

Homecoming Parade Float Safety

A Guide to Help Keep Your Event Safe and Fun

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Homecoming season is just around the corner and that means many communities across Colorado are preparing for a Homecoming Parade! 2021 parades can be especially exciting, as they mark a much anticipated return to more normal activity for many CSDSIP Members and an exciting chance to join together and celebrate school spirit. What fun! However, it is always important to consider the possible risks posed by any activity, and parades are certainly not immune. This guide will walk you through risks, CSDSIP coverage, and steps you can take to keep your event as safe as possible.



Colorado Parade Float Incidents

Following a few simple guidelines could prevent tragedies and keep your communities safe. Unfortunately, Colorado has seen some devastating parade accidents in recent years, including:

- October 2019, in Golden, CO, a two-story college homecoming float collapsed injuring 10 people. Police stated over 30 people were on the float.
- September 2018, Windsor, CO held their Harvest Festival Parade. An 8-year-old boy that was in the parade with his church fell and was struck by the float. The boy was taken to the hospital, but did not survive his injuries.
- October 2015, the Vail Daily reported that a first grader was seriously injured during a high school homecoming parade in Eagle Valley, CO. The first grader fell beneath the wheels of one of the float trailers in the homecoming parade.
- October 2007, In Westcliffe, CO, a high school sophomore attempted to climb aboard a moving homecoming parade float but fell under the wheels and was crushed. He did not survive his injuries.

Insurance Coverage

Auto Liability Coverage is triggered by the vehicle that the float is hooked up to. If the float is connected to the Member's vehicle, the Member's Auto Liability Coverage would extend to the float.

If the float is going to be pulled by an employee or volunteer's personal vehicle in the course and scope of their duties on behalf of the Member, the Pool's Auto Liability Coverage would be triggered as well as the employee's personal Auto Liability Coverage in the event of an accident. CSDSIP does **not** cover employee or volunteer vehicles for Auto Physical Damage.

We recommend that the owner of the vehicle provide the Member with a proof of insurance, to include a copy of the owner's Auto Coverage Declarations Page, which shows the owner's limits. The Member will need to determine if the limits are adequate for the exposure. Items to consider when reviewing the exposure include whether students will be permitted to ride the float, and where the students will be walking with relationship to the float.

Risk Control Recommendations:

- **Float & Running Gear**
 - Tow-float foundations should consist of a sturdy flat trailer bed with pneumatic wheels.
 - Ensure all load supporting areas on floats are built from structurally competent materials such as wood or steel. Do not use flimsy materials such as cardboard or paper, as they may appear solid to passengers, and cause injury as they cannot bear weight.
 - Check that float wheels, tires, dollies, axles, bearings, etc. are of adequate size and strength to support the total load required. Wheels and tires must be in good condition and vehicle brakes sufficient to stop the float when loaded.
 - The authority having jurisdiction with the parade has the right to ban any unsafe vehicle.
- **Vehicle Maintenance**
 - Service all float-pulling vehicles and self-propelled floats for gas, oil, water, tires and battery prior to reporting to the staging areas.

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- Ensure vehicles licensed for highway use carry proof of insurance.
- Do not carry extra gasoline on any float, as this could pose a significant fire hazard.
- All float-pulling vehicles should be equipped with a horn or other sounding device for emergency use.
- **Decorations**
 - Ensure all decorative material has been manufactured or treated to be effectively fire retardant.
 - If not marked as such, treat decorative material with a fire-retardant solution in advance of use on a parade float using a commercial treating solution.
 - Determine satisfactory flame retardant by holding a sample of the material in a vertical position and placing a match flame ½ inch below it. If the material ignites, it must self-extinguish when the flame is removed.
 - Ensure finished floats and decorated areas have no sharp or unfinished edges exposed.
 - If the driver or any other individuals are enclosed within the float or decorations, provide proper ventilation and emergency exits for them.
- **Driver Vision/Communication**
 - Design float decorations to allow the driver 180 degrees clear vision to the front and sides of the float or tow unit.
 - If 180 degrees vision is impossible, spotters must accompany and guide the vehicle.
 - Ensure all drivers have view of or a clear communication avenue with float riders in the event of a problem on the float.
- **Fire Extinguisher**
 - Carry at least one 10-pound ABC fire extinguisher in an easily accessible, designated location on every float or towing vehicle.
 - Ensure all fire extinguishers are sealed, tagged and dated within the previous 12-month period.
 - Prohibit the use of open flame displays, roman candles and fireworks on floats and tow vehicles.
 - Remember that Fireworks and explosive compositions are excluded from CSDSIP School Entity Liability Coverage.
- **Rider Safety**
 - Provide solid sitting arrangements and accessible handholds to all participants riding on open floats.
 - Those standing on open floats must have a stabilized body support with buckled safety belt or other means to prevent falling from unit.
 - Never wire or tie any person to any float.
 - Secured safety rails, barriers or ropes should be used to prevent falls where possible and should be between 36 and 42 inches in height.
 - Do not allow unsecured riders to sit or stand anywhere they could fall beneath the float, such as on the rear edge of a tow vehicle or the front edge of a float.
 - Take extra precautions when children are present, and ensure they are always under adult supervision and always seated when in motion.
 - Riders should remain in-place throughout the duration of the parade and any time their float is in motion. Prohibit all riders from boarding or dismounting a moving float.
 - Prohibit all parade participants from consuming alcohol or smoking during the event.
- **Driver**
 - Ensure all float drivers possess a valid driver's license.
 - Volunteer drivers should be asked to provide a copy of their current Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) for review.
 - Ensure all driver MVR's meet Member-established MVR Guidelines and CSDSIP MVR Eligibility Standards.
 - Confirm all drivers to be in competent condition to safely operate a vehicle. Prohibit driving under the influence of drugs or intoxicants.
 - For the safety of float riders, drivers must minimize abrupt starts and stops.
 - Provide drivers with a float safety checklist to keep in their possession throughout the event.
- **Generators**
 - When used, ensure generators are securely mounted on the vehicle with not less than 12 inches of clearance separating it from any combustible material.

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- If any generator is running in a confined space, (e.g., pick-up camper shell) prohibit riders from occupying that space.
- **Electrical System**
 - Ensure all electrical wiring is approved for its intended use, such as lighting, motorized decorations, etc., and that it has sufficient capacity.
 - Secure all wiring to prevent damage, and make sure electrical boxes are properly fused.
 - Prohibit bare wires and exposed electric connections on any float at your event.
- **Speed**
 - Confirm all towed and self-propelled floats are capable of maintaining a minimum speed of 10 miles per hour during the parade.
 - Limit all floats to a speed of 5 miles per hour when occupied.
- **Towing Safety**
 - Use adequate primary (tow bar) and secondary connection (chain, cable, etc.) devices between any towing vehicle and float.
 - All connections must comply with any and all applicable laws and standards.
 - Check that all primary and secondary connections are appropriate for normal and anticipated loads.
- **General Safety Rules**
 - Never allow objects to be thrown from any float.
 - Parade participants wishing to provide giveaways should have walkers along the float to HAND OUT the giveaways.
- **Inspection**
 - Inspect all floats for compliance with the float safety requirements prior to commencement of parade.
- **Jurisdiction**
 - Reserve the right to review and require correction of any safety matter related to the parade, and extend that right to the parade committee, school staff with assigned authority, local fire/law enforcement authority, school security, administration, and facilities maintenance staff.
 - Require correction of all matters considered hazardous to the extent that they may pose a risk to the participants or public, even if they are not discussed in this article.
 - Remove any float that presents an identified hazard which cannot or has not been corrected in an appropriate or timely manner. Prohibit these floats from the parade participation.

If you have questions, please reach out to CSDSIP Risk Control at 303-722-2600.