

## Canstruction Boston Rules & Guidelines

Updated May 16, 2025

Canstruction Boston, organized by SMPS Boston, helps fight hunger by raising awareness about the issue of food insecurity while generating large donations of canned goods for the food bank. This document summarizes the event rules and guidelines that each participating team must adhere to.

### Structure/Build Rules

**Structure size:** 10' L x 10' W x 10' H is the maximum allowed size for the built structure. Our spaces may be smaller in a few cases; space restrictions will be communicated to impacted teams.

**Team size:** Up to five builders are allowed at a time, meaning that only five people can be touching the structure at any given time. Additional team members can organize cans, cut materials, or perform other prep work. Any number of people can assist in the design and planning of the structure.

**Allowed Building Materials:** Structures **MUST** be supported internally and externally by canned food and/or beverage cans between allowed leveling materials, as defined below:

#### **Food Products:**

- Aluminum food cans of all sizes may be used. If using plastic containers or boxed items, make sure they stack and can take the pressure of cans from above bearing down.
- All cans/bottles/containers must be full, unopened, and not expired.
- **Can labels must be intact and cannot be damaged or altered in any way. The Food Bank cannot distribute products without ingredient and nutritional labeling.**
- If possible, choose food products that are on the Food Bank's "most wanted" list – see the guidelines for "Best Meal" on Page 2. NO glass containers.
- NO alcoholic beverages or products labeled with alcohol as an ingredient.
- NO pet food.
- NO junk food – candy and chips are strongly discouraged.
- Boxed and bagged items cannot be used as the majority of the structure. If your team chooses to use soft packaged foods as accents, please wrap all packages inside a clear plastic bag to prevent breakage during transport to the Food Bank.

#### **Permissible (Provided they do NOT damage cans or labels):**

- Leveling materials up to 1/4" thick such as cardboard, Masonite, plywood, plexi-glass, fiberglass, and MDF are allowed. 1/4" foam-core is allowed but strongly discouraged, as it tends to compress unevenly under the loading of the cans, causing the structures to collapse. A structure where leveling material is not visible, or blends into the structure, is judged superior to a structure where it is in plain view.
- Wood or steel rods, PVC pipe, threaded metal rods
- Velcro, magnets, zip-ties, tape, and silicone
- Rubber bands, nylon string, wire mesh, or wire
- Props may be used, but keep in mind that judges prefer pure food structures that solve design challenges with food items when possible. If you must use a prop, try and make it out of food items (e.g. tea bags, ketchup packets).
- Lighting, mirrors, and electronic devices are acceptable as accents to your structure but may reduce a structure's chance of winning the International Competition. Note that not all build spots have access to an outlet, so any requests for electricity must be communicated to the organizing committee as early as possible.

***Not Permissible:***

- NO wood or metal beams/columns, struts, steel tubes, or bracing materials
- NO leveling materials greater than 1/4" thick
- NO sheet metal, steel plates, Fiberrock, or glass
- NO permanent adhesives or bonding processes (soldering, etc.)

**Floor Covering:** Property management **requires** floor protection under every structure. Please plan appropriately and lay a protective floor covering (as simple as a layer of paper) under the cans that provides a clean, visually appealing look. There should be no protective covering showing past the can edges, unless the floor cover is part of the aesthetic.

**Awards**

A panel of independent judges is selected each year to select winners in eight categories; awards may not be given in some categories at the judges' discretion. In addition to considering how well structures fit within the theme for the year, judges consider the following:

**International Awards**

Award-winners in these categories will go on to compete internationally through a photography submission to a panel of jurors convened at the AIA Annual Convention in the spring of each year.

- ***Best Original Design:*** Recognizes a structure that creates a lasting impression, is awe inspiring, and shows creativity in its use of cans, imagery, theme, or style. Judges reward structures that are creative above all else. Judges deduct points for structures that use too many non-food props.
- ***Structural Ingenuity:*** Recognizes a structure that involves a high level of complexity, and appears gravity defying but is stable. Judges reward structures where the majority of support appears to be other cans, as opposed to (permissible) rods and pipes.
- ***Best Meal:*** Recognizes the structure that uses healthy ingredients to create a well-balanced – and appetizing – meal. Judges reward structures that use the Food Bank's most wanted food items: peanut butter; tuna fish; meals in cans (such as stews, chilis, or pastas); canned fruits, vegetables, and beans; soup. Judges deduct points if junk food is used.
- ***Best Use of Labels:*** Recognizes the structure that uses labels to create details that enhance the overall appearance. Judges consider whether labels are turned the correct way throughout the structure, and assess whether thought was put into the appearance of leveling material and materials used to connect cans (rubber bands, nylon string, etc.). Judges award extra points to structures that use cans with colored tops or bottoms (as opposed to using colored cutouts). Judges deduct points for cans that have had their labels covered completely.
- ***People's Choice:*** Recognizes the most popular structure, determined by public voting (beginning the Sunday after build day through an end date TBD).
- ***Most Cans:*** Recognizes the structure containing the highest number of cans. In cases of a tie, total weight of the food provided would be considered, as would design elements.

**Local Awards**

Award-winners in these categories are not eligible to compete internationally.

- ***Honorable Mention:*** Recognizes the structure(s) that the judges believe deserve(s) recognition but did not receive another award.
- ***Social Media Soup-er Star:*** Recognizes the participant that drove the most engagement on Canstruction-related social media posts, as defined by the competition rules that will be sent to competing teams separately.

### **Planning & Designing Your Structure**

As you get ready to build your team's structure, keep a few things in mind:

1. Make sure you thoroughly review the build rules and regulations, included earlier in this document. Pay particular attention to the allowable materials!
2. Keep your budget in mind from the beginning of the design process – canned food has a wide range of costs, which can impact your decision-making process. Physical trips to different grocery stores can help you discover what options are available.
3. Prefabricate any templates, leveling materials, or other special materials you require *prior* to the day of the buildout. This is particularly important for leveling materials as we will not have a safe space on site to cut these.
4. Think about how you will describe your structure! Each team will need to create a sign to be displayed with your structure that shares your design approach with the public (and our competition judges). The template for this poster will be sent to each team separately, but the information each team will need to include on the sign will include:
  - A structure title.
  - A 250-word description of your design, describing your subject and design approach.
  - The total number of cans included in your structure.
  - The number of cans (and other food items such as bags, boxes, etc.) that are included in the structure, broken down by product and quantity.
  - An image representing the structure design or inspiration, sized to 613 pixels x 459 pixels.
  - Names of all team members