

Frequently Asked Questions
Palm Springs Festival of Lights Parade
Saturday, December 5, 2026 – 5:45 p.m.

When is the Palm Springs Festival of Lights Parade? What time does it start? The Festival of Lights Parade takes place each year on the first Saturday in December. This year, the parade date is Saturday, December 5, 2026. The parade begins promptly at 5:45 p.m.

Where does the parade take place? Where does it start, where does it end? The parade takes place on Palm Canyon Drive in downtown Palm Springs. It begins at Ramon Road and Palm Canyon Drive and heads northbound on Palm Canyon Drive to Tachevah Road where it ends.

How long is the parade route? The parade route is approximately 1.5 miles long. It takes approximately 30-40 minutes for each entry to complete the route. The first unit steps off at 5:45 p.m. and the last unit will cross the finish line at approximately 8:00 p.m.

Where is the staging area for the parade? The staging area for the parade is located on Palm Canyon Drive between Sunny Dunes Road and Ramon Road. Additionally, Ramon Road from Indian Canyon Drive to Belardo Road is used for staging. Ramon Road from Indian Canyon to Calle Encilia will also be used for staging the bands. Indian Canyon Drive will remain open to traffic.

What time will the roads close for the parade? The staging area on Palm Canyon Drive from Ramon Road to Sunny Dunes Road, and Ramon Road from Palm Canyon to Belardo will close at 1:00 p.m. and will remain closed until the last unit has left the staging area at approximately 7:00 p.m. Palm Canyon Drive from Vista Chino to Ramon Road and Ramon Road from Indian Canyon to Calle Encilia will close beginning at 3:00 p.m. and will remain closed until approximately 8:30 p.m.

Where is the main Reviewing Stand for dignitaries and sponsors located? The Review Stand will be located at the intersection of Amado Rd. and Palm Canyon Drive. The Review Stand is for our local dignitaries and our generous parade sponsors.

Where is the best place to park? The best place to park is the area streets surrounding the parade route and the surrounding parking lots. As we have many spectators at the parade, it is best to come early to get available parking and to secure viewing space along the parade route. Underground parking is available off Tahquitz Canyon Drive or the Museum parking garage off Museum Drive.

How long will the parade last? The parade will last between 90 minutes and 2 hours from start to finish.

What time will the streets re-open? Palm Canyon Drive will re-open to vehicular traffic following the parade, once all units have safely cleared the area and pedestrians have dispersed. We anticipate opening Palm Canyon Drive by 8:45 p.m.

What happens in the case of inclement weather? The Palm Springs Festival of Lights Parade takes place rain or shine. In the event of high winds, the large balloons may be restricted from participating, but we are looking forward to a great evening for a parade!

Where is the best place to watch the parade? Is there bleacher seating available? The best place to watch the parade is along Palm Canyon Drive from Ramon Road to Tachevah Road. There is limited bleacher seating available to the general public along the parade route.

Are any chairs provided for along the parade route? Chairs are not provided anywhere along the parade route. Please feel free to bring lawn chairs from home to sit in, or sit along the curb on Palm Canyon Drive.

How should we dress for the parade? The weather can be quite cool the night of the parade, so we suggest that you dress very warmly. You may want to bring along a blanket or mat to sit on to help keep you warm.

Is there a designated disabled viewing area? Will disabled parking be available? The City of Palm Springs has designated one location for persons with disabilities to view the parade. The seating area is available on a first-come, first served basis in the designated location at the intersection of Amado and Palm Canyon on the east side of the street. Space is limited and accompanying guest must bring his or her own chair or blanket to sit on. Chairs will not be provided. ADA Accessible parking will be located on Amado Road between Indian Canyon and Palm Canyon Drives.

Will there be a sign language interpreter available? Yes, a sign language interpreter will be available at the Review Stand located at the intersection of Palm Canyon Drive and Amado Rd.

Should I bring anything? May I bring a cooler? Please feel free to bring blankets and/or lawn chairs to sit on. You may bring your own food and beverage, but please note: ***No Alcohol is permitted.***

What time should we plan on getting there? As this parade draws very large crowds, you may wish to secure seating early along the parade route. We recommend you arrive at least an hour prior to the parade to get a good location to view the parade.

How many people attend the parade? We literally have thousands of people who come to see our parade every year. The crowds are quite large and you should pre-designate a meeting area for your family members should anyone get separated from your group.

Do I need a ticket? You do not need any tickets to see the parade. It is free and open to the public!

What's in the parade? What can we expect to see? How many entries are in the parade? There are approximately 80 entries in the parade. Parade entries include marching bands, drum squads, drill teams, giant helium balloons, lighted floats and equestrian units.

If we need to cancel our participation, what should we do? If we cancel our parade entry, can we get a refund of our application fee? Please contact the Parks & Recreation Department at (760) 323-8272 or via email at events@palmspringsca.gov. Unfortunately, the parade application fee is non-refundable.

Are the floats and parade entries judged? Yes, the parade floats and parade entries are judged in many categories including: Most Imaginative Entry, Jolliest Local Band , Most Animated Balloon, Brightest Holiday Float, etc. Awards will be announced via the Festival of Lights website on Monday, December 7, 2026. Award certificates will be sent to the winners.

Who are the people in orange/green safety vests? The people in the orange and/or green safety vests are City staff and parade staff who are trained to keep the route safe and the parade moving at all times.

Is there a lost and found area at the parade? Yes, the lost and found is located at the Review Stand area which will be at the intersection of Palm Canyon Drive and Amado Road along the east side of the street.

Tell us about the balloons – The big balloons are a wonderful addition to our parade and they are reminiscent of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Balloons. The balloon walkers are volunteers from our local Palm Springs neighborhood groups.

Is the parade suitable for children? Absolutely! This family friendly parade has been rated as one of the Top Ten Holiday Parades nationwide in an AOL Survey.

Who puts on the parade? The parade is put on by the City of Palm Springs along with our generous sponsors.

What is the parade for? What is the theme of the parade? The parade was created by a small group of community-minded individuals who believed it important to offer the Coachella Valley an event that would allow residents and visitors to celebrate the spirit and joy of the holiday season while at the same time creating a unique tourism event.

How can my company become a sponsor or donate to the parade? Can I be an individual sponsor? If you would like to become a sponsor of the parade, please contact Parks & Recreation Department at (760) 323-8272 or via email at events@palmspringsca.gov