

Traverse City Light Parade Rules & Guidelines

Hosted by Downtown Traverse City Association

2025 FINAL



GENERAL RULES: *General rules apply to all entries regardless of type.*

- **NEW FOR 2025: Giveaway & Candy Policy**

- **No candy or materials may be distributed along the parade route.** This change is due to ongoing safety concerns — children have repeatedly entered the roadway to collect items, creating dangerous situations near large trucks and moving vehicles.
- **Giveaways are welcome at the Tree Lighting.** Beginning at about 5pm, families gather to await Santa's arrival at 6pm. You are invited to hand out items directly or provide them to our volunteers for distribution. Participating businesses and organizations will be recognized on stage, and larger giveaways may be highlighted by our emcee team. Details are being finalized. If interested, please contact Sara Klebba at sara@downtowntc.com or 231.360.0234.
- **No printed materials (flyers, handouts, etc.) may be distributed,** as these frequently become litter and require additional cleanup after hours.
- Thank you for helping us keep this event safe, welcoming, and enjoyable for all.
- To maintain the magic of the parade's final appearance, only the official Santa will make an appearance. Participants may wear Santa hats, but there is only one Santa, and we've got him. Exception to this rule: inflatable Santas will be permitted.
- Participants must not exceed a speed limit of 10 mph. Please maintain a consistent speed when possible and avoid gaps. Gaps cause frustration within the viewing audience and slows the entire event.
- Maintain a 10-second distance or approximately 30 feet between parade route participants.
- All units are required to maintain a forward motion.
- Drivers of motorized vehicles licensed for road use must be at least 18 years old and hold a valid driver's license. Please stay with vehicle at all times. Drivers must share their cell phone numbers with the personnel at the Parade Check In.
- If a generator is required, it must be provided by the participant.
- **Any Participant sponsored by, advocating for, or depicting any political organization or controversial issue are not permitted.** Only seated official representatives elected by the people are permitted in the parade and are by invitation only. **No campaigning is allowed.**
- You are expected to submit your media read at 200 words or less. If you have updates after submission, please email Sara Klebba at sara@downtowntc.com.

NO CHASE/ SUPPORT VEHICLES ARE ALLOWED BY ANY ENTRY. There are several emergency vehicles posted along the parade route and are there for the purpose of assisting any parade participants.

- Floats must be equipped with a Class ABC fire extinguisher. All units will be checked for this item at line-up time.
- All children under the age of 10 must have adult supervision and are the sole responsibility of the participant.

PERFORMER-SPECIFIC RULES

- Performers may display the organization's logo with signage or on apparel.
- All participants must have lights; minimum 100 lights per performer.
- If a vehicle is part of the performance, it must have lights as well; minimum of 2,000 lights.
- No maneuvers are allowed that slow the forward movement of the parade.
- All children under the age of 10 must have adult supervision and are the sole responsibility of the participant.

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION RULES

- Participant must be a 501(c)3 non-profit.
- Minimum of 2,000 lights per entry. Please note that this is the *minimum and more lights are encouraged*. LED lights are recommended to avoid heat and battery drain issues.
- Participant may partner with a corporate sponsor they contract to cover additional costs beyond the stipend. Any use of a corporate logo **must be approved in advance**.
- No float may exceed 13 feet in height due to traffic lights and power lines on Front and Union Streets. Floats may not exceed 21 feet in width. Please measure the total entry length, including the vehicle, tow bar, and float to ensure sufficient spacing for the staging area and route.
- All units will be inspected for unapproved advertising, sponsor mentions, etc. All unauthorized advertising will be removed. The participant may display the non-profit logo.
- Walkers must remain behind the float and must not walk beside or in front of moving vehicles.
- All walkers must be festively dressed within the theme of the float. Do not dress as if you are part of the general public walking behind a float.

VEHICULAR ENTRY RULES

- **Minimum of 2,000 lights per entry.** Please note that this is the minimum and more lights are encouraged. LED lights are recommended to avoid heat and battery drain issues.
- No maneuvers are allowed that slow the forward movement of the parade.
- Motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, or other motorized vehicles not licensed for road use are deemed unacceptable unless approved in writing by the DTCA.
- Motorized units must be equipped with a Class ABC fire extinguisher. All units will be checked for this item at line-up time.