

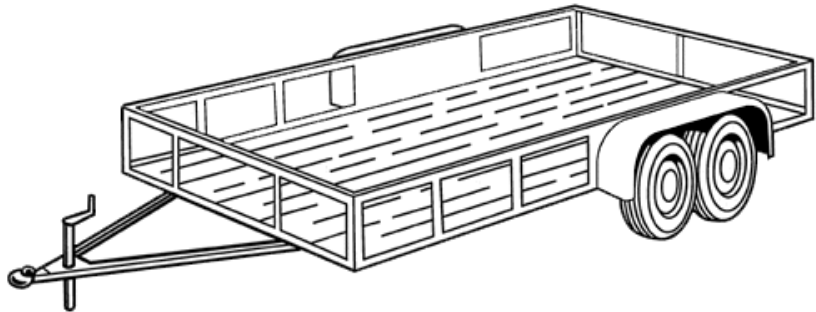
Guide to Float Building for Beginners

THINGS YOU MIGHT NEED:

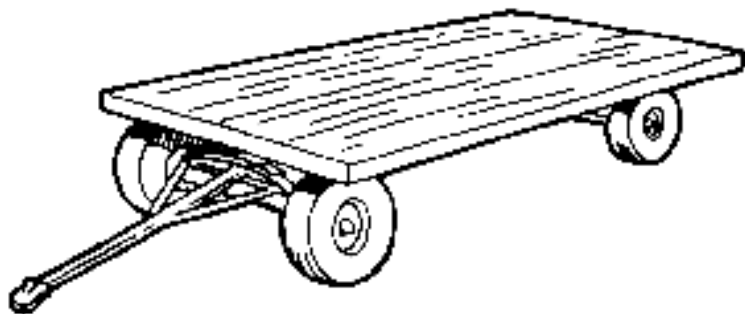
- Trailer
- Plywood and 2 x 4s
- Table Saw or Circular Saw
- Well stocked tool box
- Screws and nails
- Staple Gun
- Hot Glue Gun (and glue sticks)
- Chicken Wire or Boxes and other corrugated cardboard items that can be recycled for the float
- Crepe Paper/Tissue Paper
- Other supplies to decorate your float

Two types of trailer that could be used:

- **Low-boy Trailer**

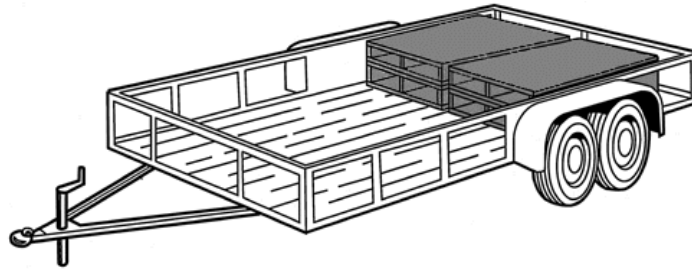


- **Hay Trailer**

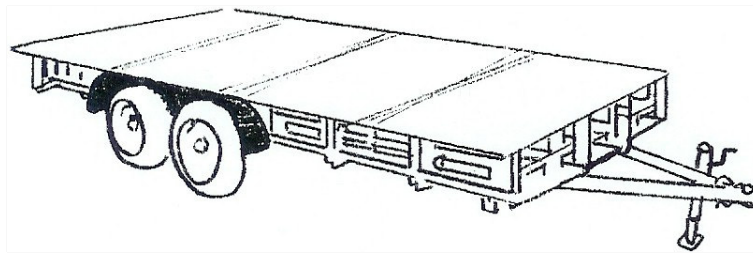


HOW TO TURN A LOW-BOY TRAILER INTO A FLOAT PLATFORM:

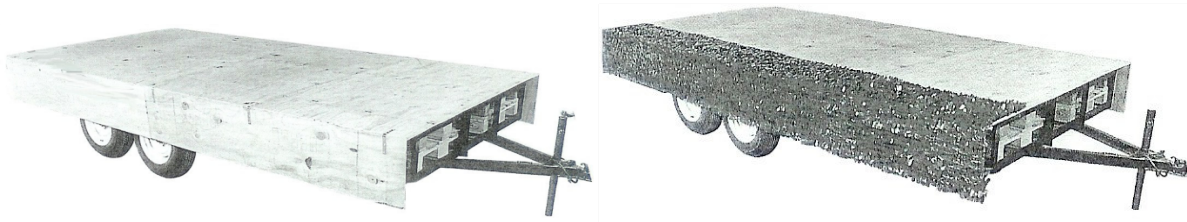
If using a Low-boy Trailer, it is a good idea to build a partial deck or full deck that will be even with the top rails of the float.



- Pallets can be used to build a partial or full sub-structure to elevate the platform of the float.
- Use good quality pallets to make a platform and be sure the pallets are stacked and secured together then firmly fastened to the bed of the float.



- Next, lay sheet plywood over the pallets. This will create a platform for your float.



- Once the platform is completed, you may apply wood skirts to sides to the deck using “L” shaped brackets. The sides should remain 14” from the bottom of side wood skirts to the ground. You may also just use fringe stapled on the bottom edge.
- For the advanced float builder, you can also build frame(s) out of wood, PVC pipe, chicken wire, etc. to fill out the float and securely fasten to the frame.
- Now you are ready to decorate!!!!!!

DECORATING TIPS:

Before you begin to decorate your float, be sure you have a place to work on it and store it that is “out-of-the-weather” such as a garage.

Using pomps is a traditional technique for decorating floats.

Pomps are simply pre-cut squared of colored tissue paper. They give a very rich and consistent appearance and come in a wide range of colors. They also lend themselves to very elaborate decorating patterns. A single package of pomps, used in every other hole in chicken wire can cover 4 sq. ft.

1. Using Chicken Wire

For this method, you’ll need to buy an adequate supply of chicken wire. This can be easily cut with tinsnips and molded over the wooden superstructure in to a wide variety of flexible shapes. You will find that it won’t take long to understand how to cut the wire and then join the pieces with other short lengths of wire. Another option is to buy a “hog ringer” at a hardware store. This tool crimps an open ring and clamps the two adjacent pieces of wire together. Fasten the wire to the wooden framework with staples wherever it crosses a brace.

Once the float is covered with wire, layout your design areas where different colors are to go. You can mark them with spray paint or paintbrushes.

There are two techniques used for stuffing pomps. For large areas of general coverage you can place a pomp in every other opening. For dense detail use every hole.

Working with a small area, spray the chicken wire lightly with spray adhesive. Then take a single pomp, form it quickly into a cone over the tip of your index finger and place into the wire. You’ll catch on to this technique quickly.

Because pomp stuffing is very time consuming, float builders have sometimes devised plans that allow-for the chicken wire sections to be distributed to a number of teams. Each team then completes their own area and the sections are joined together on the float. It is defiantly more difficult to lay out the wire this way, but it does help to eliminate the last minute rush.

2. Using Corrugated Cardboard

This method can be somewhat more cost effective due to cardboard recycling awareness. Larger sheets of corrugated cardboard might be obtained from appliance or furniture stores. Call in advance and see if the stores will save cartons for you.

This method combines the use of pomps, spray adhesive and corrugated cardboard. Work within small sections so that the adhesive remains tacky. As described in the above chicken wire method, form a cone over your index finger with a simple pomp and simply touch the point to the tacky cardboard. Continue attaching pomps approximately 3” to 4” apart for general coverage and closer for detailed work or combinations of colors.

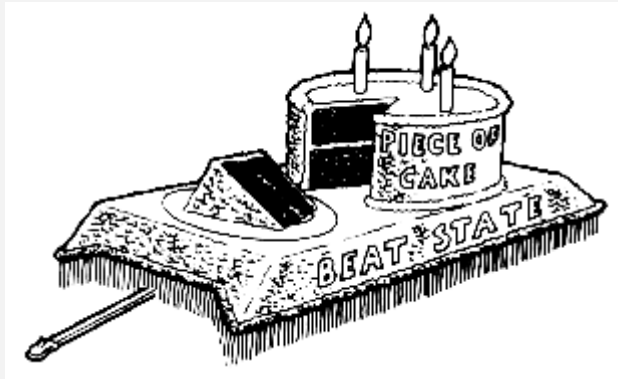
When covering large areas, you can reduce pomp use by painting the cardboard to match the pomp color so that no brown cardboard shows through.

The Cardboard is usually fastened to the frame with $\frac{1}{2}$ " to $\frac{3}{4}$ " staples. The larger the sheets of cardboard, the better the result will be.

Here are some tips for installing the cardboard:

1. Don't overlap the cardboard. Make certain the edges butt together.
2. Cut the cardboard so that the edges end up on a piece of the wood frame for extra stability.
3. The cardboard will sag and droop if it is humid, so plan to add cardboard only a few days before the parade.
4. If the cardboard gets wet, take it off and replace it with a dry panel.

You can also use balloons, paper mache, paint and people in costumes to dress up your float.



For more tips and tricks, please visit:

www.pinterest.com

www.valleydecorating.com/howto.html

For float decorating supplies:

www.orientaltrading.com

www.paradefloatstuff.com

RESOURCES USED IN WRITING THIS GUIDE:

homecoming.umd.edu/parade/float_building_guide

www.ehow.com/how_5660542_make-simple-parade-float.html

www.nwsu.edu/Websites/NWOSU/Images/Homecoming/floatbuilding.ppt