float)*
 3. *Small walking group (up to 10 people)*
 4. *Large walking group (up to 30 people). If a large walking group is selected, only one is permitted*
 5. *Marching band*
 6. *Dancing group*
 7. *Float or truck bed with people or decoration on it*
- b. The Parade Committee will review all complete application forms. In addition to meeting the eligibility and creativity criteria, demonstrating your group's efforts in

producing an entertaining and dynamic Parade entry will increase your chances of being selected for the Parade.

- c. The Parade Committee has the right to refuse any application or participation in the Parade. **An approved entry may be refused on parade day should the entry not meet the proper rules and guidelines or their entry is not consistent with their approved parade application.**
- d. **Partisan and/or Political causes and messages are not permitted** in the Parade as the Festival is a non-partisan event designed to promote community, social cohesion and general civic unity. Groups that do not adhere to this rule may be denied entry in the subsequent year.
- e. Parade applicants will receive **a written notice of approval** to participate **by April 20, 2026.**
- f. The HOD Parade Organizers will finalize each position assignment in the parade. The HOD parade organizers reserve the right to **re-arrange the Parade line-up as needed for safety and parade flow.** The Hats Off Day committee will **inform and update the affected participant when changes occur.**
- g. A hired Hats Off Day photographer will be capturing images of the Parade. **Participation in this public event signifies your group's permission to be photographed and the photographs to be used for the purposes of Hats Off Day promotion and communication with stakeholders, whether in digital or print forms.** This permission is granted by submitting this application.

Liability & Insurance and Vehicular Safety:

- a. The parade participant assumes **all responsibility for their property and vehicle(s)**, including any and all loss, theft, or damage to the display, equipment and other property.
- b. All motor vehicle drivers in the parade must have **a valid driver's license for the vehicle they are driving.**
- c. All motor vehicles **must be insured.**
- d. All floats and vehicle entries are **required to have "spotters" walking on each side of the vehicle. (A minimum of 2 spotters per side)**
- e. Drivers are required to operate with utmost **commitment to safety**, including shoulder checking and mirror checking before moving the vehicle from a stationary position. Drivers must ensure there are **no persons - adult or child - located on the street in unsafe proximity to the vehicle.** Please use a spotter to assist this process.

- f. Drivers are responsible for **keeping a safe and steady pace during the procession** – neither crowding the entry in front of them or behind them, nor creating too much of a gap between them and the entry in front of them or behind them. An ideal walking and driving speed is **3 kms per hour**.

General Participation Terms and Conditions:

- a. **Alcohol and drugs are strictly prohibited.** Any participants found with alcohol or other substances will be removed from the Parade immediately and reported to the appropriate authorities.
- b. **Smoking and vaping are not permitted** in the marshalling or dispersal areas, near and parade entries, or along the parade route.
- c. **Handouts/ Giveaways:**
 - a. **Handing out treats is permitted but must follow the conditions stated below.** Failure to comply with the following conditions will result in being dismissed from the Parade route and your group may be disqualified from participating in future parades.
 - i. Parade participants that are handing out materials or treats **must be able to keep up with the pace of the parade (approx 3 kms/hour) even while handing things out.**
 - ii. **No tossing or throwing** any treats during the parade.
 - iii. A group representative **must go to the curb** to hand out treats. (This will prevent any children and spectators in general from entering the road/parade route.)
 - iv. For safety reasons, the parade organizers **strongly discourage handing out materials that may create litter or other slip hazards** on the roadway.
- d. In an effort to adopt a more sustainable practice, Hats Off Day has a **Helium-free Balloon Policy**. We ask all Hats Off Day participants to **refrain from using helium in balloons**.
- e. There will be **no premature exiting** on the parade route. All groups must finish the parade at Boundary Road and exit north on Boundary toward Albert Steet. The only exception is for groups of small children under 6 years of age, who may complete the parade route one block early, at Esmond.
- f. **Solicitation for cash, donations, merchandise sales or tickets sales is not permitted** along the parade route.
- g. **Political or cause campaigning are not permitted.** Hats Off Day is a non-partisan, non-political event with the purpose of uniting our community.

- h. **Non-parade vehicles are NOT permitted** in the marshalling area or dispersal area.
- i. **Children** walking the parade route and/or on Parade floats **must be supervised** by an adult at all times.
- j. **Parade Pace:**
 - a. All parade participants are expected to “keep the pace” (approx 3 kms/hour) and must be **sufficiently physically fit** to maintain **both the parade pace and walk a distance of approx. 1.8 km** - the length of the Parade route.
 - b. Units creating unnecessary gaps may result in a warning and may be disqualified from participating in the next Hats Off Day parade.
 - c. **A forward motion must be maintained at all times.** Parade participants are **not permitted to stop along the parade route or go backwards** except to respond to an emergency or to avoid colliding with a group in front of them.
- k. Hats Off Day is a harassment-free zone. This includes intimidation, stalking, following, harassing, unwanted photography or recording, unwelcome physical contact or sexual attention, and offensive, hateful behaviour or communication.

Parade Instructions:

Parade instructions are subject to updates as organizers are advised by the City of Burnaby and the RCMP.

Arrival and Assembly

- a. Vehicles/floats participating in the parade must arrive **between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m and will enter the parade staging area at Gamma and Hastings (see map in other document)**. Those that arrive **after 9 a.m.** risk losing their spot in the parade. On the morning of the parade, a representative from each group **must sign in at the Parade Information and Registration Tent** located on the north side of Hastings Street at Beta Avenue.
- b. **Large oversized vehicles must arrive between 8:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m.** after the Hastings Street road closure, and enter through Gamma Avenue and Hastings Street. (See map for details). They must also check in at the Parade information and Registration Tent.

These groups must arrive earlier than others because parking for large entries becomes very difficult as congestion builds. Parade placement numbers will be indicated on the curbs of both the north and south side of Hastings Street.

- c. After parking your parade vehicle, you **must check in at the Parade Information and Registration table** (north side of Hastings Street and Beta Avenue). Please ensure you **do not block any other group members and roadways. Please look for a volunteer in a high-vis vest to check in.**
- d. **Pedestrian-only groups** will be directed to the west side of Beta Ave. between Hastings and Albert Street., where they will assemble. Once assembled, you must check-in at the Parade Information and Registration Table.
- e. Once the parade begins, the Parade Coordinator, together with volunteers, will help you merge into the parade. **All parade participants must remain alert and patiently wait for their cue from the parade coordinator to enter the parade.**

Parade Dispersal

- f. All parade **entrants** must **exit north (turn right) at Boundary Road**. You must not disperse or stop on Hastings Street as this action will force the parade to stop up the road.
- g. All parade **vehicles** must **exit north at Boundary Road** and must **turn right onto Albert Street** to the dispersal area.
- h. Those who are walking in the parade must move onto the sidewalks immediately and turn right up Boundary (North), walk along the sidewalk, and respect spectators watching the parade.

Awards:

- a. All Parade Participants will be **judged by Hats Off Day Parade Judges** during the parade procession and will have an opportunity to **win an award** in the following categories:
 - a. Best Engagement,
 - b. Best Parade Theme,
 - c. Most Creative Entry,
 - d. Top Merchant Entry, and/or
 - e. Best Overall Entry.
- b. **Winners will be contacted by the Heights Merchants Association Staff** approximately three weeks after Hats Off Day.
- c. A Hats Off Day Parade Awards Ceremony will be held on a later date to award the winners with trophies.