How Building Camp Works

Build Week is one of the best parts of Burning Man. You arrive well before everyone else to a desert that is surprisingly empty and quiet. You are surrounded by builders and makers and dreamers and doers. You scramble to get your first night's shelter in place, then you work side by side with your friends building an amazing camp. The friendliest people you've ever met, who it turns out will be your future neighbors, stop by constantly to borrow tools, yap about shade structures, and bring you fresh fruit. In the evening, you sneak out of camp on your bike to explore the art under construction and visit your friends at neighboring camps. You dawdle over some of the best grilled food you've ever tasted (the dust, and the day's hard work, make it better). And come Saturday as your campers start to arrive they are amazed and thankful for what you have built!

Before we get into it, here's the build team movie!

https://www.youtube.com/embed/iJ9KK9DkoeU

A typical year for the Build Team, assuming all goes well and there is no weather emergency or space alien invasion or global pandemic or plague of locusts, looks like this:

We meet in Reno, NV on Monday the week before Burning Man. In Reno, we do some last minute preparations, and get the Build Team RV ready to go. In 2024 the biggest thing was just buying food for the build team itself.

On Tuesday morning as early as possible, we drive from Reno to Black Rock City.

Once we arrive in Black Rock City, we wait for Placement to show us where our camp will be located. Once we find it, we do the first MOOP sweep and start surveying and measuring and putting little flags in the ground where things will go.



As soon as we have established exactly where everything goes, we call the trucking services to bring us all our stuff, the generator rental company to bring the generator, the water company to bring their tanks, etc. Then we start preparing for the first night, putting down enough shade structures for our own team to sleep in.



If all has gone well, we have managed to build six shiftpods for the first night with protective tarps above and below by the time we go to sleep on Tuesday.

Over the course of the rest of the week, we get as much built as possible. That includes all of our public and private shade structures, tents, electrical grid, water system, and as much of the camp decor as we can get done. Hopefully around Thursday night or Friday the food team rolls in and starts feeding us and setting up the kitchen and dining room. A lot of campers arrive Saturday before the gates officially open and help finish anything we didn't get done. And that's about it!

> Read the Early Build Team Orientation for a lot more details and advice



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