

Clover Safe



University of California
Agriculture and Natural Resources
4-H Youth Development Program

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Clover Safe notes are intended primarily for 4-H volunteers and members nine years and older

#43 FLOAT PREPARATION AND PARADE SAFETY

Preparing floats and participating in parades can be fun and educational experiences. However, participants should be aware that there are inherent hazards associated with these activities and take appropriate precautions to prevent injuries to themselves and others.

Float preparation and parade injuries can range from minor to serious and often include contusions, sprains/strains, lacerations, and fractures.

Float Preparation Safety Precautions

- When designing and preparing a parade float follow the parade organization's rules and guidelines, including local fire codes and float size restrictions.
- Be knowledgeable about the proper use of any hand or power tools before working on a float. Review tool manuals and perform pre-use tool inspections for tool damage or disrepair.
- If a tool fails your inspection, inform your group leader, parent, or guardian and remove it from use.
- Use eye protection when operating power tools.
- Float decorative materials, such as tissues, crepe paper, flowers or other ornamental greenery, hay, paste, paper, cloth, should be flame resistant. Apply flame retardant spray or solutions as necessary.
- Take care when cutting and attaching chicken wire. Clean up any residual wires that are sticking out from the float framework. Use gloves and eye protection.
- Watch for sharp corners and edges and protruding nails when working on a float.
- Apply spray paint in well ventilated areas away from heat sources or flames.
- Float generators shall be securely mounted and located away from flammable materials and in well ventilated areas. Generator exhaust pipes shall be located away from decorative and flammable materials and away from float riders.
- Assure all rider seats and supports, restraining belts, and hand holds and rails are securely attached to main structural elements of the float.

Parade Safety Precautions

- Towing vehicle drivers shall possess a valid driver license.
- The towing vehicle and float shall each carry an approved 5 lb Type AB fire extinguisher.
- Drivers shall have a clear field of vision that encompasses 180 degrees and provides a view in front and to each side of the vehicle.
- The towing vehicle shall have a functioning horn and brakes that are in good working order. In addition, the vehicle shall have been properly serviced with oil, water, and fuel. Extra gasoline shall not be carried on the float.
- Towed floats shall have safety chains attached to the towing vehicle.
- Parade floats should maintain a 30 foot interval between other entries in front of them.
- All sitting float riders shall remain seated and use restraining belts, if available. Standing float riders shall have body support and firmly grasp hand holds and rails.
- No person shall jump off or onto a moving float.
- Float riders shall not throw candy or other items to spectators. Candy or other items may be distributed to spectators by hand from parade participants walking along side the float.
- Float riders shall not spray water or other fluids at spectators.



Photograph Courtesy of
Ventura County 4-H Program



If you are injured while preparing a float or participating in a parade, notify your project leader, parent, or guardian. Seek medical attention if the injury is serious.