

Designation Ceremony Planning Guide

“Designated Canadian Safe Communities” Program

Congratulations on being designated a Canadian Safe Community by Parachute. We are aware it takes a tremendous amount of hard work and a strong commitment on the part of many dedicated people, primarily on a volunteer basis, to achieve this status. As a result of your work, the quality of life in your community will be enhanced with injuries prevented and lives saved. Your designation ceremony is a time to celebrate your accomplishments and share your successes with your community and the world!

The following guide provides a format that has proven successful for planning a designation ceremony. The approach outlined in this guide allows flexibility for each community to tailor an appropriate ceremony to their specific needs. The ceremony should be structured as a public and media event at a location where a large number of invited guests and the general public can be accommodated. The key is determining what resources and capacity you have to plan and execute the ceremony, and planning to achieve any specific objectives you have for the event. For example, do you want to engage new members, generate new sponsors, enhance awareness, etc.

Planning your ceremony should begin as soon as Parachute confirms your designation. There are a number of factors to be considered to ensure that you achieve maximum media and public exposure, and good attendance and participation at the ceremony.

Suggested Activities and Action Plan

Appoint Key Liaison People

Some considerations:

- ◆ Appoint a key contact person from each organization that will be involved in the planning and execution of the ceremony. At a minimum, one or two people from the local Leadership Table should form your planning committee. There may be many organizations that will begin to work together at this point but it is best to keep the lead planning group small to facilitate decision-making in tight time frames.
- ◆ Appoint a chairperson for management of the event.
- ◆ Circulate a roster of names, and contact information.
- ◆ Establish time lines and meeting schedules/ teleconferences to ensure thorough communication and consultation.

Select a Date and Time for the Designation Ceremony

Please consult with the Parachute office in Toronto to ensure that the suggested date is available for their official to attend.

Some considerations:

- ◆ If possible do not select a Monday; Tuesday and/or Thursday generally maximize media participation.
- ◆ Friday is an alternative if you choose the morning or just after the lunch hour.
- ◆ Do not select a date just prior to or immediately after a statutory holiday.
- ◆ Choose either morning (10:00 a.m. is ideal) or afternoon (1:30 p.m.).
- ◆ Determine the rehearsal date if needed.
- ◆ The event should be no longer than 30 to 45 minutes in length.

Select the site

Some considerations:

- ◆ Consider accessibility, parking, power supply.
- ◆ Adequate space and seating for all attendees.
- ◆ Sound amplification and presentation capabilities.
- ◆ Space for media to assemble.
- ◆ For outdoor sites, a back up in case of bad weather, cover from sun.

Create an agenda

Some considerations:

- ◆ Think about the tone you'd like to convey. For example, is your ceremony open to the public, by invitation, or part of an existing event?
- ◆ Refer to your recent Priority Setting Exercise to determine the key issues you will be addressing and the key messages around your strategies in the short and long term.
- ◆ You may want to speak about local statistics.
- ◆ Consider who will be speaking. We recommend a Master of Ceremonies and a few key speakers.
- ◆ Representation for the groups that are part of your Safe Community.
- ◆ A representative of Parachute should be invited to speak.
- ◆ Assign time slots for each speaker to keep the agenda moving.

Choose spokespeople

A few key spokespeople should be selected and prepared in advance to speak to the media.

Some suggestions for potential spokespeople:

- ◆ One individual from the Leadership Table well versed in the Priority-Setting Exercise.
- ◆ Select some key spokespeople, such as the mayor or official representative, provincial MPP or Federal MP, Public Health representative, Emergency Services representative,

local community champions, a member of the public who may have been affected by a preventable injury in some way.

- ◆ A representative of Parachute will be able to speak to the media.

In advance, circulate to all spokespeople the key messages you would like them to address.

The Ceremony

At least two weeks before the ceremony, we ask that you send to Parachute a list of the names of the people to be included on the formal declaration. We recommend you circulate, review and finalize your list locally before sending it to Parachute.

Some considerations:

- ◆ Have your local Safe Communities sign on the podium or stage, visible so that it can be in any photos taken.
- ◆ Parachute may provide signage for the stage.
- ◆ Review if any speakers have special requirements, such as hand held microphone, projector, etc.
- ◆ Determine in advance who will be the signatories to the official designation certificate. A representative of Parachute will sign this in addition to, generally, the co-chairs for the Safe Community, the mayor or other official of the municipality and a public health representative. It is up to you whom you would like to sign the certificate, though we do not recommend more than five signatories, including the Parachute representative. This is a photo opportunity!
- ◆ Each signatory will sign three copies of the declaration - one for the city, one for the Safe Community Leadership Table, and one for Parachute. You need to make sure that close to the stage or on the stage, is a table and appropriate chairs for this signing ceremony to take place. Don't forget a pen!
- ◆ Determine if you would like to have a handout available at the ceremony.
- ◆ Arrange for a photographer or videographer as appropriate.
- ◆ A representative from Parachute will present the 'Key to Safety' to a representative of your Safe Community, a community official or a group of citizens, depending on what you would like – this is a photo opportunity! Please communicate your decision to Parachute and the representative(s) that will be in the photo.

Invitations

Some considerations:

- ◆ A formal invitation should be developed and mailed or e-mailed to identified guests.
- ◆ Some guests to consider inviting; a representative from Parachute head office, the Parachute Provincial Lead, Government representatives, local health, safety promotion and injury prevention service organizations and community associations.
- ◆ Try and send out the invitation four weeks in advance, include an RSVP contact and date. Ideally the deadline to respond should be two weeks before the ceremony.
- ◆ Some follow-up by phone or e-mail may be required for key invitees.
- ◆ Consider if you want to have name tags, and/or a check-in at the ceremony to keep track of who is there.

Media

Parachute will issue a local media advisory with information about the date and details of the ceremony. This will be issued one week prior to the ceremony. It will include a contact from your community.

Some considerations:

- ◆ You are encouraged to do local media promotion, which might include contacting local radio and television stations to determine opportunities to speak.
- ◆ One to two days before the ceremony, contact media outlets to find out who will be attending and if they would like to interview any spokespeople in particular.
- ◆ Assemble a media kit for the day of the ceremony. It should include a copy of the media release, a backgrounder document on Parachute, a backgrounder document on your Safe Community, local brochures, business cards and contact information.
- ◆ Schedule media interviews for after the ceremony if possible.
- ◆ Include references to local sponsors and volunteers.
- ◆ Parachute will track coverage, but it is wise to tape audio and video locally.

The Big Day!

Some considerations:

- ◆ Arrive early with your team for set up and sound check.
- ◆ Set up a media check-in desk and designate an individual to manage it. This person should hand out the media kits and direct reporters to the appropriate spokespeople.
- ◆ At the closing, ensure the MC invites people to remain, mingle, ask questions and learn more about how they can support and/or join their new safe community.
- ◆ Thank all of your committee, organizations, volunteers and sponsors for their support, because without them, this would not have been possible

Enjoy! This is the opportunity for your Leadership Table, volunteers, sponsors and your community to demonstrate their latest achievement towards making your community the safest in which to live, learn, work and play in Canada.