



Territory and Municipal Services

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Traffic management at Christmas light displays fact sheet

Traffic management at Christmas light displays

Christmas light displays can be a great way for Canberrans to celebrate Christmas and boost community spirit.

In most cases, Christmas light displays do not need any involvement by the ACT Government.

However, in limited cases ACT Government involvement is required because the scale or nature of the display causes traffic, parking and safety implications or potentially leads to neighbourhood tension by attracting significant night time traffic to the street.

Small scale displays with minimal traffic implications

Most residential Christmas light displays are regarded as small scale and are likely to have no or minimal traffic implications.

The ACT Government will only review these light displays if it receives an enquiry for a proposed activity or a complaint about an existing activity.

If it does identify issues, the ACT Government (through Roads ACT) will first discuss options for resolution with the householder. It is possible that temporary traffic management (TTM) measures, such as restricting the street to one-way traffic between certain times, may be required. In this case, Roads ACT will assist residents in the preparation of any TTM plan.

Large scale displays with more significant traffic implications

In limited circumstances, a Christmas light display could be considered a 'special event', as defined in [Roads ACT's special events handbook for events organisers](#). These displays require ACT Government involvement. They can impact on the surrounding neighbourhood, including on traffic safety.

One or more of the following conditions would make a Christmas light display a 'special event':

- the installation of larger-scale Christmas light displays at one or several residences within a street or local area with an identifiable organiser(s). If you are unsure what would constitute a large-scale display, Roads ACT can advise
- selling food, drink or merchandise, or noise levels, which may require appropriate permit/approval from the ACT Government
- the promotion of a Christmas light display in such a way as to encourage higher vehicle and pedestrian numbers which may cause safety issues or possibly lead to disputes with other neighbours who do not want their street's amenity impacted.

In these cases, the [special events handbook](#) requires the organiser to take into account public safety and convenience issues, and consider the views of people likely to be affected by the display.

Public safety requirements include a formal assessment of risks and control measures, including a Risk Management Plan, and adequate public risk insurance cover. The responsibility for the development and implementation of temporary traffic management measures, and costs associated with public liability, should be borne by the event organiser.

Action may be required to ensure that the wider community is not inconvenienced by the display. There are also requirements in respect of consulting with people residing in proximity to, or affected by, the display and advertising road closures and detours in the media.

Advance notice (preferably two months) would be required for Roads ACT to consider and approve the event.

The Roads ACT Special Events Officer is available to assist organisers of Christmas light displays to prepare the necessary documentation.

Government costs associated with Christmas light displays would generally be absorbed by Roads ACT as a public service. However, if costs exceed \$2,000 Roads ACT may seek to recover part, or all, of the amount from the event organiser. This will be at the discretion of the Director of Roads ACT and will depend on the particular circumstances.

For further information, please refer to the [Roads ACT special events handbook for events organisers](#). Alternatively, please call Canberra Connect on 13 22 81.

Further information about TTM measures can be found on the TAMS website at: <http://www.tams.act.gov.au/roads-transport/traffic>