



MARDI GRAS FLOAT CONSTRUCTION GUIDELINES

While we wish to allow as much flexibility as possible, these important points must be observed.

All floats must be decorated to comply with the official parade theme.

The winning floats have multiple dimensions with unique decorations and a variety of activities. Go beyond a painted box and give the sides a 3rd dimension. It is permissible to display the float title or krewe name but business names and advertisements are not allowed except for sponsorship agreements with Mardi Gras Inc.

The maximum height can be no more than 13 feet 3 inches to accommodate the lowest overpass along the route. The maximum width recommended is 12 feet.

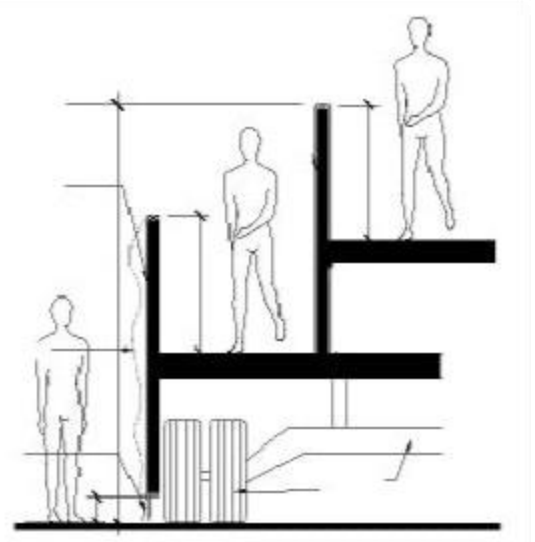
Portable toilets must be disguised and decorated. Make sure the tires are parade worthy.

Each float must carry a fire extinguisher and proof of insurance.

All standing and riding areas must have secure solid walls or railings with balusters with 3-inch spacing at 42" above the float platform. Other material can replace balusters, but the structure must be sturdy. Chicken wire or something similar could fill in between support lumber.

If necessary, consult with professionals experienced in construction techniques to ensure that the railing is secure.

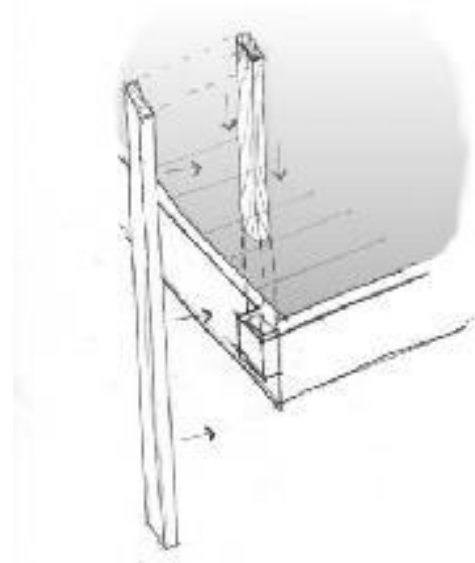
Plan your build; once you build over something, it may be difficult to get access to that space. By using removable panels, you can maintain access to the trailer hitch or spare tire.



Build a sturdy floor, lumber sizes will vary according to the float design and size, however; it is better to overbuild. Treat it as if you were building a deck on wheels. The handrails must be strong: lap the 2 x 4 uprights down past the floor line.

The side of the float should extend to a point 20" inches above the street.

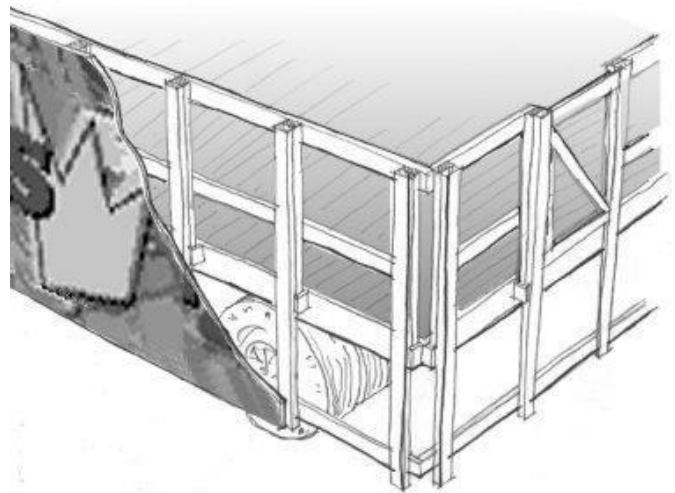
The tow vehicle must have good sight lines for the driver and ability to drive at slow, constant speeds, and be operable for the length of the entire route.



Rule clarification for FIRETRUCKS Standing and riding areas:

There are usually areas made for the firefighters to stand around the perimeter of the truck. It is permissible for a krewe member to be there in the parade only where the surface is solid and there is a hand grab installed.

Around the flatbed area of the truck, you must construct railings with spacing to prevent a person from falling through. It is recommended to be 42" above the platform, with a minimum of 30". Soft materials i.e., cloth or plastic sheets are not allowed as a railing. The railing can be attached as a temporary addition but must be able to serve its purpose.



If you have removed the water tank and the platform is lower, a railing may not be needed. Please contact the Parade Chairman for specifics on your entry.

Display your parade position number on the front and back of your float so it is visible at street level.

1010 FLOAT WORKSHOP RECAP

Here are float building suggestions and tips from several very successful krewes.

There are several artists we can contact for you to help with your creative process. Feel free to ask for help.

General float building tips:

- Make large props
- Use lots and lots of glitter
- Don't take anything off once it's on. Make it work.
- Step back 12 ft and squint – it will look much better. The judges don't see it up close.
- Use BRIGHT colors
- Apply spray paint around the edges for depth

Steve from the Riverbend Krewe

"We were fortunate enough to have a professional advertising artist on our krewe. She would draw the design as we brainstormed. When finished she would lay out the art on a grid for all the volunteers to follow as a blue print for location and size."



Bethany from the Mystic Knights of the Purple Haze

"We always go oversize and overboard. Use the largest props and designs you can handle and bring on the bright colors. We are a show no one can miss because of our interaction with the crowd and the costumes that we wear. "



Ron from the Krewe of Calypseaux

“Get your supplies all year long, don’t just wait until fall. Go to garage and estate sales, thrift stores, Habitat for Humanity ReStore, and clearance events. Even the “oops” paint section at the hardware stores will have paints you can use. Involve people with your project, wear your costumes to shop and don’t be afraid to take something free for future use. Next year you might want the warped 2x4s or the mannequin with one arm.”

“Adding Baby Powder to paint will keep the paint from cracking and coming off if you are using it to paint flexible items such as tarps or muslin. Airbrushing can be used to add dimension and detail to your float and costumes.”



Bonita from the Banana Bike Brigade

“Costumes are our thing. We reuse each year whatever we can. Most of our shapes are built on plastic frames with paper Mache. Used billboard signs work great to paint scenery. The large size and bright colors are what make our costumes winners almost every year. We interact with the crowd by talking to them and getting them cheering. “



Don from the BCS Krewe

“We started with a core group of friends and built our krewe. We focus on staying in character during the parade to reinforce or connection to the parade theme. My sister is very artistic and guides the decoration of our float.”



Nan from Gosport Nancy

“BRAND your krewe. Use t-shirts, business cards, buttons, posters, etc. to establish your identity & become a cohesive unit. Set an appropriate dues structure that covers (at least) your entry fee & deposit. (But, be flexible—friendships & other talents/ contributions are worth more than \$). Costumes are decided on, designed, and produced collectively. Build a basic/ safe structure (w/ appropriately themed porta-potty) and then embellish with as much “dimension” as you can manage. (a spaceship, a castle, or a school bus.)”

