

Holiday Parade Lighting Tips

If you've thought about entering a float of some kind in the Christmas Parade, but didn't, because you thought it was too difficult to light up, here are a few tips that may change your mind.

Tip 1. Use miniature lights instead of the larger C-7 or C-9 size. The miniatures use much less power and are more durable. The C-7's and C-9's with their large filaments break easily when hit, especially if they are lit.

Tip 2. Today many people own small portable generators. They have come down in price in the last few years and many people have found them handy for all kinds of uses since they have become more affordable. If you don't have one check with your friends and neighbors you might be surprised who does have one. They may let you borrow it to power the lights on your float. The new ones are easy to use and surprisingly quiet.

Tip 3. If you can't get a generator think about an Inverter. This device plugs into the cigarette lighter in the vehicle and takes the 12 volt DC current and turns it into 120 AC current that will power the lights on the float. You have to be careful not to overload the unit. Inverters will have an output from about 300 watts to 700 watts. If you plug in too many light strings the internal circuit breaker will shut down the unit as it heats up. The information plate on the inverter will tell you what the unit is rated for. Most light strings also give the wattage they require. Just add up the wattage of each light string and keep it under the wattage rating of the inverter.

Tip 4. For wagons, bicycles, pets and individuals there is another option. Battery operated miniature lights. These are available in limited amounts at several retailers in the area. These strings are short, 8 to 12 lights, but they are powered by one or two D size flashlight batteries and, the batteries will last for the duration of the parade. The Chamber Ambassadors used to decorate their old umbrellas with them and they never had a problem. They proved to be very dependable. If you are careful take the batteries out and store them properly the strings will last for many years.

Tip 5. The last item is glow sticks. Right now long glow sticks are available for Halloween so buy them now and save them for Christmas. You can also purchase the shorter glow sticks anytime of the year as well. These are usually found in the camping supply section of many stores. Obviously, glow sticks require no cords or power and that allows you to be very creative with your unique float design.