Parades offer many benefits. They also present many risks that can be significantly enhanced if organizers do not collaboratively plan for them. Areas of vulnerability include traffic concerns, crowd considerations, fire hazards, mass violence threats, spectator safety, float design, parade participant behavior, and more.

Parade tragedies are not a new concern:

- Seven killed, dozens injured, a gunman opens fire during July 4th parade, Highland Park, Illinois, 2022.¹
- A man dressed as Santa Claus, seriously injured, falls from a fire truck, Umatilla, Oregon, December, 2020.²
- Generator causes the float to engulf in flames, Virginia Beach, Virginia, December 2013.³
- Eight-year-old boy dies, struck by a parade float, Edmond, Oklahoma, July 2013.⁴
- Seven-year-old dies from falling off a vehicle in a parade, struck by a float, Annapolis, Maryland, July 2013.⁵
- Man killed, fire truck in parade strikes tractor in a parade, Bangor Maine, July, 2013⁶
- Nineteen injured, multiple shooters open fire during Mother’s Day parade, Louisiana, May 2013.⁷
- Four killed, 17 injured, train collides into a parade, Midland Texas, November 2012.⁸
- One killed, 23 injured, horses broke loose and trampled parade attendees, Bellevue, Iowa, July 2010.⁹

Mitigating the risks associated with parades requires strategic and contingency planning, a policy supported by the local government, collaboration, training, and contractual risk transfer.

The Safety Director has developed the Parade Planning Worksheet, which should be utilized by key stakeholders well in advance of any parade event.

The Parade Planning Worksheet is extensive. Organizers of large, complex parades will need to consider many of the risks offered. When planning smaller parades, organizers may be able to quickly consider and discount some risks; however, the considerations should be reviewed for each parade. Such a review should take place even for re-occurring parades, as often such parades can become larger and more complex year to year.