



Bexley Recreation
& Parks



BLOCK PARTY ACTIVITY BOOKLET

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How to Host a Block Party:

Why host a block party?

Our goal in creating the BPAK was to eliminate any barriers for Bexley residents when hosting neighborhood block parties. The BPAK provides so many essential supplies, do that you do not need to use your personal supplies or go purchase extra just to host an event. Our desire is to change the point of view of hosting block parties from daunting to easy. We believe block parties strengthen our community, starting at a neighborhood level, and that they help to uphold Bexley as a safe and desirable place to live. So party on!

Step 1: Organize a group of volunteers to plan the party and pick the date.

Deciding to organize a party in the street with your neighbors is a great way to help create community within your block. Even a relatively laid-back party needs a bit of planning. Get together with a few willing neighbor friends and find out what date works best for everyone. Most block parties are held in the afternoon to evening. Also, take the weather into consideration. Plan the party far enough in advance so people can put it on their calendar and you have enough time to organize it all. If there are people willing to help with the planning, welcome them with open arms. Decide what you think would work best for you street: having the same volunteers plan each year, OR getting different people involved each time.

Step 2: Apply for a permit through City of Bexley and collect 75% of signatures on your street.

This permit can be found online at www.bexley.org In the search bar type "block party application form" and it'll come up for you to print off in Preview. Please make sure to read over the policies and procedures. They require this form to be turned in at least 7 days prior to the event and to have 75% of the signatures of residents on your block. Don't forget to turn the form back in to the Bexley City Hall so they know when to deliver roadblocks.

City Hall
2242 East Main Street
Bexley, OH 43209
(614) 559.4200

Step 3: Reserve the BPAK.

Bexley Recreation & Parks Department can be found on the 3rd floor of Jeffrey Mansion. They are open Monday through Friday from 8:00a-4:30p. A calendar will be available online so you can see when the BPAK is available to rent.

Bexley Recreation & Parks Department
165 N. Parkview Ave.
Bexley, OH 43209
614.559.4300
www.bexley.org/recreation

Step 4: Promote your party.

Word of mouth alone won't do the trick. We'd suggest printing out flyers and bringing them to your neighbors. Walking to your neighbor's door, and cheerfully speaking with the person who answers is an excellent way to deliver the flyer and meet your neighbors! It's so much more effective than just sticking a flyer on their front door and walking away. It's ideal to hand one out a few weeks before the party so your neighbors can reserve this date. Also, another one a few days before the block party, reminding people to come, and that the road will be blocked off (they might need to move their cars). Included in this booklet is a template for your convenience. Just put in the information for your party and print!

Step 5: Decide how to do the food and drinks.

There are lots of different ways to do food, but we would definitely suggest including it in some form. It's a crowd pleaser! You can omit a big meal and just do snacks, or you could have dinner. Some options: just snack items, everyone bring their own dinner to eat together, potluck style dinner (everyone brings a dish to share), or each person in attendance chips in towards a meal from a local vendor. We have included a list of possible vendors to include in your event if you need some ideas to get started.

The cheapest and easiest way to organize food for a neighborhood block party is to have a potluck. If doing potluck style, you could have one side of the street bring a side dish, and the other brings a dessert. Or when neighbors call to RSVP you can ask them what potluck dish they plan to bring to share. If you pull a few grills out, everyone can bring their own food to grill. Don't forget cups, ice, plates, napkins, and utensils.

Cost: The cost of block parties varies. They can be thrown with no cost at all if everyone pitches in. If you're booking extra vendors for food, music, etc., you can ask neighbors to chip in towards this expense. One of our goals in creating the BPAK is to eliminate financial burdens in throwing a block party: so utilize what you've rented! We've included a large variety of supplies as well as entertainment options to set you up for a fun event.

Step 6: Decide the main location and plan a few activities.

Consider the time of day you are thinking about having the party, and where there is the most shade, or location to neighbors' hoses, and outlets for plugging things in. Your street will be blocked off with barricades on each end, but you still need a main gathering area for the food tables, and people to set up their chairs, blankets, etc. Where is the best spot to place activities for the kids?

Our number one suggestion for this area is not to over-plan. Gathering around food with your neighbors is definitely enough to take up an evening and keep everyone entertained. Most block parties will have kids in attendance, so it's a great idea to have a few activities planned to keep them happy and entertained. A few ideas to get you thinking: capture the flag, bike obstacle course, glow sticks, running

through the sprinklers, sidewalk chalk, frisbees, kites, and balls. Bobbing for apples, water balloon toss, potato sack race, and watermelon seed spitting contests are some ideas that adults can enjoy with the kids. Also, check out Pinterest.com for a variety of ideas for block party activities or arts and crafts ideas. While the kids are playing games, the adults can mingle, eat, and get to know each other. Nametags can be very helpful in a large group of newly acquainted neighbors. It's fun to have music in the background, so delegate someone to set up their own speaker, or use the PA system included in your rental of the BPAK.

Step 7: The day of the party.

If you're well organized, the biggest tasks on the day of the block party will be setting up and cleaning up. On the day of the party recruit some older kids to help set up the tables, coolers, and chairs about an hour ahead of time. As neighbors arrive, introduce yourself and hand out nametags. Place potluck dishes on tables and direct the kids to the activities. Don't forget to be flexible if things don't go exactly planned. Remember that the main reason to get together is to relax and get to know one another. Enjoy the sense of community that you are building by simply being together.

Step 8: Clean up.

Be sure not to leave your block in a state of disarray. At the scheduled time, remove the traffic barriers that have been set up at the ends of the block and nicely set them to the side for the city to pick back up. Return any items back to neighbors and begin cleaning up and reloading the BPAK. We have included information here on how to clean and re-pack the trailer to ensure it is ready to go for the next rental. Thank you in advance for leaving things as you found them, if not better.

Using the BPAK:

Inside the trailer you will find a binder full of all the information you should need to set up, clean, and repack the trailer. We've even included copies of inventory manuals in case you get stuck. These are meant to be kept in the binder at all times and returned back to the BPAK. Most things will be self-explanatory, but more specific set up, such as the projector, please reference the chart and manual in the binder. Please use all equipment with care so that things do not break or get lost. You are responsible for the trailer and the items in it while it is in your possession.

Re-packing the BPAK:

Please clean each item and repack the BPAK with the same care and organization as it was given to you. This is an important step in the rental process and ensures that everything is in proper shape for the next renters. When cleaning up please just use common sense and the saying of "leaving it nicer than when you found it". Wipe down anything that can be, then return each item to the trailer in it's designated spot. If we take good care of the BPAK it will last longer.

More specific instructions for clean up:

Please wipe down all the **tables and chairs** before loading them back into the trailer. Please empty all ice/water out of the **snow cone machine** and wipe down the plastic sidewalls and inside bottom with a wet soapy cloth. The **popcorn machine** can be treated the same way; making sure there are no kernels left, and wiping down the inside bottom and sidewalls. Please don't wash down the popcorn machine

until it has cooled down to ensure that you do not get burned and the glass does not crack. All **game equipment** should be returned back to the bags, and the volleyball equipment loaded all together with the net in its original bag. The **canopy pop up shelter** should be wiped down on the top if dirty and put into its original bag as well. All **cords and power strips** can be wrapped nicely and placed in their labeled plastic bin. Please use extra care when loading the **projector**. This does not need to be wiped down, but the projector chords should stay in the padded case with the projector. The **speaker stands** are strapped down individually within their own case. The **outdoor screen** can be spot checked for dirt then nicely folded and placed back into the carrying bag. The **soak 'n wet** can be hosed down, allowed to air dry, then returned to the bin. Make sure to get all the plastic parts as well as the beanbags for this one, they are easy to loose. If you ended up using the **first aid kit or fire extinguisher** please let the staff at Rec and Park know when you return the BPAK so we can be sure to replace those items.

There are pictures hung up in the BPAK so you know where to place everything. If items arrived strapped down to the trailer, please ensure it is strapped down again so nothing breaks while the trailer is being transported. The binder included in the BPAK will have more specific instructions on how to clean and where to place everything. Thank you for your help with this.

Possible Vendors to Include:

Food

Please consider supporting a local vendor to do food for your event. Places such as Rubino's, Bexley Pizza Plus, Chipolte, Piada, City BBQ, Johnson's, Grater's, Jenni's, and City BBQ. If you'll be ordering a large amount, ask if they will offer a discount.

Reference <http://www.centralohiofoodtrucks.org> to find food trucks in Columbus.

Entertainment

Our first suggestion would be to Google the type of performer you are looking for to see if you recognize the name of someone local. Also, consider looking at Thumbtack for price comparisons on local magicians, face painters, musicians, clown entertainment, and balloon artists.

<http://www.thumbtack.com>.

Supplies to Purchase:

SNOWCONE SYRUPS AND POPCORN SUPPLIES

At this time, the BPAK does not come stocked with popcorn and snow cone supplies, meaning you are responsible for getting these on your own. But don't worry, it's easy!

You can find snow cone syrups and supplies on websites like

<http://amazon.com> or <http://www.hawaiianshavedice.com>. Also check a local grocery store, Target, or Wal-Mart. Pinterest has recipes for how to make your own with Kool-Aid or Jello. You can buy syrup by the gallon with pump dispensers online, making the process very easy.

We would suggest considering purchasing the following: snow cone cups, syrups, pump dispensers, popcorn bags, and popcorn that has oil packets included. We have had a lot of success with purchasing all of this on Amazon, and with Amazon Prime it ships very fast.

Here is a chart to reference when wondering how much syrup to purchase:

This Table Is Based On 1½ Ounce Of Syrup Per 6 Ounce Cup Of Ice	
Size Of Syrup Bottles	Number Of Snow Cones
4 ounces	3
1 pint	10
1 quart	20
1 gallon	80

The popcorn machine included in the BPAK will pop 8 ounces at a time, so if using one-ounce popcorn bags this will do 8 servings per cycle. This is approximately 160 servings per hour, with each popping cycle taking an average of 3 minutes.