



Pride Fest 2026 Safety Plan

Wake Forest Pride

Updated: September 30, 2026

Wake Forest Pride and Pride Fest organizers have developed a detailed plan to ensure the safety of everyone attending and involved in this year's Pride Fest celebrations. This plan has been developed in consultation with officials from the Town of Wake Forest, the Wake Forest Police Department, the Wake Forest Pride Board and leaders, local experts and stakeholders, and resources from the NC Office of the State Fire Marshall, the Princeton University Bridging Divides Initiative, the American Red Cross, and others. Wake Forest Pride is actively working to make our community and events an exemplar in safe public engagement.

Our ongoing objective for safety at Pride Fest is threefold:

1. Ensure the physical safety of all who are within the Pride Fest area,
2. Maintain and care for Wake Forest public property, and
3. Protect and promote the psychological safety of Pride Fest visitors, vendors, and volunteers.

We intend to pursue these objectives through an organized, multi dimensional and thoughtfully implemented Safety Plan that emphasizes increasing awareness and promoting joyful engagement.

We are also working on an ongoing basis with Town of Wake Forest personnel to clarify ordinances, policies, protocols, and priorities. We rely on Wake Forest Police officers and officials to enforce these ordinances reasonably, consistently, and fairly.

Wake Forest Pride has developed an extensive training program to prepare our leaders and volunteers to follow this plan. Safety-oriented training is offered to all Pride Fest volunteers, and required of those directly involved in implementing the Safety Plan. This training emphasizes prevention of hazards and elimination of dangerous situations, emergency response, positive crowd management, de-escalation skills, and effective communication.

On the day of Pride Fest, Wake Forest Pride will have trained, prepared safety leaders assigned to each area of the festival footprint. These leaders will be focused on ensuring the safety of all Pride Fest participants and the prevention of any dangerous situations. Teams will also be dispatched to respond to expected protestors as needed, maintaining a barrier for the physical and psychological safety of participants. Town ordinances related to noise and freedom of speech demonstrations will be adhered to, and enforced by Wake Forest Police. Any demonstrators who attend will be monitored closely to ensure they are abiding by local laws.

We encourage all visitors and Pride Fest participants to focus on joyfully engaging with the day's celebration and activities, and not to engage with anyone who intends to disrupt. We believe that our attention is one of our greatest assets, and we will not share that with those spreading negativity. Any and all instances of intimidation or threats of violence will be immediately referred to Wake Forest Police.

Volunteers will be easily identifiable in all Pride Fest areas, signaled by a name badge and a brightly-colored vest. If at any time a participant needs help, or has a question or concern, they should speak with the closest vested volunteer. If that volunteer does not have the information or help needed immediately available, they will know who to contact and how to find them quickly. Communication among volunteers and event leaders will be consistent and monitored for any emergency concerns.

Our Safety Plan also outlines specific emergency response protocols, should the unlikely need arise. Careful decisions will be made related to weather conditions and precautions will be in place to respond to heat-related emergencies. Any unexpected emergency will be handled by the appropriate authorities, and emergency medical care will be available onsite if necessary. First Aid, sensory care, and cooling zones are all provided for in the Safety Plan.

In case of an emergency, volunteers will assist visitors to know how to avoid any dangerous situation or how to evacuate the area. Emergency announcements will be made from the stage or information tent if necessary. If an immediate threat is identified and an emergency evacuation of the festival area is warranted, a siren will be sounded and all visitors, vendors, and volunteers should exit the area as quickly and safely as possible. If necessary, seek shelter in cars, nearby businesses, or anywhere away from the area of concern.

The explanations included in this Safety Plan summary are not intended to raise concern. These emergency situations are not likely to occur, and Wake Forest Pride fully expects to have a safe, positive, inclusive, and enjoyable Pride Fest. Our preparations are intended to ensure that no unexpected scenario could arise that we are unprepared to manage alongside our Town partners, and to communicate with the public our readiness to facilitate a safe and meaningful celebration of Wake Forest's thriving diversity.

We are very excited that our local community is planning to come out and join us, and we look forward to experiencing one of our town's best days together!