

Parade Procession Guide

The 11th annual Surrey Vaisakhi Parade is the largest outside of India, a colourful and entertaining procession winding its way through the streets of Surrey on Saturday, April 23rd. In total, over 2500 participants representing 20 community organizations will participate in this celebratory event, with thousands more celebrating the spirit of Vaisakhi in roadside booths along the parade route. As part of the spirit of this community celebration, which draws in excess of 100,000 guests from across the region, the roadside booths give away free food and treats to onlookers. Your guide to the 2011 parade procession:

1. Sikh Motorcycle Club

Leading off the 2011 parade procession, members of the Sikh Motorcycle Club participating. The only one of its kind in Canada, the club was established in 2002 and today has over 90 members. In BC, Sikhs are legally allowed to ride motorcycles while wearing a turban according to the Provincial Motorcycle Act.

2. Canadian Forces

This float has six members of the Canadian Forces as well as two Humvees. The Canadian Forces and the Sikh community have a longstanding relationship that dates back over 100 years, and this year's parade entry is a salute the Sikh community during this day of celebration.

3. Nagara (Sikh Drum)

The ceremonial Nagara drum is beat to signal onlookers that the procession is happening and is played on festive occasions. The Nagara is similar to a kettle drum and comes in two different sizes.

4. Parshad (Sikh Food Offering)

Parshad is a traditional Sikh dried sweet that was used as a religious offering. Volunteers from the Gurdwara Dasmesh Darbar Temple will be handing out these sweets to the crowd.

5. Guru Granth Sahib

The most important float in the procession, this float carries the Guru Granth Sahib, the religious text of Sikhism. The text remains the holy scripture of the Sikhs, regarded as the teachings of the Ten Gurus.

6. Har Jus Kirtan

With over 100-members, participants in this parade entry will perform traditional Sikh hymns. These hymns, many of which are hundreds of years old, unite the crowd in celebration of the harvest.

7. Sikh Academy

The Sikh Academy in Surrey, established in 2008, is a private elementary school from kindergarten to grade seven. Three hundred and thirty children are expected as part of this entry, representing their school and its motto of “imagine, innovate, inspire”.

8. Khalsa School Band

The Khalsa School Band is a marching band with 60 members. The band will play up-tempo marching band music.

9. Khalsa School - Newton

The Khalsa School in Newton will have 500 participants, aged kindergarten to grade 12, in this year's entry. The Khalsa Schools are private Sikh schools dedicated to teaching the whole child through academic, Sikh religion and cultural classes. The participants from the Newton Khalsa School will perform hymns and traditional dances throughout the parade procession.

10. Khalsa School - Surrey

This year the Khalsa School in Surrey will have 500 young participants, aged kindergarten to grade 12 representing their school.

11. Khalsa School - Vancouver

Vancouver's Khalsa School will have 300 students from kindergarten to grade 10 representing their school in this year's event.

12. Sarbat Khalsa

This float tells the history of the Sarbat Khalsa, a biannual mass meeting of the Khalsa people held at Amritsar in Panjab during the 19th century. Sarbat Khalsa is translated as “entire Sikh community”.

13. Save Panjab

Save Panjab is a community group with ties to the global organization Save Panjab that is committed to furthering environmental and social issues within Panjab region.

14. Khalsa Aid

Established in 1998, Khalsa Aid is an international not-for-profit aid and relief organization founded on principles of selfless service and universal love. Based in the UK, Khalsa Aid raises both funds and awareness for countries in need, most recently, Japan, India and Haiti.

15. Victoria Sikh School

This entry will include members of the 100-member student body of the Victoria Sikh School performing traditional Sikh hymns and dance.

16. Translink

The first of two Translink buses provided courtesy of Translink, Greater Vancouver's public transportation authority to carry Sikh elders during the event.

17. Guru Nanak Academy

This Surrey based school is run by the Gurmat Studies Foundation and offers classes for children and adults in language, Sikh history and Sikh martial arts. This popular entry features traditional martial arts demonstrations during the parade procession.

18. Dastar Float

This interactive float encourages the public to come and learn about the meaning and cultural significance of traditional Sikh headdresses. Men, women and children of all ethnicities are invited to come and try their hand at turban winding.

19. Darpan Anti-Drug Float

Bringing a strong anti-drug message, this float encourages young people to be a positive role model to their peers.

20. Calgary Anti-Drug

Travelling from Calgary to bring their positive message against drugs, this parade entry features two dozen participants.

21. Red FM

Live radio cruiser. See some of your favourite personalities from Red FM, the voice of the South Asian community on local radio airwaves. Listen to the top songs from Punjab and Bollywood charts as this vehicle passes by.

22. Sher-E-Punjab

Sher-E-Punjab is the South Asian Community's first and only news/ talk radio station. Broadcast throughout many parts of BC as AM1550, and carried by stations across Canada and a few in the US, Sher-E-Punjab prides itself on giving its audience a chance to voice its opinions on issues that are important to the local community.

23. CKNW Cruiser

CKNW AM 980 is the Lower Mainland's news, talk and sports radio station. The CKNW cruiser will be participating in the parade to connect with the local community.

24. Pingalwara Society

This is a volunteer-run organization started nearly 100 years ago by Bhagat Puran Singh Ji. The Society helps the poor, sick and mentally ill in India. This float intends to raise awareness for one of the charity's endeavors, the Amritsar Orphanage in India.

25. Mamta Foundation

The Mamta Foundation of Canada aims to help children around the world through moral, social, cultural and economic support. Its first project is to help raise funds for the construction of a new building site for abandoned and orphan girls in Jalandhar City, India.

26. The Indo-Canadian Voice/Awaaz

A Surrey-based newspaper covering all the important news and events in the local South Asian community. Stop-by for giveaways!

27. Translink

The second of two vehicles provided courtesy of Translink, Greater Vancouver's public transportation authority.

For assistance please contact:

Laura Ballance
Media Relations
604.637.6646 (direct)
604.771.5176 (mobile)
Laura@LBMG.ca

Rebecca Peters
Media Relations
604.637.6649 (direct)
604.762.2098 (mobile)
Rebecca@LBMG.ca