

# Tips: Keep safe this Mardi Gras

Acknowledgements: Fox 15 KADN Lafayette



**LOUISIANA** — Mardi Gras in Louisiana is an attraction that gains attention worldwide. Everyone seeks to let the good times roll, unfortunately bad things can and do happen. Below are some tips that will help you enjoy the festivities while remaining safe.

## **Parking**

Personal property, including clothing, should not be left in unattended vehicles. If no alternative depository is available, personal property should then be locked in the trunk of the vehicle prior to parking.

Prior to parking your vehicle on the street, ensure you are not attempting to park on the parade route, in a restricted area, or blocking a driveway, crosswalk, fire hydrant, etc.

Make a note of where you parked, including street names and nearby landmarks.

Parking will be extremely limited, so it is strongly suggested citizens utilize carpools, taxicabs or other forms of public transportation. Illegally parked vehicles are subject to be ticketed and towed.

## **Personal Safety**

Parade spectators are cautioned against carrying large sums of money with them as persons who are adept at pick-pocketing seize the opportunity in crowded situations.

Purses should be carried across the torso, but preferably, place important items in the front pocket.

Don't become distracted by cellular devices, cameras, MP3 players, etc.

Stay in well-lit and populated areas.

If consuming alcohol, know your limits, utilize a designated driver and ensure at least one member of your party remains sober to ensure everyone's safety.

Never leave drinks, food or property unattended.

## **Parade Reminders**

Police officers will be visible along parade routes before, during and after the parades. Uniformed officers will engage in crowd control and plainclothes officers will be among the spectators for detection of crimes such as pick-pocketing.

The Mardi Gras Ordinance entitled, "Throws and Throwing," prohibits riders and maskers from tossing throws or favors to the rear and/or front of their floats or trucks. It also prohibits them from throwing in the parade formation and disbanding areas. It is quite hazardous for trinket seekers to be in either the front or rear of floats and trucks, as well as in the formation and disbanding areas, which are heavily congested.

Remember the neutral ground (median) is public property.

Erecting of stands or platforms on the sidewalk, street and/or medians is prohibited.

The chaining of ladders to public property, light standards, utility poles, and/or to each other, is prohibited. All ladders used by parade spectators should be structurally sound.

No ladders, chairs, ice chests, chaise lounges, etc. should be placed in intersections, on medians or between curbs of public streets.

The rule governing ladders is: Ladders should be placed as many feet back from the street curb as the ladder is high.

Spectators are reminded also it is illegal to drink from an open glass container on or near parade routes, as well as in certain areas of the French Quarter.

Use extreme caution when attempting to cross the parade route, seek an officer's guidance on the best place to do so.

## **Keeping Children Safe during Mardi Gras**

Watch children carefully and never leave them unattended.

Make sure your child knows his or her name, phone number and address. Write that information, along with the parent's name on a piece of paper and place it in the child's pocket, in case of separation.

Introduce them to a nearby officer, so they may know what uniform to look for and advise them to give the officer that information sheet, if they get lost.

Do not let children climb over or underneath barricades.