

## HOMECOMING FLOAT SAFETY

Everybody loves a homecoming parade. School groups join together to assemble floats, bands prepare to march and cheerleaders/pompons prepare their cheers. What fun! Everyone loves a parade!! However, this type of activity can be risky unless precautions are taken ahead of time.

Following a few, simple guidelines could prevent a tragedy like the one that happened in Westcliffe, Colorado, in October 2007 where a high school sophomore attempted to climb aboard a moving homecoming parade float but fell under the wheels and was crushed to death in front of onlookers.

### Float Safety Recommendations

**Float & Running Gear** - The foundation for a tow float is typically a sturdy flat trailer bed with pneumatic wheels. All load supporting areas on the float should be of wood, steel or other structurally competent material (not cardboard). Wheels, tires, dollies, axles, bearings of adequate sizes and strength to support the total load of the float are required. Wheels and tires should be in good condition and vehicle brakes sufficient to stop the float when loaded.

The authority having jurisdiction with the parade shall have the exclusive right to ban any unsafe vehicle.

**Vehicle Maintenance** - Vehicles pulling floats and self-propelled floats shall be serviced for gas, oil, water, tires and battery prior to reporting to the staging areas. Vehicles licensed for highway use shall have proof of insurance. No extra gasoline may be carried on the float. For emergencies, a horn or other sounding device is to be present.

**Decorations** - All decorative material shall be manufactured or treated to be effectively fire retardant. If not marked as such, decorative material may be treated with a fire retardant solution. Commercial solutions may be purchased to treat material.

Satisfactory flame retardant is determined by holding a sample of the material in a vertical position and placing a match flame 1/2 inch below it. If the material ignites, it must self-extinguish when the flame is removed. The finished float and decorated areas should have no sharp or unfinished edges exposed. If the driver or any other individuals are enclosed within the float or decorations, proper ventilation and emergency exits shall be provided for them.

**Driver Vision/Communication** - Float decorations shall be designed to allow the driver 180 degrees clear vision to the front and sides of the float or tow unit. If 180 degrees vision cannot be provided, a spotter(s) with clear vision of these areas must accompany the float as a guide. Driver shall also have view of (or communication with) float riders in the event of a problem on the float.

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## Homecoming Float Safety

Bulletin 11-01  
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### Suggested Distribution

- Superintendent
- Business Manager
- Principals
- Etc

### Distribution

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**Fire Extinguisher** - At least one 10 pound ABC fire extinguisher shall be carried in an easily accessible, designated location on the float or towing vehicle. The fire extinguishers shall be sealed, tagged and dated within the previous 12 month period. Open flame displays, roman candles and fireworks are prohibited on floats and tow vehicles. Fireworks and explosive compositions are also excluded from the Pool's School Entity Liability Coverage Form.

**Rider Safety** - All participants riding on open floats shall have solid sitting arrangement with hand holds readily available to them. Any standing participants shall have a stabilized body support with buckled safety belt or other means to prevent falling from unit. No person shall be wired or tied to the float. Secured safety rails, barriers or ropes may be used to prevent a fall from the float. Safety rail and barriers are recommended at 36-42 inches in height. No unsecured riders may be located where they might fall beneath the float, its wheels or between tow vehicle and float (e.g. no seating on rear edge of tow vehicle or on front edge of float). If present, children must be under adult supervision and seated at all times when in motion. Riders are to remain on float once the parade begins and at all time when the float is in motion. Alcohol consumption or smoking on the float is prohibited.

**Driver** - Float driver shall have a valid driver's license and the Pool recommends, if the driver is a volunteer, provide the District with a copy of their current Motor Vehicle Record (MVR).

The MVR shall be reviewed by the District to ensure that it meets the District's established MVR Guidelines as well as the Pool's MVR Eligibility Standards. The driver shall also be in competent condition to safely operate the vehicle. Driving under the influence of drugs or intoxicants is prohibited. For the safety of float riders, the driver must minimize abrupt starts and stops. The float safety checklist must be in the possession of the driver.

**Generators** - Where used, generators shall be securely mounted on the vehicle with not less than 12 inches of clearance separating it from any combustible material. Any generator in a confined space (e.g. pick-up camper shell) shall not have any riders inside the same space.

**Electrical System** - Where used for lighting, motorized decorations or other application on a float, electrical wiring must be of a type approved for the use for which it is being employed, shall have sufficient capacity, shall be secured to prevent damage, shall have all connections secured via approved devices (or electrical boxes) and shall be properly fused. Bare wires or exposed electric connection are permitted.

**Speed** - Towed and self-propelled floats shall be capable of maintaining a minimum speed of 10 miles per hour during the parade. The speed when float is occupied during parade is limited to a maximum of 5 miles per hour.

**Towing Safety** - Adequate primary (tow bar) and secondary connection (chain, cable, etc) devices shall be made between the towing vehicle and float. All connections shall comply with any and all applicable laws and standards. Primary and secondary connections shall be appropriate for the normal and anticipated loads.

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Colorado School Districts  
Self Insurance Pool

**General Safety Rules** - Hard objects, candy, boxes, etc. should not be thrown from the float during the parade. Parade participants wishing to provide give-aways should have walkers along the float to **HAND OUT** the give-aways. **DO NOT THROW ITEMS INTO THE CROWD.**

## Inspection

All floats will be subject to an inspection check for compliance with the float safety requirements prior to commencement of parade. **The float safety checklist must be signed and in the possession of the driver at the start of the parade.**

## Jurisdiction

Any matter of safety not covered in these rules can be reviewed and required to be corrected by any member of the Homecoming Parade Committee or school staff with assigned authority. This includes but is not limited to the local fire/law enforcement authority, school security, school administrations staff or school facilities maintenance staff. Matters considered hazardous to the extent that they may pose a risk to the participants or public are to be corrected. Failure to correct the hazard identified can result in the removal of the float from the parade.

## **Insurance Coverage**

Auto Liability Coverage is triggered by the vehicle that the float will be hooked up to. If the float is connected to the District's vehicle, the District's Auto Liability Coverage would extend to the float. If the float is going to be pulled by a volunteer's vehicle, such as a parent or an employee's personal vehicle, then the volunteer's Auto Liability Coverage would extend to the float.

If the float is going to be pulled by the employee's personal vehicle **and** the employee is within the course and scope of their employment and has permission from the District to be driving their personal vehicle while pulling the float, the Pool's Auto Liability Coverage would also be triggered as well as the employee's personal Auto Liability Coverage in the event of an accident.

If the float is going to be pulled by a volunteer's personal vehicle, it is important to keep in mind that the Pool's Auto Liability Coverage does not extend to the volunteer or their vehicle. As such, we recommend that the owner of the vehicle provide the District with a proof of insurance to the District, such as copy of the owner's Auto Coverage Declarations Page, which shows the owner's limits. The District will need to determine if the volunteer's Auto Liability Limits are adequate for the exposure. Items to consider when reviewing the exposure include whether or not students will be permitted to ride the float and where the students will be walking with relationship to the float. Below is a Float Safety Checklist.

## Float Safety Checklist

Name of Float Entry

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**Float Driver must have this Inspection Checklist in his/her possession the day of the Parade. Driver must check off, sign, and present checklist to the Officials for verification prior to start of parade.**

- \_\_\_ 1. **Float & Running gear** – Float and tow vehicle, supporting structure, wheels, tires and brakes are in good condition and sufficient for safe handling of float with riders on board.
- \_\_\_ 2. **Maintenance** – Float and tow vehicle are in good working order, properly serviced with gasoline, oil and water. If licensed for highway use, vehicle's proof of insurance is available. No extra gasoline is carried on the float. For emergencies, a horn or other sounding device is present.
- \_\_\_ 3. **Decorations** - All decorative materials used are flame retardant, either manufactured or treated (borax). No sharp or unfinished edges are exposed. If individuals are enclosed within float or decoration, proper ventilation and emergency exits are provided.
- \_\_\_ 4. **Vision/Communication** - Driver has proper 180-degree forward vision (or spotters) as well as view of (or communications with) float riders.
- \_\_\_ 5. **Fire Suppression** – The float has a least one 10 lb ABC Type Fire Extinguisher, which has been serviced, tagged & dated. It is affixed to unit within easy reach of the float driver and float occupants (or 2 separate extinguishers may be used, as needed).
- \_\_\_ 6. **Riders** - Each float rider has a sturdy support, hand holds, belt restraints or other means to prevent fall from unit. No one shall be located where they could fall under float. Safety of seated and standing riders will be assessed by the Parade Committee. Alcohol consumption or smoking on float is prohibited. Riders have been cautioned to remain on float during parade and anytime float is in motion.
- \_\_\_ 7. **Driver** - Float driver has a valid driver's license and is competent to drive float safely. Driving under the influence of drugs or intoxicants is prohibited.
- \_\_\_ 8. **Generator** -Portable generator, if used, is securely mounted and separated from decorative materials. Generators is equipped with a metal exhaust which extends the exterior of the unit
- \_\_\_ 9. **Wiring** –All float electric wiring used for light or other components are secured and appropriately guarded to prevent shock or fire.
- \_\_\_ 10. **Speeds** – Float unit is able to maintain at least 10 mph. Float speed shall not exceed 5 mph when float riders are on board and during parade.

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- \_\_\_ 11. **Towing** - Towed trailers or towed floats has sturdy tow connection and safety cables or chains in place (and attached) which are of sufficient strength for proper handling.
- \_\_\_ 12. **General** - Riders have been advised that objects should not be thrown from the float

The above inspection has been made and to the best of our knowledge this float is in accordance with (School Name) safety requirement and is acceptable for participation in the Homecoming Parade.

Float Driver Name/Signature \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parade Official - Name/Signature \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please bring this Checklist to your Safety Inspection, conducted at the start of the Parade.