ALEXANDRIA
Scottish Walk
Holiday Parade

2026 Participation Guidelines and Code of Conduct

Saturday December 5 2026 | 10:30am to 12:30pm | Alexandria Virginia

The City of Alexandria welcomes applications to participate in the 2026 Scottish Holiday Walk Parade on Saturday, December 5.

The parade celebrates Alexandria's Scottish heritage and the city's holiday traditions. Applicants should describe how their proposed entry will contribute to those themes through music, attire, decoration, performance, historical interpretation, or other identifiable elements.

Space is limited. Applications will be reviewed using the published selection criteria and available parade capacity. Submission of an application does not constitute acceptance. Applicants will receive written notification of their selection status.

Eligibility and selection will be based on the proposed parade entry and its compliance with the published requirements. An organization's mission, identity, or affiliation will not, by itself, determine eligibility or selection.

Selected groups must comply with the parade's approved theme, rules, safety requirements, arrival instructions, and conditions of participation. Participants may not promote political activity or engage in advocacy efforts. Material changes to an approved entry must be submitted to the City for review.

Read these guidelines before applying to walk, perform, or drive a vehicle in the Scottish Walk Holiday Parade. All units must apply and comply with the participation guidelines and code of conduct.

Application process

- Applying is free. An application does not confirm participation. Returning participants must apply and are not automatically accepted.
- All units must apply in advance. The application deadline is Sunday, November 1, 2026.
- All applicants will be notified of their acceptance status on or around Friday, November 13, 2026.
- City staff will review applications for eligibility and completeness before eligible entries are reviewed by a selection panel. Entries must be family appropriate, meet safety and operational requirements, provide required information, and demonstrate readiness to participate.
- Selection considers holiday spirit, community connection, audience experience, diversity and inclusion, and overall parade composition. Describe your proposed entry, including costumes, decorations, music, vehicles, and performances. Organization identity alone does not describe the proposed entry.

Participation fees

- Accepted units will receive payment instructions after selection. Do not submit payment with your application. The 2026 fee amount and payment deadline will be provided by the City.
- **Payment for participation in 2026 is $75, to be received AFTER selection and no later than November 30**

- Contact specialevents@alexandriava.gov about financial assistance before the payment deadline.

Parade participation

- The parade is curated in advance. Organizers may decline entries or restrict proposed content under the approved participation and selection guidelines.
- Entries should reflect Scotland, the holidays, or Alexandria and contribute entertainment value. Coordinated tartan, plaid, holiday costumes, props, and decorations are encouraged.
- All entries must be suitable for a family audience and respectful.
- The parade is a non-political event. Parade units must not promote any political campaigns or use the parade for advocacy efforts. This guideline includes banners, signage, symbols and icons, attire, announcements, and other promotional materials.
- No campaign flyers or other literature may be passed out during the parade.
- No items may be thrown at participants or attendees. Candy may be tossed underhand or passed out along the parade route. For groups that include vehicles, candy must be passed out after the vehicle has passed. For everyone's safety, the vehicle driver is not permitted to distribute any items, including candy.
- We would like to inform all participants that chocolates will no longer be allowed for distribution during the parade. This decision has been made to ensure the safety of all attendees.
- Please contact Parade Producers in advance to request permission to hand out items other than candy along the parade route.

Walking Participants

- Please coordinate your group's attire and formation to enhance the entertainment factor for attendees.
- Please carefully assess your group's ability to keep pace with the parade and avoid stopping along the route.
- Please consider your walking formation as you make your way down the parade route.

Youth

- All youth participants must be accompanied by adult chaperones who will be responsible for supervising all children walking in the parade or riding in parade vehicles and/or floats.

Participation Of Elected Officials

- The participation of elected officials is limited to the person currently serving in the role at the time of the event.

Animals

- Animals may be included if they are related to your organization's cause or central to your parade unit's participation. The parade is open to dogs, horses, donkeys and other animals based on approval from Parade Producers. Please carefully assess your group's and animal's ability to be in a parade environment with music or sudden loud noises and to keep pace with the parade and avoid stopping along the route.
- Swine are not permitted within the City of Alexandria limits.
- Please only bring animals that are up to date on their Rabies and other vaccinations and will be comfortable being in a crowd and around music.
- On the day of the parade, please be prepared to present vaccination paperwork for every animal participant in the parade.
- All canine participants should have a leash no longer than 6 feet. The use of retractable or extendable leashes is not permitted out of safety concerns in a crowded event environment.
- All animal waste should be cleaned up and disposed of during the parade by participants. All horses and donkeys should have a bag to catch droppings. Please have someone in your group dedicated and responsible for this task, and contact Parade Producers with any concerns.

Vehicles and Floats

- Alexandria's streets are historic and may not accommodate large floats or trailers.

- All vehicles in the parade must be driven by someone with a valid driver's license and show proof of insurance for the vehicle.
- Sirens and airhorns are not permitted during the parade.
- Float railings must be a minimum of 36 inches tall.
- Trailers must be towed by an accompanying vehicle and have a turning radius of not less than 90 degrees.
- The City of Alexandria has restrictions on oversize vehicles:
  - Single unit vehicles may not exceed 8 feet wide, 40 feet long.
  - Truck dimensions may not exceed 8 feet wide, 55 feet long.
  - Buses may not exceed 8 feet 6 inches wide, 60 feet long.
- Height limit on all vehicles and floats should not exceed 12 feet.
- Scooters, hoverboards, skateboards, and mopeds are not permitted.
- For everyone's safety, the driver of the vehicle is not permitted to distribute or hold any items, or have other tasks that would cause distracted driving.

Music, Amplified Sound, And Noise

- Please include detailed information in your application about the use of music, amplified sound or other noises.
- No sirens or airhorns are permitted.
- Please keep any amplified music or sound at a volume that is respectful to other participants who may have music or performances.
- To maintain a safe and comfortable environment for attendees, no fireworks, poppers, explosions, gunshots, or cannon fire are allowed.

Weapons

- Traditional or ornamental weapons are acceptable as part of a group's uniform or costume. All knives, swords or spears carried in the parade as part of a uniform or costume must have a dull blade.
- Parts of the parade involve City public spaces where guns are prohibited. Guns, model guns or other replicas are prohibited in the parade. Exceptions are made for participating law enforcement and military units. However, the discharging of any weapons is prohibited.
- Parade participants with other weapons as part of a costume or uniform should contact parade organizers in advance to request permission at specialevents@alexandriava.gov.

Balloons, Banners and Signage

- Banners, signage and other elements are recommended to provide a variety of visual elements for the parade. The use of a banner pole is recommended for all hand carried banners.
- Alexandria's streets are historic with powerlines overhead and may not safely accommodate large parade balloons. All balloon clearances should be below 12 feet in height.
- Please be as detailed as possible in your application on the size of inflatables/parade balloons and any logistics involved or space to inflate/ deflate items. Power and space may not be easy to coordinate within the assembly and dispersal areas.

Safety And Logistics

- All participants agree to report to your group's specified assigned assembly location at the requested time and to follow directions from all on-site parade producers, staff and public safety personnel at all times during assembly, the parade and dispersal.
- Parade groups may not switch line-up locations with another group.
- Adhere to all safety and other logistical guidelines provided by the parade producers, on-site staff, and public safety personnel.
- All units must keep moving along the parade route unless approved to stop for a performance in advance. No stopping along the parade route for any reason unless previously arranged with Parade Producers.

- All organizations will be required to submit a waiver for participation. Additional insurance information, vehicle information and driver's licenses may also be requested.
- Prepare and plan your participation for a variety of weather scenarios. The parade is rain or shine, unless severe or dangerous weather conditions dictate the cancellation of the parade.

Photography and Filming Notice

- By participating in the parade, photographers, videographers, and press are likely to film or photograph your group/organization. Your participation, including the participation of children in your group, indicates consent to be photographed or filmed.
- Please be mindful of how your group's participation will appear in photographs and on camera.

Cancellation

- Please notify parade organizers immediately if your unit needs to cancel.
- The City will provide the 2026 refund policy with payment instructions.
- The parade is rain or shine. In the event of severe weather or extreme conditions that require a cancellation for safety reasons, there will be no rain date or rescheduled date.

Code Of Conduct

- Parade units should be courteous to other parade participants, staff, City personnel and the attendees.
- Groups must avoid the use of profanity or any behavior that can be reasonably perceived as offensive or threatening.
- No alcoholic beverages or controlled substances may be consumed, carried, or possessed by parade participants during the event.
- Adhere to health and safety measures set by the Parade producers.
- Parade units must not promote any political campaigns or use the parade for advocacy efforts.
- Have fun!

Parade Contacts

The 2026 Scottish Walk Holiday Parade is produced by the City of Alexandria.

Contact specialevents@alexandriava.gov for participation questions. Visit alexandriava.gov/HolidayParades for updates.

The 2026 route will accommodate City Hall construction. Accepted units will receive the confirmed route, assembly assignment, arrival time, and dispersal instructions before parade day.