



NEIGHBORS WEST-NORTHWEST

Coalition of Central Westside Neighborhoods

Arlington Heights · Goose Hollow · Forest Park · Hillside · Linnton · Northwest Industrial · Northwest Heights
Northwest District · Old Town-Chinatown · Pearl District · Portland Downtown · Sylvan-Highlands

Community Events and Block Parties in Portland, Oregon

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why do I need a permit to close my street?

Block party and community events permits allow you to close some streets in the City of Portland. Many community members and organizations enjoy the atmosphere and the safety that comes with closing a street for an event. Obtaining a permit for street closure also helps city services plan around your event. For example, the police and fire departments can prepare alternative routes to emergencies or the Water Bureau may plan repairs to your fire hydrant on an alternative day.

2. What is the difference between a community event and a block party?

- A *block party* permit closes the street for a small, local event focusing on one city block for small-scale parties such as potlucks or barbecues with your immediate neighbors.
- A *community event* permit closes a street for a large event that is non-political, non-commercial, and provides a civic benefit to the community. This supports events inviting people from beyond the street that is closed including a neighborhood street dance, neighborhood fair, non-profit fundraising event, community holiday event, community festival farmers market, a business sponsored event or an art fair.

3. Where can I hold my event?

Block parties close no more than one block of a local service residential street. Block parties are limited to streets *without* a bus route, a bus layover, or a signalized traffic intersection. Community events can include more than one block. Both block parties and community events must include a traffic control plan. A basic template is included with each application. Traffic control plans may be more complicated if you are planning an event on multiple blocks or if your neighborhood does not have a regular grid system.

4. When can I hold my event?

Block parties must end by 10:00 PM to respect the surrounding community.

5. Why do my neighbors need to sign the petition in the application?

The City's application process requires you to notify all the residents affected by the street closure so neighbors are not surprised to discover the limited access to their home on the day of the event. This is a great opportunity to invite them to attend! For Community Events, you must notify the neighborhood association in addition to the neighbors – a great way to invite even more people to your event.

6. My neighbor plays music in a group and they might jam at our event. Do I need another permit?

Amplified music requires a noise variance permit. If the band plays acoustically, a noise variance permit is not required.

7. Are we allowed to serve or drink alcohol?

If you plan to serve, drink or sell alcohol in the street or public right-of-way, City Council must pass an Ordinance. This is only possible through the Community Event application, not through the Block Party application. You must also comply with Oregon Liquor Control Commission requirements. For more information about OLCC requirements, visit www.oregon.gov/OLCC/how_to_get_a_liquor_license.shtml or contact Kat Hand, 503 872-5070.

8. How much will the permits cost?

- Block Party permits are available at no charge.
- Community Event fees range from \$0 to \$820 depending on the intended audience (advertised to the neighborhood or citywide), the event sponsor (non-profit or for-profit), and the presence of alcohol. For more details, contact Kristen Alldrin with the Portland Bureau of Transportation (503 823-7073, Kristan.Alldrin@portlandoregon.gov) or visit www.portlandonline.com/transportation/index.cfm?a=306014&c=38718.
- Noise variance permits cost \$66.

9. How much time does it take to process my permit?

- Submit Block Party applications to your neighborhood coalition office for insurance information no less than 2 weeks prior to your event.
- Community Event applications are due 4 weeks in advance directly to the Portland Bureau of Transportation.
- If you would like an Ordinance to serve alcohol in the street, submit your community event application at least 11 weeks in advance directly to the Portland Bureau of Transportation.
- Start planning early and make sure you notify all the residents on your street.
- The more time you provide the City to process the permit, the better. This assures that you receive your permit and prevents acceleration fees charged by the Noise Control Office!

10. What do I do with my permit once it arrives?

Keep the permit available on site for review if a police officer requests it.

11. What do I do about the insurance requirement?

- For small, local Block Parties, your neighborhood coalition office supplies insurance. Neighbors West-Northwest provides insurance for block parties held within 12 neighborhoods in Northwest and inner Southwest Portland. (503 823-4288, coalition@nwnw.org) To find other neighborhood offices, visit www.portlandonline.com/oni/search. Some coalitions charge a small fee for using their insurance. Neighbors West-Northwest does not.

If within our coalition area, NWNW staff will complete the insurance information and submit your application to the Bureau of Transportation. This insurance DOES NOT COVER you, event participants, your organization and/or others for any liability incurred. The insurance only covers the vehicle right-of-way. The sidewalk is covered by homeowners insurance. **If you plan to hold an event where alcohol beverages are served, races are held or that include the use of mechanical devices (merry-go-rounds, kid bounce houses, dunk tanks, etc.), you must obtain insurance from another source.** City of Portland's insurance services program: www.portlandonline.com/omf/index.cfm?&c=32612.

- For Community Events, you are responsible for securing your own liability insurance. This is required prior to submitting your application to the City of Portland. Sometimes small groups partner with larger organizations (churches, schools, or other local institutions) to secure liability insurance for the event, especially if your group or organization doesn't hold events very often. www.portlandonline.com/omf/index.cfm?&c=32612.

12. What types of children's activities are allowed?

If you plan to hold an event that includes races or the use of mechanical devices (merry-go-rounds, kid bounce houses, dunk tanks, etc.), you must find your own source of insurance. The City offers an insurance services program to assist event organizers meet the City's insurance requirement for special events. For more information and costs, please visit the City of Portland's Website at www.portlandonline.com/omf/index.cfm?&c=32612.

13. How do I make sure the street is blocked off from auto traffic?

You will need to purchase or rent six Type I barricades with "Street Closed" signs. If your party will continue after dark, the barricades must include flashing yellow lights. Three signs should be placed at each end of the block.

Search for "barricades" in the yellow pages to find other sources. When NWNW staff contacted the "barricades" list in Yellow Pages, only two organizations indicated they would rent Type I barricades. One vendor indicated that they charge \$45 to rent enough barricades, lights and signs to comply with the city regulations for block parties.

- American Barricade (aka National Barricade), (503) 285-6616, Address: 173 NE Columbia Blvd, Portland, OR 97211, Hours: 7:00 AM – 5:00 PM, Monday - Friday
- D & H Flagging Inc, (503) 232-2488, Address: 1612 SE Holgate, Portland, OR 97202
Hours: 5:30 AM– 6:00 PM, Monday - Friday

14. What if I want to have a community party in a local park?

This is another type of activity. Portland Parks & Recreation has its own process to reserve space that depends on the Park you would like to use and the type of event you are holding. If you are planning a large event for local neighbors, consider working with your neighborhood association. Neighborhood Associations can reserve two park spaces for no charge each year. One date is a flexible date, and the other date is for National Night Out at the beginning of August. For more information about partnering with your Neighborhood Association, contact Neighbors West-Northwest (coalition@nwnw.org, 503.823.4288). To apply directly to Portland Parks & Recreation, visit their website at www.portlandonline.com/parks.