

BLOCK PARTY

PLANNING GUIDE

Throw a BLOCK PARTY in your area. This is a great way for neighbours to connect, meet one another, and build a stronger and safer community. Connecting with neighbours creates a sense of belonging in your neighbourhood and it increases safety and wellbeing. A BLOCK PARTY is an opportunity to identify and discuss what you love about where you live, and ways to make it better. This guide was created to help make the process easy and FUN.

TOP 10 REASONS TO HOST A BLOCK PARTY:

1. To have fun
2. To get to know your neighbours
3. To build friendships
4. To create a sense of belonging
5. To discuss events and happenings in your neighbourhood to form a group to plan more events
6. To celebrate your great neighbourhood
7. To increase sense of safety/security by knowing your neighbours
8. To learn about the history of your neighbourhood
9. To meet others that you could help or that could help you in the future
10. To discover your neighbours hidden talents



Find Some Neighbours to Help Out!

The idea of a neighbourhood block party is to bring neighbours together, so the first step is to bring some people together to plan the party. Start by connecting with a couple neighbours you already know to see if they would help with planning and ask them to talk to neighbours they know. You may want to send out a flyer to explain what a BLOCK PARTY is and generate interest to see if others would like to help with the event. Enlist as many neighbours as you can to help out and lessen the workload.

It's important to include as many interested people as possible (including youth) in planning and organizing your events. Areas they could help with include:

- ✓ Invitations and Promotion of the Event
- ✓ Food and Beverages
- ✓ Application or Permits
- ✓ Set-up and Takedown
- ✓ Games or Activities



Start Simple, Start Small

Start off with a smaller event rather than a large one. **BLOCK PARTIES don't need to include big street closures or require inviting the whole neighbourhood.** It can be as simple as a few households getting together on the front driveway. The size of the event will also impact the complexity of the event. In selecting who to invite, use natural neighbourhood boundaries where possible. **If you are planning a street or cul-de-sac party, you will need to invite everyone from that area and have their support especially if you plan on applying to block off the street.**

*You may also want to decide if this event is just for neighbours or if outside family and friends can be invited too.

Pick a Date & Time

While a BLOCK PARTY can happen all year round, most will occur during the warmer season, May-September. A week night might be an easy time to round up your neighbours, but a weekend date might work too. You can always take a quick poll with your neighbours to decide what day of the week and time works best.

Keep in mind those who live in the neighbourhood when setting the hours for the party. If there are young children or seniors living near the party area, it is a good idea to plan to finish by 9 PM. Please keep in mind that there are quiet hours, starting at 10 PM, which is implemented town-wide.

Choose Your Location

Consider what activities you want to have and where in your neighbourhood the best location might be. Each neighbourhood is unique, and you and your neighbours likely know where those hidden sweet spots are. Depending on your planning time available, number of people you would like to include and how much neighbourhood interest you have, here are some party options to choose from.

THESE 3 LOCATION IDEAS DON'T REQUIRE A STREET CLOSURE FORM!

YARD OR HOUSE - Host a social get together in your own yard, house or garage! This is the simplest way to start and works well for a smaller number of people. You could invite those neighbours that live closest to you to share a meal together or just hang out and get to know one another.

PARK OR GREEN SPACE - Host a gathering in the park in your neighbourhood! Park sites allow you to not only enjoy a meal together, but you can engage in fun active games. The green spaces in your crescent or even your neighbourhood central park site work well.

NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTIVITY CENTRE - Consider renting a room in the recreation centre or community/church hall in your neighbourhood. This option works well year-round when weather might be a factor.

STREET PARTY - Host a **BLOCK PARTY** on your neighbourhood street or cul-de-sac. Transform your street into a hub of activity for the day. As this event occurs on a public street, you will need to apply for a *Town of Edson Street Closure Permit* prior to your event and will be required to have insurance.

NOTE: In some cases where higher risk activities such as bouncy castles, horse rides or where large tents or fire pits are used, you may require Town permission and proof of insurance.

Contact Community Services at 780-723-4403 for more information or visit www.edson.ca



Decide What to Eat

Food tends to be the main incentive that brings people together. There are many different ways to go about your BLOCK PARTY and the options are endless. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- ✓ BARBEQUE - organizers can arrange for use of a large BBQ (see *list on edson.ca/blockparty*) or have neighbours bring their portable BBQ to the event. Guests may bring their own meat, or the organizing committee may supply this part for the event.
- ✓ PICNIC - everyone brings food for their own families (planning committee may want to supply dessert, cake or ice cream treats for everyone).
- ✓ POTLUCK - everyone brings one dish to share (even # houses could bring dessert, odd # houses could bring salads, or everyone brings a family favourite or cultural main dish).
- ✓ CATERED DINNER - hire a catering company to prepare the food and have everyone pitch in to share the cost.
- ✓ PROGRESSIVE SUPPER - appetizers at one house, main course next door, and dessert down the street (these parties are fun year-round).
- ✓ CHILI COOK-OFF - turn your event into a friendly competition and have neighbours prepare their version of a dish to be sampled by everyone.
- ✓ BACKYARD CAMPFIRE - have neighbours over to roast some hotdogs or marshmallows if you have a safe fire pit to do so (see *Town of Edson Fire Permit Bylaw for details*).



Be sensitive of food allergies. If people are bringing food to share, encourage them to bring the recipe as it not only provides useful information for those with allergies, but a recipe exchange is also a fun activity!

* As a reminder, the Town of Edson does not allow for consumption of alcohol on Town property including parks, sidewalks and roads. For events held within a facility or where you are serving alcohol, you may be required to have a liquor license. (See *Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission <http://aglc.ca>*)

TRY TO BE ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS BY HAVING PEOPLE BRING THEIR OWN DISHES, RECYCLING BOTTLES AND CONTAINERS AND MINIMIZING WASTE.

IF USING A PUBLIC SPACE, PLEASE LEAVE IT CLEANER THAN WHEN YOU FOUND IT.

Play Some Games

While food and visiting will be the focus of the BLOCK PARTY, it is always a good idea to have some games and activities planned to keep people engaged. You could even base your event around a theme such as community soccer game, cultural heritage or favourite holiday.

To help people get to know each other and break the ice try one of these ideas:

- ✓ Neighbourhood Bingo
- ✓ 21 Questions
- ✓ Speed Dating
- ✓ On this day in the Year _____

Keep the kids busy with these ideas:

- ✓ Sidewalk Chalk
- ✓ A Scavenger Hunt
- ✓ Lawn Games
- ✓ Street Hockey
- ✓ Basketball Tournament



You may also choose to host your BLOCK PARTY in an area that has a Green Shack. You can use all of the toys and activities that are stored there. There is a recreation bag full of games you can borrow from Community Services, as well as Tug of War and a Bean Bag Toss.

Getting the Word Out

A BLOCK PARTY is even better when people know it is happening. Make sure you are talking about it every chance you get. Make a special effort to personally invite new people who may not be familiar with what a BLOCK PARTY even is. Other ideas to advertise could be:

- ✓ Lawn Signs
- ✓ Dropping Flyers in Neighbours Mailboxes
- ✓ Putting Posters Up on Local Bulletin Boards
- ✓ Posting Information on Community Facebook Pages
- ✓ Hanging Door Knocker Invitations on Neighbours Homes
- ✓ Have children go door to door with adult supervision to do personal invitations

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Request Use of the Block Party Trailer

Check the box on the application form regarding the use of the Block Party Trailer. It's full of toys and games that are fun for the whole neighbourhood. Keep in mind, as the Block Party applicant, you are responsible for the condition and contents of the Trailer. For more information and a list of the contents, please visit our website www.edson.ca/blockparty or call 780-723-4403

Want free money for your Block Party?

\$200 rebate for supplies

Your Block Party must be approved and booked through community services to be eligible for the rebate

Purchase your food, beverages and other supplies you need. Complete the BLOCK PARTY Rebate form and submit with original receipts to Community Services.

A maximum rebate of \$200 is available towards eligible expenses such as non-alcoholic beverages, food, invitations, posters, entertainment. It is at the discretion of the Director of Community Services, or his/her designate, which expenses shall be deemed eligible. If you are not sure which of your expenses would qualify for the rebate, give us a call at 780-723-4403 or email cserv@edson.ca

Need Equipment??

Community BBQs:

Husky Energy	780-723-6945
Shell Canada	780-728-4479
Ironline	780-712-5500
Repsol Energy	780-725-4550
Cenovus	780-723-4992

Tables, tents and chairs can be borrowed from the Edson & District Recycle Depot by calling 780-723-4002

Quick Planning Checklist

You as the organizers are responsible for supporting the event in a way that makes it a success. One of the keys to success is good planning. Make a to-do list and identify with your organizing committee who will be responsible for each item. Some of the items you are going to want to discuss include:

BEFORE	
	Choose your date, time, location and size of event.
	Decide what type of food you want and if you need to purchase additional supplies in advance.
	Decide if everyone will bring their own tables and chairs, plates, cutlery and cups.
	How will you advertise and who will deliver the invitations?
	Who will register your BLOCK PARTY with the Town and complete permit forms if necessary?
	If using barbeques, who will bring them? What safety measures have you put in place for BBQ? E.g. Fire extinguishers, water.
DURING	
	Who will be the greeter(s) at the event; introducing new neighbours and helping them make connections. Provide everyone with a name tag and have a sign in sheet, ask for neighbours contact information so you can keep in touch to plan future BLOCK PARTIES.
	Who will set up tables for food and supplies?
	Institute a bathroom policy "everyone to use their own", so that home security is maintained. Are there any public washroom facilities close to the site? Rent a porta potty if needed.
	Designate someone to be in charge of facilitating games and activities.
AFTER	
	Make sure to leave it how you found it. You may wish to encourage clean up by rewarding the neighbourhood children with a prize or treat for picking up garbage.
	Who will take down any signs or posters? Who will return any borrowed equipment?
	Provide residents with an evaluation at the end of the event to collect any new ideas for the next BLOCK PARTY.

IF ORGANIZERS CHOOSE TO COLLECT EVALUATIONS AT THE END OF THEIR BLOCK PARTY, PLEASE FEEL INVITED TO SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK WITH COMMUNITY SERVICES.

WE WOULD LOVE TO KNOW HOW THE BLOCK PARTIES ARE GOING, AND IT WILL HELP US KEEP TRACK OF HOW MANY RESIDENTS ARE GETTING INVOLVED.

FINAL TIPS AND REMINDERS

1. It is a good idea to have a sign-in sheet to collect contact information. You can use it to stay connected all year long or start a Facebook group if you don't already have one for your neighbourhood.
2. Use name tags to help identify and remember each other's names.
3. Have several garbage and recycling bins on site. Garbage trailer or bins can be borrowed from the Edson Recycle Depot.
4. Remember to leave it better than you found it.
5. Keep noise levels reasonable.
6. Be considerate of your neighbours and aware of Town Bylaws.
7. Decide if pets are allowed at the event.
8. Encourage people to use their own washrooms but have a water source on site for rinsing.
9. Remind people to lock their doors even if the party is close to their house.
10. Have people fill in an evaluation form afterwards or provide a way to give feedback.

Throw a BLOCK PARTY, get a BLOCK PARTY WINDOW DECAL! Become a Community Connector; Contact Community Services for more information.

For BLOCK PARTY resources and more party ideas check out the Block Party Program on the Town of Edson website: www.edson.ca/blockparty

For assistance or more information please contact:

Town of Edson Community Services

780-723-4403

cserv@edson.ca