

Calgary



Community Notification Guide

Guidelines and resources for festival and event organizers

Introduction

If you're planning a festival or event in Calgary, this guide is for you. Developed by The City of Calgary Arts & Culture Team, it outlines best practices and resources to help you be a good neighbour in the community where your event is being held.

Whether your event is large or small, volunteer run or staff supported, you want it to have a favourable impression in the community!

If you have comments or questions about how to use the guide, contact the Festivals & Events team at EventServices@calgary.ca

At a glance

Here's what you need to know and consider when communicating with surrounding residents and businesses about your event:

- ☐ Connect early with the community/neighbourhood association and/or Business Improvement Area.
- ☐ When applicable, write a Good Neighbour letter for residents and businesses that outlines the impacts of your event. You can use the template available from your Event Liaison (see Appendix 1 for sample) or your own event-branded stationery.
- ☐ Map out a letter notification area and request feedback from your Event Liaison if required.
- ☐ Distribute letters within the recommended timelines to the residents, businesses, community association and/or Business Improvement Area.
- ☐ Email a copy of the Good Neighbour letter to your Event Liaison.

Other considerations:

- ☐ Expand your event notification reach with messaging on community signage, community association channels, social media and/or your website.
- ☐ Invite event attendees to be good neighbours through know before you go messaging, announcements and signs at your event.

Being a good neighbour

Festivals and events bring people together for shared experiences that help build a sense of togetherness. While your event can be a source of joy and delight for attendees, it can also cause unwanted impacts for the neighbours near your event location. Road closures, parking pressures, noise, garbage and public disorder are the most common concerns of nearby residents and business owners.

As a guest in the community, you are also responsible for minimizing your event's impacts on neighbouring residents and businesses. Poor communication is often a factor in many of the issues that arise, so developing and maintaining good relations with the community where you are holding your event is crucial.

This guide is scalable based on the characteristics of your event including size, time, location and activity. Many of the event communication actions are low to no cost and can provide many benefits including well informed neighbours and better communication between your organization and the community.

Neighbourly action

Reach out as early as possible to the [community \(neighbourhood\) association](#) and [Business Improvement Area](#) (BIA) (if event is in a [BIA zone](#) or adjacent) where you are planning to hold your event. These community advocates know the people and the area best and can provide valuable advice as you plan your event.

You'll want to be a good neighbour with these groups by informing them of your event details, and giving them an opportunity to ask questions, provide feedback or share concerns about event impacts to the community.



Good neighbour letter

Being a good neighbour includes communicating notice of your event and its impacts in advance, to help to build trust and increase your event's reputation in the community. Advance notice of your event also helps impacted residents and businesses make informed decisions about how they could adapt while the event is happening in their neighbourhood.

The City of Calgary sometimes requires, and often recommends, that you write and deliver a good neighbour letter to the surrounding residents and businesses/organizations that will be most impacted by your event.

A good neighbour letter is required when:

- Event that includes a road closure and/or has parking impacts
- Loud event (e.g. concert, fireworks/pyrotechnics show)
- Multi-day, large-scale event where food, alcohol and/or cannabis will be on site
- Event that ends after 10 p.m.

A good neighbour letter is recommended when:

- Event that ends between 8 and 10 p.m.
- New event
- Large festival
- Event that may impact resident and/or local business access

A good neighbour letter template is shown in Appendix 1 and is available from your Event Liaison* as a branded Word file that you can customize based on the specifics of your event. Alternately, you may use your own event-branded stationery, provided that your letter covers the details outlined in the template shown in Appendix 1.

* If you are unsure who your Event Liaison is, email eventservices@calgary.ca

Determining your good neighbour letter notification area

The more impacts your event will have on the neighbourhood, the larger your notification area should be. While a minimum two block radius around your event site is recommended, a broader notification area is appropriate when the impacts include road closures, parking pressures and noise. Your Event Liaison can review your proposed notification area for residents and businesses and make recommendations if needed.

Good neighbour letter delivery

Smaller or annual event

One to two weeks before event

New festival or event; large festival

Two weeks before festival or event

Letters can be delivered by event organizers/volunteers. For larger delivery areas, a local flyer delivery service or [Canada Post Neighbourhood Mail](#) service can deliver to your target area.

If your delivery area includes apartments or condos, a letter can be posted prominently in the building lobby/notice board in lieu of delivery to each residential unit. This can be arranged by contacting the condo association or building landlord.

Other VIPs to notify of your event – letters can be emailed to these contacts:

- Events Liaison via EventServices@calgary.ca. Your liaison will share your letter with the relevant internal City of Calgary contacts, including 911, 311, police, fire and bylaw.
- [Community Association\(s\)](#)
- [Business Improvement Area\(s\)](#)

Neighbourly action

Make your event part of the community by inviting residents to volunteer at your event, offering courtesy passes for those most impacted by your event's presence, and being available to answer questions and resolve concerns leading up to your event.

Other considerations

Supplementing the good neighbour letter to residents and businesses with other low to no-cost communication methods helps to ensure as many people in the community as possible know about your event and what they can expect. People receive information in different ways, so it is better to overcommunicate and use more than one method to spread the word.

Community signage – This includes bold signs (large black signs with fluorescent letters), sandwich boards or other similar signage. Sign placement must follow The City of Calgary's [mobile community sign requirements](#) and [applicable bylaws](#).

Community association channels – Check with the [community association](#) to see about placing an ad or short announcement for your event in the community newsletter. Note that submission deadlines can be up to one month or more before delivery to mailboxes, so plan early if you want to use this option. Some community associations may also be willing to share notice of your event on their Facebook page and through their member distribution list.

Social media – Create a Facebook event and share announcements/updates across all your social channels. Include a link to your website in your posts.

Website – Make it easy for people to find information about your event and how to contact you if they have any questions.

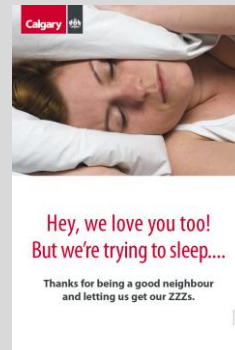
Event attendees can be good neighbours too. Consider including a “know before you go” section on your event web page and social media channels, and letting attendees know what they can expect at your event.

Information to share out could include transportation and parking tips, guidelines on alcohol/cannabis consumption and a map showing on-site amenities such as restrooms and waste bins.

Neighbourly action

If your event includes a host announcer/emcee, they can share good neighbour etiquette with attendees, such as obeying parking bylaws, placing garbage in the bins provided, and leaving quickly and quietly at the end of the evening.

The Festivals & Events team has large sandwich board signs available for loan to support event etiquette messaging. Contact your Event Liaison or EventServices@calgary.ca to reserve these signs for your event.



Good neighbour checklist

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Appendix 1: Good neighbour letter template

Sample only – a branded Word file to write your letter is available from your Event Liaison.

Event notification letter Coming soon to your neighbourhood – [Name of event]

Dear Neighbour,

We're excited to be bringing [Name of event] to your neighbourhood as follows:

When: [Month, day(s), year] between the hours of [event times, using 12-hour clock and a.m./p.m. designations].

Where: [Event location]

[Include a one-sentence description of your event.]

Because you live or operate a business near the event site, we want to let you know of some of the impacts that may be noticeable in the area while our event is underway.

Traffic and parking: [Outline the **road closures and timing for the closures**. Information about restricted access and special access to residential parking areas is also included here. Include a map on the next page that clearly shows where these closures and/or restrictions apply.]

Noise: [Describe the steps you are taking to minimize the noise level of your event while acknowledging that residents will notice more sound than usual. Note that City of Calgary noise bylaws will be followed (or that you have a noise exemption permit) and event attendees will be reminded to be good neighbours as they leave your event.]

Health and safety: [Describe the security, first aid and crowd management measures you will have in place to support the health and safety of attendees. Include the steps you will take to mitigate any public disorder, including excessive noise and inappropriate peeing, that may arise on or near the event site.]

Litter: [Describe the steps you are taking to minimize waste at your event and prevent litter from spilling out into the community.]

We look forward to bringing people together for this event and are committed to making it run as smoothly as possible.

If you have questions or comments about this event, please contact us at [Your event email address, phone number and/or website]. You can also contact The City of Calgary at 311 with questions or comments about our event's presence in your neighbourhood.

[Your name]

[Your title/organization]

Traffic impacts map

