GM FINANCIAL PARADE OF LIGHTS
POLICIES 2026
(September 2026)
Parade scheduled LIVE, November 22, 2026

GENERAL INFORMATION

A. INDEMNIFICATION WAIVER

An indemnification waiver must be signed and submitted with payment. (See Addendum 1.)

B. FIRE MARSHAL REQUIREMENTS FOR FLOATS

All float participants must review fire marshal requirements for floats before applying. (See Addendum 2.)

C. BANNERS, SIGN, AND ENTRY NUMBERS:

- An entry sign will be provided to you with your entry name and entry number listed on it.
- Two additional banners can be placed on either side of the entry. There is no size limit to banners.
- Banners must be able to be read with minimal lighting for effective viewing.
- You must provide your own **banner carriers** that can maintain the Parade pace.
    - If the pace impedes the Parade's progress, the entry will be removed.
- Parade management will provide a number sign large enough to be read by the Announcers prior to entering the Announcement Stand areas.

D. COMMERCIAL ENTRANTS

- Businesses may apply as Parade entrants and pay the appropriate commercial fee.
- Entries may be sponsored by an individual business or businesses in a mutual association.
- Logos or business names may be used on an entry.
- The entry may not be used primarily for advertising purposes and must be in keeping with the holiday spirit of the Parade.
- Signs must be limited to two per entry.
- Maximum size per sign may not exceed 24 inches by 36 inches.
- Floats in keeping with the overall theme of the Parade are available for sponsorship, including marketing and advertising benefits. Contact beckyf@dfwi.org for more information.

E. ENTRY CONSTRUCTION OR PRODUCTION EXPENSE

- There is no maximum limit in terms of costs or expenses to be incurred by organizations to produce their entries. The use of ingenuity and creativity in the design and execution of an entry is encouraged and will be considered when the entry is judged.

F. HANDOUTS OR GIVEAWAYS:

- **No handouts or giveaways** of any kind are permitted before, during, or after the Parade except by Parade Sponsors or Commercial Float entries.
- Per the Fort Worth City Ordinance, nothing is to be thrown from a Parade entry, including candy or other promotional items. Violators could be issued a citation from the Fort Worth Police Department.

G. PERFORMERS AND ENTERTAINERS:

- PARADE PERFORMANCES

- Any performance along the route or in front of the judges or Announcement Stands must be a continual moving/marching routine.
- **Any entry that stops to perform shall be ineligible for an award, ineligible to return the following year, and will be subject to removal from the Parade.**

H. POLITICAL

- DFWII is a non-political organization.
- Only current public office holders can enter the Parade and must contact us directly.
- Individuals or organizations who attempt to use the Parade to further their own or others' campaigns will be removed from the Parade.
- Under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, tax-exempt organizations are prohibited from participating in or intervening in political activities.

I. SUPPORT VEHICLES:

- Motorized entries (floats, cars, etc.) will not be permitted to have a support vehicle. A float and a tow vehicle comprise one unit.
- Marching units and walking entries are permitted to have one support vehicle. The support vehicle must be decorated and lit.
- Entrants must describe the support vehicle on the supplement form to be eligible to have a support vehicle in the Parade.
- The support vehicle must be lit as per the specifications below (Section L).

J. SAFETY:

- No child under eight (8) years of age will be allowed to walk in the Parade. Children under eight (8) may ride on floats, vehicles, or bicycles under adult supervision.
- At no time shall anyone on the float attempt to step off the float while the float is in motion.
- Parade participants must keep pace with the line of march. All units **must maintain forward motion during the Parade. No counter-marching or other maneuvers contrary to the forward progress of the Parade are allowed.** Gaps are not allowed to occur.
- Materials used in each entry must be fire-retardant and not of a dangerous nature.
- If entrants choose to apply a flame retardant, the City of Fort Worth Fire Marshal will need a simple written document, signed by the participant, indicating the following:
  - the product applied
  - the manufacturer's name
  - a statement that the flame retardant was applied in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.
- The manufacturer's technical documentation should be available to be provided upon request. This documentation is generally noted on the label or other instructions that came with the product.
- Floats will be inspected for conformance to this requirement prior to the start of the Parade. Non-compliance may be cause for exclusion from the Parade at the Fire Marshal's discretion.
- A letter from the City of Fort Worth Fire Marshal's office is attached to this policy as Addendum 2.
- An onboard fire extinguisher is highly recommended and mandatory if portable generators are used.
- Bike riders and motorcycle operators must adhere to state and local helmet laws.
- Hand holds must be provided for each float rider.
- Payment of the fee and appearance at the Parade staging area(s) indicates an understanding of and acceptance of the above policies. Nonconformance may be cause for dismissal from the Parade.
- Parade units must follow instructions from the Parade Committee and Police Officers. Failure to follow instructions will result in immediate removal from the Parade lineup.

- Any additions or changes made to Parade units after being accepted must be approved by the Parade Committee. Parade units with changes that have not been approved will not be allowed in the line of march.
- The Parade Committee reserves the right to remove any unit from the line of march for any reason or cause without advance notice.
- **The Parade will occur in rain or shine unless prohibited by dangerous weather conditions**.
- Entries will be required to provide direct contact information for the on-location manager, supervisor or party responsible to be added to our emergency contact list. This list will be kept active and up to date and will serve as the primary means of communication should there be a situation requiring immediate communications.

K. APPLICATIONS

- All applications must be postmarked or turned in by the deadline posted on the Parade application. Notifications of participation will be made by the posted date.
- No more than three applications may be submitted from an individual organization to enter a unit in the Parade; however, except for performing units, no more than two entries can be accepted if all applications consist of units with similar elements and characteristics. This is necessary to maintain a diverse Parade.
- There can be no more than six elements within each entry. Additional entries for a single organization will be subject to increased fees or may be placed on a waiting list. See Fees and Indemnification (Section N.)
- A separate application must be submitted for each entry in Parade. Example: A school that enters baton twirlers, drum major, and color guard to be judged, must submit a separate application for each; however, in this example, if the entry is considered to be one, only one application is required.
- If a single organization has multiple entries, they should be listed at least once in the desired line-up order. Example: Schools with cheerleaders, drum majors, band, drill team, and alumni groups.
- **Submission of application does not guarantee entry into the Parade. Acceptance of entry is based on the entrant's ability to describe illumination, musical programming, artistic merit, creativity, costuming and entertainment value.**
- **All entry forms must include:**
    - An informative and complete written description
    - A photo, sketch, or artist's rendering and
    - A short one-paragraph script that will be read at the Announce Stands during the Parade
- By completing an application to participate in the Parade, entrants understand that not all applicants will be selected for participation.
- The Parade Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any Parade unit application.
- The application serves as a waiver of release for the submitting organization. Application submission constitutes agreement to the terms therein.

L. ENTRY AND LIGHTING REQUIREMENTS:

- Each entry must be illuminated with light strands, flashlights, spotlights, florescent materials, or other resources and in accordance with the following minimum requirements:
    - **Floats** (decorated unit on a trailer pulled by a tow vehicle, self-propelled or flatbed):
    - Length =
    - 5 feet, 800 lights
    - 10 feet, 1,300 lights
    - 15 feet, 2,000 lights
    - 20 feet, 2,500 lights
    - 25 feet and over, 4,000 lights (no longer than 50')
    - Cars/Golf Carts/Tractors, 1,500 lights
    - Motorcycles and bicycles, 750 – 1,000 lights.
    - Tri-wheel motorcycles, motorcycles with sidecars, bicycles with pull-behind trams, 1,000+ lights.

    - Carriages/Stagecoaches/Wagons, 1,500 lights
    - Trucks (tow vehicles are not included and should not be illuminated), 2,500 lights
    - Horses/Livestock (includes pull horse for horse-drawn vehicles) 75 lights each
- Walking units will be limited and are required to accompany a float or provide entertainment value, such as performing a mobile routine, clowning, drill team, dance team, cheerleading, handling a giant balloon or inflatable, or use of creative holiday costuming.
- All individuals in walking units must be illuminated with lighting of a minimum of 50 lights per individual.
- All Parade participants, including motorcycle, bicycle, float, horse riders, walking units, and car drivers must be in costume or holiday wear indicated in the entry description.
    - Exceptions will be made for uniformed marching units, drill teams and/or cheerleaders; however, lights are required.
- Alcoholic beverages and other controlled substances are forbidden on and along the Parade route. This includes all assembling and dispersal areas. Participants consuming said substances prior to or during the Parade will not be allowed to participate and will be removed from the line of march. The Fort Worth Police Department will also be notified of any suspected intoxication or violation of this rule.
- **Parade participants CANNOT distribute candy, pamphlets or other materials along the Parade route.**
- The DFWII Santa Claus will ride the anchor float. No other live or life-size likeness of Santa Claus is permitted, although replications of reindeer, sleighs, etc., are acceptable.
- All entries are required to be ready to step off at the appropriate time and any entry not prepared will forfeit their opportunity regardless of the reason.
- All floats shall have a skirt to cover the wheels within the bounds of safety.
- Baby strollers and children's wagons are not allowed in the line of march with units.
- All drivers must be at least 18 and possess a valid driver's license.
- All vehicles must have valid insurance.
- All entries with music or sound-amplifying systems shall maintain a volume that will not interfere with other entries, especially those with animals. If a Parade official informs a unit that the noise generated by their unit is too loud, they shall immediately turn the volume down.
- No sirens, horns, or loud noises are permitted.
- Per City Code:
    - No superstructure may exceed 14 feet from street level
    - All superstructures must be wired or otherwise secured
    - All superstructures must be able to go under utility wires along the Parade route.

M. MUSIC:

- Music is not required, but it is highly encouraged and a consideration for judging criteria.

N. FEES AND INDEMNIFICATION:

- Applications accepted for participation will be required to pay an entry fee based on the following:
    - Commercial (businesses and for-profit companies) - $1,100
    - Non-Commercial - $200
    - Non-Profit (must prove non-profit status and may not "sell" status to a for-profit organization) - $90
- Fees are **not refundable** for entries that are removed from the Parade for nonconformance with these policies.

O. ENTRY CATEGORIES

- **FLOATS:** – generally considered to be wheeled decks or trailers with decorations and lighting, needing propulsion
    - Towed

- Pushed
- Self-propelled

- **VEHICLES:**
  - Classic/Antique Car Clubs (25 years of age at the time of entry) - **Clubs only!** No more than six (6) cars/units per entry, maximum of two (2) entries per club
  - Contemporary Car Club. No more than six (6) cars/units per entry, maximum of 2 entries per club
  - Antique vehicle (25 years of age at the time of entry) - This may be a truck (except fire trucks), car, bus, etc. Only one (1) vehicle allowed per entry, and only two (2) entries per organization
  - Antique Firetruck (25 years of age at the time of entry) – Only one (1) vehicle is allowed per entry, and only one (1) entry per organization
  - Motorcycle - No more than six (6) units per entry, maximum of two (2) entries per club
  - Golf cart, go-cart, mini-cart, or other small ATV-type vehicle – No more than six (6) carts/units per entry, maximum of two entries per club
  - At no time shall additional units join a club entry without having been registered in advance.
- **MARCHING BANDS:**
  - School or Professional Marching Bands with or without Drill and Flag Teams
  - Drum and Bugle Corps
- **MUSICAL GROUPS, DRUM CORPS** (other than marching bands, with music produced by participants)
  - Pipe and Drum Corps
  - Marching Musical Performance Groups not classified as a Marching Band or Drum/Bugle Corps
- **WALKING OR PEOPLE POWERED**
  - Drill Teams or Dance Teams with recorded accompaniment
  - Bicycle or Unicycle Units
  - Walking or people-powered sculptural elements, including masks, sculptures, or inflatables
- **MOUNTED AND EQUESTRIAN UNITS**
  - Pulled wagons, stagecoaches, or any elements requiring stock to pull or push
  - Horse clubs
  - Single riders
  - NOTE: Equestrian Units are limited to no more than six (6) animals per entry, plus coach or wagon per entry, and no more than two (2) entries per organization.
  - Animals and riders must have demonstrated Parade participation credentials, i.e., they have had experience riding in a Parade event.
- **UNIQUE:**
  - Any entry that does not fit in any other category. Divided into commercial and non-commercial entries with awards in each category.
- **DIGNITARIES**: (Not for judging)
  - This category includes elected officials, sponsors of the Parade, the Grand Marshal, and invited dignitaries.

P. JUDGING CRITERIA

- All Floats, Vehicles, Marching Units/Bands, Walking Units, Equestrian Units, and Unique Entries will be judged by a 9-member panel composed of civic, arts, and theater industry leaders. The following criteria will be used with an average numbering system between 1 and 7, with 7 being the highest score possible for a single entry:
  - Overall Lighting and Appearance (Outstanding display of showmanship and entertainment)
  - Holiday Spirit
  - Costumes
  - Originality (artistic merit)
  - Music and Creativity

- Thematic Interpretation
- Dramatic Impact
- Car club entries with less than three (3) vehicles will not be judged.

Q. AWARDS:

- GRAND PRIZE WINNER: Plaque awarded for the best overall entry, commercial or non-commercial. This entry must be of holiday nature.
- COWTOWN SPIRIT AWARD: Equestrian entries
- HOLIDAY SPIRIT AWARD: Vehicles
- FOUNDERS AWARD: Commercial floats
- FOUNDERS AWARD, Non-Commercial: Non-Commercial Floats
- CRAFTSMANSHIP AWARD: Marching Units and Walkers (not Marching Bands)
- MUSIC AWARD: Bands and live musicians
- DIRECTOR'S CHOICE: Overall award by DFWII
- BEST OF CLASS AND HONORABLE MENTION:
  - May be chosen in each category
  - All winners will receive awards.

Results will be posted on the Parade website within two (2) business days following the end of the Parade.

Addendum 1
Indemnification, Statement of Financial Responsibility and Waiver
Corporate/Organization/Participant
Downtown Fort Worth Initiatives, Inc., Parade of Lights

(MUST BE SIGNED AND SUBMITTED BY THE POSTED DATE ON THE APPLICATION)

I, the undersigned, as an authorized person, officer, or director of the participant herein named, do hereby agree to release, hold harmless, and indemnify Downtown Fort Worth Initiatives, Inc. and the City of Fort Worth, its participants, officers, directors, and each and every Parade sponsor, from any and all liability or claim whatsoever for any damage or injury including death or any financial loss that may occur as a result of or relating to participation in the above named Parade and event. I warrant that I am an authorized representative for:

Print Name of Entity, Organization or Person(s):

_____

And, as such, further warrant that such entity, organization or person(s) possesses adequate financial responsibility so as to indemnify the above-named parties and assume all expenses that may arise from any third-party claim. Further, as the authorized representative, I hereby waive any and all claims that the entity, organization or person(s) may have against the above-named parties as a result of or relating to the Parade of Lights and/or related events.

Print Address of Entity, Organization or Person(s):

_____

I HEREBY WARRANT AND REPRESENT THAT I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE RELEASE, INDEMNIFICATION, STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND WAIVER, AND THAT I AM DULY AUTHORIZED TO BIND THE ABOVE STATE PARTICIPANT TO SUCH REPRESENTATIONS. (PLEASE INITIAL): _____

SPECIFIC RELATIONSHIP OF SIGNER OF THIS DOCUMENT TO THE PARTICIPANT IN THE PARADE OF LIGHTS

_____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

Addendum 2
City of Fort Worth Fire Marshall Requirements

Parade Floats requirements:

The Fort Worth Fire Department, Bureau of Fire Prevention, is charged with the enforcement of the Fire Code within the City of Fort Worth. When this office determines that an indoor or outdoor gathering of people has an adverse impact on public safety, this office has the authority to order the development of, or prescribe a plan for, the provision of an approved level of public safety.

For any plan to be approved by this office, it must include the following requirements:

- ***Any motorized float, or any float with a liquid fueled generator, must be equipped with at least one up to date fire extinguisher with a rating of no less than 2A10BC.***
- ***All decorative material used on floats must be either non-combustible (NFPA 701) or treated with a flame retardant.***
- ***Hay will not be allowed on any float that contains lights, generators or fuel tanks.***
- ***Generators are NOT permitted in the bed of the truck with participants, nor on the trailer/float with participants. The generator may be permitted in/on a pulling device/or truck bed where participants are non-existent. A generator may also be placed upon the tongue of the trailer hitch, where ventilation is adequate, and noxious fumes are not readily consumed by participants.***

The following disclosure statements are an attempt to answer any questions regarding the above-mentioned requirements:

If the float contains any combustible materials, including *paper, cardboard, cloth, foam*, etc., the applicant may be asked to produce documentation of flame retardancy by the fire official onsite. Professional application for such products is advised, as these professionals will supply appropriate documentation as proof of application.

The applicant may choose to apply a flame-retardant chemical, in which case, the applicant will be required to present documentation which includes a signed letter stating the application product, the manufacturer, and a statement acknowledging proper application of the product in accordance with the manufacturer's directions. This can include a simple document verifying that the applicant has complied with all requirements. In addition, the applicant *may* also be required to provide a copy of the manufacturer's

documentation, indicating specificity about the products overall design to reduce flammability.

This office cannot recommend specific flame-retardant products. However, if a question arises about a particular product, please contact the Bureau of Fire Prevention to discuss approval and use.

Testing data will not be required for the use of any fire-retardant product, as that data was previously collected by the listing agency, such as Underwriters Laboratories or Factory Mutual, and does not need to be duplicated. However, if the product documentation is not available, the fire inspector *may* require that a field test be conducted. It is the responsibility of the individual float applicant to ensure that the documentation is available onsite.

Up-to-date fire extinguishers on all motorized floats, and floats with liquid fueled generators meet the intent and discretion of all previous fire extinguishment requirements and suffice flammability and public safety measures.

If a float is not compliant with any of these requirements, it will not be permitted to participate in the event and must be removed from the area. However, if the fire inspector on-site determines that the issues can be resolved prior to step off, the inspector *may* allow participation with *remedial actions*.

As a department, we recognize that entrants of any parade may be largely non-profit and/or budget limited. The requirements noted above should not in any way add significantly to the cost of participating. Any questions or concerns from participants are always welcomed. Please call this office at 682-301-2912 for instruction or guidance. It is the mission of this unit to ensure a safe and successful event for all.

Thank you,

Captain Brad Barron
Special Events Coordinator
Fort Worth Fire Department
james.barron@fortworthtexas.gov
682-301-2912 Cell
817-392-6943 Office

Bureau of Fire Prevention

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