

## Tips and Tricks for Throwing a Block Party in San Francisco



### *Who approves block parties in San Francisco?*

ISCOTT (the Interdepartmental Staff Committee on Traffic and Transportation) guides, reviews, and approves all block party applications in San Francisco. It is made up of representatives from city departments including police, fire, and the SFMTA. The official block party application is available online at: <http://www.sfmta.com/cms/vclos/documents/specialeventstreetclosureinfo708.pdf>

*For more block party guidance contact Cindy Shamban, the SFMTA administrator for ISCOTT, at (415) 701-4683 or [cindy.shamban@sfmta.com](mailto:cindy.shamban@sfmta.com)*

### *What is this pamphlet?*

This document provides a schedule of tips and tricks to help you prepare a successful block party. It should be used as a supplement to the official permit application and any additional instructions from ISCOTT.

Past San Francisco Block Parties



Photos: Michael Helquist and  
flickr user rumspringa

## Your Block Party Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3 Months Out: \_\_\_\_\_

- Get the word out.** The more people who know the more fun and easier it is to throw a block party.

*Tip: Reach out to neighbors before you start organizing by posting flyers, saying hello in the neighborhood, knocking on doors, or joining the neighborhood association.*

*Tip: Select one neighborhood block without a transit line for the easiest permits.*

*Tip: Build an email list for quick communication and future events.*

- Host a meeting** and decide what you want at your party: what type of games, food and music? Do you want jumpy houses, hula hoops, chalk art, or a bike training course? Will it be a potluck? Do you want a community partner? Think out your desired activities, who can organize and supervise them, and where they might take place on the street.

*Tip: Organize a potluck to keep costs low and have everyone contribute food or drink.*

*Tip: Team with a community partner like a school, community center, or neighborhood association. They can sometimes provide facilities, equipment, publicity or support.*

*Tip: Choose coordinators or committees for:*

Publicity: \_\_\_\_\_

Food: \_\_\_\_\_

Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Set up/clean up: \_\_\_\_\_

- Apply to ISCOTT for a permit.** Download the application and instructions here <http://www.sfmta.com/cms/vclos/documents/specialeventstreetclosureinfo708.pdf>

*Tip: Get your application in early; the earlier you submit your application, the less your permitting fee will be.*

*Tip: Limit the time frame of the party (suggested 4 hours)*

*Tip: Add a few extra hours to your permit before your set up time if you live in an area where people come to park. This allows time for people to move their cars.*

*Tip: You'll need to include a drawing of the block party.* You can draw it on a Google map or with other software, but hand-drawn is also fine. A sample map is on the last page of this pamphlet. Make sure the map includes:

- 14-foot fire lane clear of tables and objects for the entire block length
- Barricade locations
- Major elements (such as a jumpy house or children's game area)

### 2 Months Out: \_\_\_\_\_

- Attend the public hearing.** The City usually schedules the hearing date within two weeks of receiving your application. Make sure to:

- Prepare a one to two minute explanation of the block party to present to ISCOTT. Emphasize your neighborhood outreach efforts.

- Remove hearing notices within seven days of the hearing.

## 6 weeks out: \_\_\_\_\_

- Make it official.** After approval by ISCOTT, tie up the loose ends: Leaflet cars on the block several times with block party flyers that include “No Parking” hours, as well as the official time, date, activities, and contact information for the block party. Alternatively, for a fee you may request “No Parking/Tow Away” signs from the police department (a police contact is provided with your permit).

*Tip: Call up your local fire station. Kids love it if they can bring out a fire truck!* <http://www.sf-fire.org/index.aspx?page=176>

- Rent the equipment you need.** For simple parties, you may only need barricades. If you rent a jumpy house, the vendor only needs insurance if you plan to put stakes in the roadway. For requirements and potential vendors, contact Cindy Shamban at SFMTA at (415) 701- 4683 or [cindy.shamban@sfmta.com](mailto:cindy.shamban@sfmta.com).
- Confirm your adult supervisors for activities.** Make sure an adult can set up and oversee each activity on the block.

## 4 weeks out: \_\_\_\_\_

- Post “Save the Date” notices** on your block. Include contact information and parking information in the flyer.
- Identify people to set up and clean up.** Don’t forget to provide trash, recycling and compost bins!
- For potlucks, ask neighbors to contribute a dish or drinks.**
- If you want amplified sound, obtain a sound permit.** Amplified sound requires a Loudspeaker Permit. Applications are available at: <http://www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/entertainment/documents/LoudspeakerPermitApplicationPkg.pdf>. Loudspeaker permits cost \$440. Call (415) 554-5793 for more information.

## Week of the Party: \_\_\_\_\_

- Get the word out!** Post flyers on poles a week in advance. Flyer windshields a few days before and the night before. Include contact information and parking information in the flyer.

## Day of Party: \_\_\_\_\_

- Ask neighbors to bring out lawn chairs and tables.**
- Hang a sign thanking any community partners or sponsors.**
- Tidy up.** Make sure people pitch in to pick up trash, recycle the recyclables, take down signs, and move the barricades.



# Sample Block Party Drawing

The drawing you submit with your permit application may look something like this example.

