

A Very Merry Madison Christmas Parade Rules and Guidelines

1. Entrants must observe all applicable rules and regulations and follow instructions from police and parade officials or be barred from the parade. The Committee reserve the right to remove any entrant from the parade either prior to assembly, while assembling or any time during the parade.
2. Vehicles will not be allowed in the parade unless pulling a float or providing transportation for pageant entrants. Exceptions will be considered for antique vehicles and other organized specialty car groups with prior approval.
3. No materials or candy may be thrown along the parade route. Those wishing to distribute candy and materials, must walk along the parade route and distribute items at the curb. This is to prevent children from running into the street during the parade precession.
4. Forward movement maneuvers only by marching units are permitted. No units may stop forward motion for performances except in the areas designated by the Parade Committee. This stop may not exceed 90 seconds.
5. A space of 50 feet between each unit will be enforced. All units are required to close gap between units when instructed by parade officials. Failure to do so may warrant removal from the parade.
6. Drivers of any and all vehicles in the parade areas must possess a valid driver's license, be at least 18 years old, and possess all liability vehicle insurance.
7. Livestock, reptiles, wild and domestic animals shall not be in the parade unless special approval is obtained. If approval is granted, all animals must have someone to clean up, if necessary, along the parade route.
8. **Only Christmas theme music will be allowed.** Parade officials have the complete authority in this matter and reserve the right to withdraw any unit that does not comply with their instructions to turn down or turn off sound when instructed to do so. Failure to comply with the officials' instructions will result in immediate removal from the parade and jeopardize future participation.
9. The Parade Committee reserves the right to withdraw any unit of which costume or performance does not meet the Christmas parade rules and regulations or conform to the standards of reasonable public taste and fit the parade theme.
10. Political campaigning is not permitted; however, political organizations and candidates may participate by entering a walking group or float that fits the theme of the parade.

11. No last-minute entries allowed the day of the parade. Registration Deadline is November 21, 2025.

12. The Parade Committee reserves the right to accept or decline any entry.

FLOATS

1. **All entries must be decorated according to a Christmas theme.** All banners must be neatly lettered.

2. Participants must be costumed according to the parade theme, with **no participant dressed as Santa Claus.** Santa Claus is hired by the city and will be in the final float.

3. No participants may jump on a float to ride and not interfere with any other unit in any way. Float capacity will not be exceeded. No participants will dismount from a float during the parade route. Participants will not have body parts, particularly legs and feet, extending past the sides, front or rear of the float. This is an extreme safety hazard.

4. The city will secure Santa Claus and his sleigh for the parade. **No other Santas or Santa Sleighs are allowed to participate to preserve the magic of the parade.** However, winter sleighs are permitted.

BANDS & MARCHING/WALKING UNITS

1. All marching units must maintain forward motion. Routines that cause gaps will not be permitted. Stopping or reversing motion will result in removal from the parade and will jeopardize future participation. Only Christmas theme music will be allowed.

2. No unit may stop forward motion to perform except in areas designated by the Parade Committee. Performance stops may not last more than 90 seconds.

3. If for any reason a gap of greater than 50 feet is created, marching units must increase their pace to close the gap.

4. All members of any marching unit should be at least 10 years old. Participants must be suitably costumed with no participant dressed as Santa. Walking groups must be dressed in uniform that easily identifies walkers as a part of the same group.

5. No vehicle may accompany marching units.

KINGS/QUEENS

Kings/Queens from any Elementary, Jr. High, High School, College or recognized pageant will be considered for the parade at the discretion of the Parade Committee. Eligible entries for consideration will include private/public, elementary/secondary, college institutions and recognized pageant winners. Kings/Queens from the same school must ride in the same convertible. Kings/Queens are required to furnish their own convertibles. The driver must be at least 18 years old and have a valid driver's license. A maximum of 2 persons per vehicle (driver excluded).

Signage must be neat and look professional.

LINEUP

All entries will be assigned a line-up number and receive further instructions about the parade upon receipt and approval of the application.

ROUTE

The parade will start from the assembly area along Jefferson Street in front of the courthouse, and in the city parking lot south of the courthouse. The parade will turn left onto Main Street and travel West to Mill Street where ALL units will turn south. Walking groups and bands may regroup in the Visitors Center Parking Lot. All floats and vehicles should continue onto Vaughn Drive and may then travel back to Jefferson to regroup or exit at that time. Balloon handlers will continue on one block past Mill and will drop balloons off in the Lydia Middleton School parking lot. Balloon handlers must stay with their balloon until the balloon company dismisses you.