

CANSTRUCTION WATERLOO REGION

CAPTAINS MANUAL

Team Timelines

Description	Deadline
Registration deadline	December 31, 2025
Initial design form	January 15, 2026
Final design, team sign information and payment	January 31, 2026
Food purchase/order deadline Please try and place order asap to avoid delays.	February 6, 2026
Food must be at The Food Bank	March 6, 2026
Mall build Note: Build to be completed within approx. 6 hours	March 13, 2026
Awards Ceremony At Conestoga Mall before tear down.	March 22, 2026 at (5:00 p.m.)
Mall teardown	March 22, 2026 (approx. 5:30 p.m.)

Preparing for Canstruction Waterloo Region

Read the Rules!

The rules in this manual are imperative to a successful build. Please become familiar with all the requirements which include information such as size, deadlines, awards and levelling material guidelines.

Roles and Responsibilities

Recruit Your Team:

- Each team can include an unlimited number of people who take part in the design, food collection, and construction.
- A maximum of five team members can be in the 10' x 10' building area at a time.
- Remaining team members can provide support and assistant to the team by preparing supplies, building smaller pieces, organizing food, etc.



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- All team members may be listed on the team sign.
- Each team must designate a Captain for the duration of the event, who will serve as the primary liaison with Construction organizers.
- It is recommended—but not required—that each team includes at least one individual with a background and/or experience in architecture or structural engineering.
- A company can combine with another company or organization to form a team.

Captain's Role:

The Captain manages all key aspects of the build. The Captain's responsibilities include:

- Acting as the main point of contact between your team and The Food Bank of Waterloo Region.
- Ensuring all important information is delivered to all team members in a timely manner.
- Managing and delegating all tasks so your team is prepared and ready on build day.
- Providing leadership and direction to the team during the planning, building and tear-down.
- Ensuring all important forms and team build information is completed and submitted – to The Food Bank – on time.
- Advocating for Construction Waterloo Region and supporting The Food Bank.
- Be available, if required, to be a spokesperson for your team for media interviews (or have designated alternate).
- Thanking and encouraging your team – it's always appreciated!

Additional Roles:

Role	Description
Co-Captain	This is the second point person. They will be called upon to step into the Captain position should they be unavailable.
Designer	Architect, graphic designer, engineer, marketing staff. Someone who understands structure but also thinks of colour and visual impact (recommendations are that each team has an individual with background and/or experience in architecture or structural engineering).
Shoppers	Sourcing required cans/packages within your budget.
Finance	Tracker of receipts and expense claims.
Marketer/Fundraiser	For internal promotional campaigns, fundraising and media relations.
Builders	Members who will build the structure
Planners	Members who will plan the build day and assign roles
Gophers	Members responsible for getting supplies and items on build day for the building team.



Clean Up	It is recommended each teams have 2-3 people to assist in keeping your building site clean and tidy.
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Get Ready for Canstruction Waterloo Region

Important!

- Initial design concept is due January 15. Final design is January 31. Upon completion of the final design form, please include a download link on the form or forward a PDF drawing (in a format of your choice) to Becky Riley, beckyr@thefoodbank.ca.

Brainstorm a Design:

Review pictures from other Canstruction competitions (<https://www.canstruction.org/>).

- Think about what might be a crowd-pleaser and popular with those who visit the mall.
- Solve potential design dilemmas: How will we get that to hang? Will tape hold for seven days in the mall?
- Research the food: What will that cost? Can we get the right colour can to create that look? Will a can with a pull-top be stackable?
- Sketches/renderings serve two purposes, providing your team with instructions for building the structure, and enabling organizers to plan the spacing and location of structures at the build site.
- Canstruction Waterloo Region will not follow a specific theme, but teams are asked to think about a relationship between your structure/design and the message of sharing food with neighbours who are hungry.
- The maximum size of any can structure is 10 feet in length, 10 feet in width, and 6 feet in height. (3.48m L x 3.48m W x 1.83m H). **Dimensions are important.** Please indicate the height, width and full dimensions of structure and ground materials in your drawing.
- You are welcome to disclose what you are building to outside parties, but The Food Bank will keep your design confidential. Design concepts will only be shared with organizers who are mapping structure locations at the mall.

Finalizing Your Budget:

- **Each team is responsible for providing all cans and other items needed for your structure.** In previous competitions teams reported costs ranging from \$1,400 to \$4,000. Some companies cover the cost of food and supply purchases while other teams undertake some creative fundraising efforts. Others partner with companies or clients they do business with for donations.
- If you will be embarking on fundraising campaigns, early planning is recommended. Please contact The Food Bank for resources to support your campaign.



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Acquiring Your Cans:

- Each team is responsible for obtaining your own supply of canned goods. However, The Food Bank has arrangements for teams to order and purchase canned goods through local suppliers.

Preferred Supplier List will be sent to all teams.

- When ordering food, please use the Food Purchase Order provided by The Food Bank. Please use a separate order form for each store.
- Teams may also conduct employee food drives or solicit canned goods or financial donations from manufacturers, consultants, vendors, and contractors.
- If your team chooses to solicit funds from other vendors, clients, or contacts, the names of these organizations can be added to your team sign as “Team Supporters”. However, **logos of supporting organizations are not permitted.** Sponsor logo rights are reserved for official Construction Waterloo Region sponsors.
- The Food Bank is able to provide one-time assistance to teams by transporting cans to The Food Bank from either the store where the items were purchased, or from the pre-build site. **Transportation is booked on a first come first served basis.**
- All food will be transported to Conestoga Mall from The Food Bank.
- Cans must be packed in sturdy cartons and labelled with your team or company name. Boxes can be supplied by The Food Bank upon request.

Food Ordering Tips:

- Specialty items or items not in stock in the food supplier’s warehouse can delay orders.
- We recommend you order all food within the designated dates to avoid disappointment.
- Visually describe the can you are ordering along with providing the order information. This will help the store to confirm they have ordered the correct product with the correct label presentation.
- Always order a little extra – accidents happen, dropping a can often causes a dent and has potential to weaken your structural design.
- When ordering, make arrangements for payment of your team’s food. **Food cannot be picked up by The Food Bank unless paid in full by the team.**
- Discuss pick-up arrangements of the food at the time of your order. Note the store where ordering has been arranged may be willing to store your food in their back supply rooms until pick-up dates are confirmed.



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Structure Materials

Your Cans:

- Aluminum cans of all sizes may be used. Some food manufacturers are switching to plastic—if you're using plastic, make sure the containers can support the weight of cans stacked on top.
- Packaged food of other types may also be used to accent your structures only. **Structures MUST be built using cans.**
- Cans must be full, unopened, and unaltered, with labels intact and legible. Labels MAY NOT be covered, stripped off, or altered in any way. However, a single layer of clear packing tape may be used over top of cans. **Cans may not be painted or glued.**
- Cans will be donated to The Food Bank following Canstruction Waterloo Region for distribution to individuals in our community. With this in mind, the following items are not permissible:
 - Cans with altered labels, paint or glue present, open or exposed food
 - Pet food
 - Alcoholic beverages
- Make every effort in designing your structure to use edible, nutritious foods. Pop and junk food may be used, but the judges will favour nutritious selections.

Supporting Materials:

- **The majority of your structure must be self-supporting.** Load-bearing materials (1/4-inch thick or less) may be used for the purpose of levelling cans. Some acceptable materials include foam core, cardboard, Masonite, plywood, or Plexiglas.
- **Support beams and load bearing material greater than ¼ inch thickness are NOT PERMITTED.**
- Cardboard tubes can be used as guides, and must also be limited to 1/4-inch thicknesses.
- Teams may use temporary adhesives such as Velcro, clear and/or double-sided tape, high-tension rubber bands, nylon string, wire, and tie-backs. Permanent adhesives or glue may not be used.
- If you require electricity for your build you must indicate this to Canstruction organizers on the final design form. You are responsible for providing your own extension cords and, if necessary, securing cords to prevent tripping hazards.
- Your team may want to consider laying down plywood on the floor of your build if level surface is crucial to your structure's balance. Your team may also choose to use plywood, foam core, cardboard etc. for levelling purposes.
- Delivery and removal of these materials will be the responsibility of the teams. All cardboard and plastic packing materials can be disposed of at Conestoga Mall, however plywood, foam core, removal is a responsibility of your team after tear down. Cutting of all building materials in advance is recommended.
- **Painting materials in the mall is prohibited.**



To Pre-Build or Not?

- There are no restrictions or expectations for a pre-build. Some teams pre-build tricky parts of their structure, some pre-build entire structures, while others like the challenge of on the spot problem solving on build night. If you are going to pre-build, it is best to order food early.
- All food used in pre-builds must be boxed with all tape, wires etc. removed for transportation.

Team Sign Information

Deadline: January 31, 2026

Each team has their own sign that will be displayed beside their build during the event at Conestoga Mall. The sign gives the public extensive information about the design concept, team members and sponsors.

Note: *Team sign information is a requirement standard set out by Canstruction® International.*

- Each team will be asked to submit information for your team sign on the final design form, which is due January 31, 2026.
- Information will include:
 - Official team name and name of structure.
 - Description of structure (subject matter should tie in the spirit of sharing food with our neighbours).
 - Total number of cans used in structure.
 - Names of the five official Team Members and additional Associate Team.
 - Names of Team Supporters.
 - Your company logo.
- Following the judging period, each team sign will be displayed beside your structure, identifying the structure for the viewing public.

Tax Receipts

The Food Bank is a registered charity and is eligible to issue income tax receipts for eligible donations. Tax receipts related to Canstruction will only be issued at the sole discretion of The Food Bank according to [Canada Revenue Agency guidelines](#). **The issuing of tax receipts must be approved by The Food Bank prior to the event.** Any requests for tax receipts after the event may not be eligible. To be eligible for donation receipts all funds and food must be received by The Food Bank of Waterloo Region. Specific questions related to tax receipts can be directed to beckyr@thefoodbank.ca.

What kind of receipt can Canstruction Teams expect?

- Companies, individuals and team supporters can receive an Official Donation Receipt for Income Tax purposes for purchased food (pre-tax amount). Proof of food purchase (grocery receipts), information regarding the name and address of the person or company requesting the Official Donation Receipt for Income Tax is required.



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- Companies, individuals and team donors can receive an Official Donation Receipt for Income Tax purposes for gifts of cash, cheque or credit card payment. Information including: the name and address of the person or company requesting the tax receipt is required.

How will sponsors and supporters be recognized?

- Sponsors of Canstruction Waterloo Region event are companies who have given financial or in-kind support directly to The Food Bank. These sponsors will receive logo recognition on all Canstruction Waterloo Region signs as per contract agreements. Each team registered for Canstruction Waterloo Region is lending in-kind support, as such; teams are entitled to see their corporate logo displayed on their team sign.
- Supporters of each team (individuals or companies who have contributed to your fundraising towards team food purchase) will be recognized with their name on the corresponding team sign. Team captains are responsible for submission and approval of supporters' names for signs.
- As per [Canada Revenue Guidelines](#), official income tax receipts are not available for sponsors if they receive logo or name recognition for the event.

Food Transport and Assistance

The Food Bank will transport your food to Conestoga Mall. Details on how to reserve your transportation will follow. Please keep in mind:

1. All food must be boxed in advance.
2. Your team will be responsible for loading the food onto The Food Bank truck and into a bin or onto a skid. Please make sure 2 or 3 team members are available to assist with loading.
3. Our Food Bank truck drivers are volunteers and will appreciate the help!
4. The pick-up routes and estimated times, are determined based on locations and cargo capacity, with very limited flexibility. Please refer to the **important dates on the first page of this manual**.

The Build

Building will take place on Friday, March 13, 2026 with start times between noon and 6 p.m..

Build areas will be roped off and Canstruction Waterloo Region volunteers will be on-site to assist with garbage removal and ensure members of the public do not get too close to the structures/teams. Please be conscious that you and your building materials remain within the designated areas to ensure the public safety.

The build will be completed during mall hours. Please be conscious of your space and do not encroach on the walk ways.

What to Pack: Team Survival Kits

Be sure to bring all the supplies and tools you need and remember to plan for the unexpected! Items to include in your survival kits might include step ladder, utility knives, level, markers, scissors, tape (lots of clear packing tape), two sided tape, Velcro, extra magnets, rubber bands, tissues, bandages, safety pins, extension cord and camera.



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Site Selection and Structure Placement

The location of each structure will be announced one week prior to the build. Mapping of the structure and locations will be determined by things such as size of your structure, common themes or anticipated number of team supporting members. Structures will be located in the mall corridors and will have visibility from all sides. Your 10' x 10' space will be marked with tape, and will follow the floor tile grids. You may wish to angle your structure within the 10' build square.

Your food will be placed in or near your designated build space in on pallets. These are vital to our operations, please do not damage the pallets.

Structures will be approximately 6 – 8 feet apart. Ropes will be placed along the mall corridors the morning after judging and photography is complete. These ropes will create a grouping of structures allowing the public to observe the structures from a reasonable distance.

Build Day/Night:

- Team members outside of the 10x10 build area are permitted to un-box and organize cans, prepare materials, or perform other related tasks. Team members inside and outside of the build area may swap roles as often as necessary.
- Teams must bring all of the supplies and equipment necessary to build the structure (tape, scissors, foam core, cardboard, ladders, etc.). Overestimate and be prepared!
- Please do not push skids or drag them along mall floor. If a skid requires moving ask for The Food Bank staff or volunteers to move the skid using the pneumatic pump truck.
- Upon completion, your team is responsible for ensuring your site is left “broom -clean”.
- If at any time during the public display of your build it looks like your structure is unsound, sagging, slipping, or proving otherwise unstable, your Team Captain will be contacted and **must be prepared to return and fix it immediately**. If rebuilding is impossible, your team will need to be prepared to tear down your structure and box up the cans.
- Minor repairs including re-taping or repositioning of a limited number of cans or food items back into the structure will be completed by the organizing committee or authorized Food Bank staff. Repairs will only be made when committee or staff feels the structural change will not further deter from the appearance of the structure and adjustments will be in keeping with rules and regulations. Team Captains will not be notified if minor repairs are conducted.



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Judges' Criteria and Awards

The Judges

Each year a panel of volunteer judges are selected by The Food Bank organizing committee. The judges typically have expertise in engineering, design or have had previous experience with this event. Sponsors are also given the opportunity to join the judge's panel. This will comprise 50% of the score. A second panel of judges comprised of employees of The Food Bank will fulfill the remaining 50% of the score.

One person from The Food bank will be available to answer judges' questions as well as collect any comments from the judges which will be shared with teams. Teams are eligible to receive more than one award.

Judging Criteria:

- A structure where the 1/4-inch levelling material cannot be seen will be judged as superior to a structure where it is in plain sight.
- Props are strongly discouraged—the judges prefer pure food structures, and you should try to solve design problems with food items. For example, a structure that uses cans with black labels to make the eyes on a face is preferable to an entry that uses black circles of paper for eyes.

The Awards:

There are seven awards – six are decided by the judging panel, and one by the public at large. Those determined by the judging panel include:

1. **Most Cans:** The structure that is built using the greatest number of cans (bags, boxes, etc will not be counted)
2. **Best Use of Labels:** Design of the structure is articulated by the labels. Strong use of colour and alignment will add to the visual impact.
3. **Best Meal:** The products used in the structure could make a complete meal. Nutritious canned or packaged food choices which include all food groups will be important.
4. **Structural Ingenuity:** How did they get that to stand? Hidden structural supports and balanced or gravity defying designs will wow judges.
5. **Best Original Design:** Does the structure avoid trademark images? (e.g. Mickey Mouse) Is it a new twist on something or an original idea?
6. **Judges Favourite:** The judging panel picks this one!
7. **People's Choice:** The public will "donate to vote" for their favourite structure

Judging will take place on Saturday, March 14. Award winners will be announced at the awards presentation on Sunday, March 22 at 5:00 p.m. prior to de-Canstruction.

People's Choice Award

The public gets a chance to vote for their favourite structure. The award is based on most donations received – both online and at the mall. The People's Choice award will be announced on the Monday following De-Canstruction.



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What happens if you win?

You'll be awarded a trophy and have local bragging rights for the next year. As well, photos of all winning designs will be entered into the International Canstruction Competition to be judged against winning designs from other Canstruction events.

Make the Most of Your Participation

Your team sign is the first place you can highlight your team's creativity, supporters and give credit to your builders. Although the sign is a requirement of Canstruction Waterloo Region 2026, there are some other options to consider:

- Make sure to feature your structure and team story on your website, or newsletter.
- Talk about your build through social media. Provide your social media handles to The Food Bank and use #CanstructionWR #FeedWR @FoodBankWatReg so we can help promote your efforts.
- Provide a picture of your structure to each of your team members to post on their personal Facebook pages. This will help make some noise to family, friends, clients and should increase the number of votes in the People's Choice Awards, (links to your voting page on The Food Banks website will be provided).
- Make a time lapse video of your build for your website and share the link.
- Have someone on your team as the designated "spokesperson" that media can contact for quotes or interviews.
- Speak to the media – yes it is encouraged for you to tell your story. How hard was it to build? What "can"astrophies happened while you were building? How did you raise money for your build? What impacts you to believe you have made with your volunteer efforts?

De-Canstruction

De-Canstruction will take place on Sunday, March 22th at 5:30 p.m. All teams must meet at centre court at before starting to tear down. This is an important phase to ensure the food you raised will arrive safely at The Food Bank. Your team is responsible for taking down your structure and removing all building materials from the mall. You should have a minimum of 4 team members present. Once you are finished with packing all food from your site into bins, removing building materials and garbage, please check in with Food Bank staff for final site inspection and security.



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