

CORPORATE POLICY



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1.11 POLICY STATEMENT:

The City of Waterloo's Outdoor Rink Program has a long history of supporting low cost, outdoor recreation across the city. With the hard work of hundreds of volunteers, supported by City staff, the program provides opportunities for residents to stay active close to home and for neighbour connections and engagement. The program further provides opportunities for neighbours to work together and build healthy and resilient neighbourhoods.

1.12 PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Outdoor Rink Program Policy is to define the eligibility for an outdoor rink and to outline the program parameters, the City's role in supporting program volunteers, the responsibilities of rink volunteers, and to support safe program participation.

1.13 DEFINITIONS:

City: the Corporation of the City of Waterloo

City staff: an individual employed by the Corporation of the City of Waterloo and working within a division involved in administering the Outdoor Rink Program.

City staff supervisor: the Neighbourhood Coordinator responsible for administering the Outdoor Rink Program with City of Waterloo volunteers.

Community Services: the Community Services department within the City of Waterloo.

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Corporate Management Team, Review Date September 1, 2021

Fall Season: the period between September to November prior to the start of the winter rink season.

Impoundments: Manmade water features that were historically used as mill ponds that collect runoff from surrounding surface drainage and the creek systems.

Management: City of Waterloo staff at the Manager, Director, and/or Commissioner level who are responsible for management of outdoor rink operations and the Outdoor Rink Program.

Operating an Outdoor Rink Handbook: a City of Waterloo handbook that explains the process of establishing, flooding, and maintaining an outdoor rink, in addition to City and volunteer responsibilities. The handbook will be provided to all rink committees by the City.

Outdoor Rink: a City-approved, outdoor ice surface located on an approved rink site that is run by a rink committee. This does not include privately-run outdoor rinks not operated through the Outdoor Rink Program nor community-wide outdoor rinks (such as the Public Square rink) that are not maintained by neighborhood volunteers. Stormwater management ponds, impoundments, lakes, ponds and other bodies of water are not outdoor rinks.

Rink Applicant: an individual or individuals who has/have contacted City staff with an interest in establishing a new outdoor rink.

Rink Committee: a group of rink volunteers who oversee and direct the operation of an outdoor rink. A rink committee must be composed of one rink convenor and at least 5 additional volunteers.

Rink Convenor: the rink volunteer on a rink committee who is the primary contact with the City of Waterloo for information distribution regarding the outdoor rink. A rink convenor must be officially accepted and registered by the City of Waterloo in the outdoor rink program and will have a designated city staff supervisor. Rink convenors must be 18 years of age or older.

Rink Site: the park or community space on which an existing outdoor rink is located or where a future outdoor rink may be located. This includes the immediate surrounding area and any nearby amenities or park infrastructure.

Rink User: an individual who uses an outdoor rink not under the duties of a rink convenor and/or volunteer.

Rink Volunteer: anyone who, without compensation or expectation of compensation, performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the City of Waterloo. A rink volunteer must be officially accepted and registered by the City of Waterloo in the outdoor rink program and will have a designated city staff supervisor. A rink volunteer must be 16

years of age or older or 14 years of age or older, if accompanied by a parent or guardian as a volunteer.

Snow Removal Items: equipment operated by hand to remove snow from the outdoor rink ice surface. This includes city-supplied shovels, rink committee-supplied shovels, or rink committee-supplied snow blowers. Snow removal items that are not operated by hand, such as motorized tractors, vehicles or all-terrain vehicles with a plow are not permitted as per Park Bylaws.

Starting an Outdoor Rink Handbook: a City of Waterloo handbook that explains the eligibility criteria for new outdoor rinks and the process of applying for a new outdoor rink. The handbook will be provided upon request to all individuals interested in learning about how to establish a new rink.

Storage Box: a box provided to a rink committee by the City. The storage box can only store equipment needed to maintain an outdoor rink and shall be located on the rink site.

Stormwater Management Pond: engineered facility created to collect runoff from surrounding surface drainage and the local storm sewer system following a rainfall, snowmelt, or water use by residents (i.e. watering lawns and washing cars).

Tarp: a tarpaulin or ground cover used to line the ice surface of an outdoor rink.

Winter Rink Season: the period between late-November and March during which an outdoor rink is open for use. Exact dates are determined by City staff annually and communicated to rink volunteers prior to the start of the season.

1.14 SCOPE:

This policy establishes the conditions necessary for implementing and operating a new or existing outdoor rink as part of the City of Waterloo's Outdoor Rink Program. The policy also outlines the responsibilities of rink convenors, volunteers and City of Waterloo staff. This policy does not apply to:

- Privately run outdoor rinks not run through the Outdoor Rink Program; or
- Community-wide outdoor rinks not maintained by neighbourhood volunteers (such as the Public Square rink).

This policy applies to:

- Community members in the City of Waterloo interested in establishing an outdoor rink;
- All rink convenors and rink volunteers responsible for a City of Waterloo outdoor rink; and
- City of Waterloo staff responsible for:
 - Conducting assessments of outdoor rinks,

- Seasonally assembling and/or dismantling rinks,
- Assisting with lighting and water taps for outdoor rinks,
- Volunteer recruitment, retention, and recognition,
- Communicating with rink convenors and volunteers about outdoor rinks.

1.15 POLICY COMMUNICATION:

This policy will be communicated by way of:

- Posting on the City of Waterloo website,
- Posting on the City of Waterloo intranet accessible by staff,
- Communicating the policy to all rink applicants, rink convenors, and volunteers upon approval of an outdoor rink site, and
- Communicating the policy to new City staff that will support program operations as needed.

1.16 POLICY:

1.0 Eligibility for New Outdoor Rinks

- 1.1 Community members who may be interested in establishing an outdoor rink in their neighbourhood should contact City staff at waterloorinks@waterloo.ca to learn more. City staff can provide interested community members with the “Starting an Outdoor Rink” handbook to help guide the process.
- 1.2 The total number of outdoor rinks that can be established each season will be determined collaboratively within Community Services on an annual basis and is limited based on program budgets and staff resources.
- 1.3 To be considered for a new outdoor rink, a site must typically meet the following criteria:
 - a) Be located in an open space, i.e. in a park, that is accessible to the public;
 - b) Have an already established path of access for emergency vehicles;
 - c) Be large enough to accommodate a standard size outdoor rink (84' x 48');
 - d) Have direct access to water via a program-approved water tap;
 - e) Have a relatively flat, level ground, as assessed by City staff, for a flat skating surface;
 - f) Be greater than 800m (or 15 min) walking distance from any other already established outdoor rink.
- 1.3.1 Potential rink sites that do not have an existing water tap but meet all other eligibility criteria may still be eligible for an outdoor rink.

- 1.3.2 Distance criteria between potential rink sites and already established outdoor rinks will take safety considerations, such as proximity to expressways, arterial roads, active railway lines, watercourses, impoundments, and stormwater management ponds, into consideration.
- 1.4 Outdoor rinks cannot be located on stormwater management ponds or impoundments.
- 1.5 Rink applicants who wish to establish a new outdoor rink in their neighbourhood, who believe the proposed site meets the above criteria, and have gathered initial community support, should contact City staff at waterloorinks@waterloo.ca to apply for a new rink. Applications for new rink sites must be completed in advance of the rink season, as outlined in the Starting an Outdoor Rink handbook.
- 1.6 Upon receiving a request to establish a new outdoor rink, City staff will conduct an assessment to ensure the location meets the eligibility criteria.
- 1.7 Applications for new rink sites will be reviewed and prioritized by City staff based on specific criteria, including site conditions, access to a program- approved water tap, distance from existing rink locations, safety considerations, available budget, and community need.
- 1.8 If a site does not meet all eligibility criteria to accommodate an outdoor rink as outlined in section 1.3, City staff will contact the rink applicant to discuss possible alternative options for moving forward. This could include recommending an alternate location for the outdoor rink.
- 1.9 If City staff determine that a proposed site meets all the requirements for a new outdoor rink, staff will contact the rink applicant to begin the process of establishing a new outdoor rink.
- 1.10 Prior to the establishment of a new outdoor rink, a rink applicant must contact neighbours who live in the neighbourhood of the proposed rink site in order to discuss the proposed outdoor rink. Contact may be made by letter, flyer, direct visit, and/or other individualized contact. City staff will support rink applicants to inform neighbours of the proposed rink site.
 - 1.10.1 In situations where a proposed new rink site is disputed, the Commissioner responsible for the Outdoor Rink Program will make a final decision, considering site conditions and community benefits.

- 1.11 Once a site is approved by City staff, a rink convenor must be identified to City staff and the convenor must establish a rink committee, as detailed in section 7.0.
- 1.12 City staff will communicate by letter to the residences immediately backing onto the outdoor rink location when a new outdoor rink has been approved for the neighbourhood.
- 1.13 Approvals of new rink sites by City staff will be made each winter rink season based on safety considerations at rink sites, proximity to other outdoor rinks, and site conditions.
 - 1.13.1 Requests for additional outdoor rink(s) in communities or neighbourhoods that already have a rink will be considered by City staff and approved based on available budget and resources.

2.0 Preparing for the Start of the Winter Rink Season

- 2.1 Once a new outdoor rink has been approved, all prospective volunteers will be required to complete an online volunteer application form, volunteer waivers, and training prior to the start of the volunteer term.
 - 2.1.1 City staff will contact rink committees during the fall season prior to the opening of the outdoor rink to arrange completion of the online form.
 - 2.1.2 Volunteer application forms, waivers, and training must be completed during volunteer registration. Individuals who have acted as a rink volunteer in the previous season for a City of Waterloo outdoor rink must complete any new required forms and/or training as per any program communications or updates from Volunteer Services or designated City staff supervisor.
- 2.2 First-time rink convenors are required to participate in an outdoor rink orientation on site with City staff and must complete the volunteer screening process prior to the start of the winter rink season.
- 2.3 Once all necessary documentation and orientation are complete, City staff will assemble an outdoor rink at the rink site. The rink structure will be assembled prior to the start of the winter season.
 - 2.3.1 City staff will assemble a standard rink structure (84' length x 48' width x 10" height), unless an alternate layout has been approved by City staff.

- 2.3.2 Rink committees interested in an alternative layout for their outdoor rink may inquire by contacting City staff at waterloorinks@waterloo.ca, as per section 4.0.

3.0 Outdoor Rink Operations

- 3.1 City staff will provide all rink committees with the Operating an Outdoor Rink handbook to guide all rink operations.
- 3.2 The winter rink season will take place between late-November and March. Exact start and end dates will be determined by City staff.
- 3.2.1 The start date of the winter rink season will be communicated to rink committees during the fall season. The end date of the winter rink season will be communicated to rink committees approximately mid-way through the season, depending on weather predictions and conditions.
- 3.3 Activities permitted on an outdoor rink are limited to:
- a) Recreational skating, and
 - b) Recreational hockey (excluding slap shots).
- 3.4 Each rink committee will work with City staff to determine a schedule for rink activities. Where feasible, time should be equally allotted between both ice activities. Activity schedules must be posted on the City's website and at the rink site. Schedules must comply with City Parks and Noise By-laws.
- 3.5 Rink committees are responsible for maintaining the outdoor rink and ensuring safety throughout the season, as detailed in section 7.0.
- 3.6 The City will supply each outdoor rink with the following supplies:
- a) Rink boards,
 - b) Pins or sand bags,
 - c) Shovels,
 - d) Hose,
 - e) Storage box,
 - f) Water tap lock,
 - g) Keys for water tap lock,
 - h) Signage.
- 3.6.1 Quantities of supplies can be found in the Operating an Outdoor Rink handbook.
- 3.6.2 Items from section 3.6 that are vandalized or stolen will be replaced by the City, depending on the availability of supplies.

- 3.6.3 Any items or supplies other than those listed in section 3.6 that are needed to support the use or maintenance of an outdoor rink should be supplied by the rink committee.
- 3.6.4 All items supplied by the City remain the property of the City of Waterloo. All other items supplied by the rink committee remain the property of the rink committee.
- 3.7 Rink committees are responsible for snow removal, as outlined in the Operating an Outdoor Rink handbook. The shovels provided by the City should be used for snow removal.
 - 3.7.1 Should a rink committee wish to use additional snow removal items these must be supplied by the rink committee, including any associated costs. Snow blowers may only be used by approved program volunteers who are 18 years of age or over and have the requisite skill and experience to operate items safely. Snow blower operating manual guidelines should be followed at all times when in use. Equipment should always be in proper working order.
- 3.8 The City will supply each outdoor rink with a storage box. The storage box should be used to store only rink equipment and all rink equipment should be kept in the storage box when not in use.
- 3.9 Rink volunteers must use program-approved water tap for flooding of outdoor rinks.
 - 3.9.1 If a rink committee believes a water tap is frozen, the committee should refer to the Operating an Outdoor Rink handbook or contact City staff via waterloorinks@waterloo.ca.
- 3.10 City staff will notify rink convenors of flooding date cutoffs as the end of the winter rink season approaches.
- 3.11 Rink volunteers are responsible for supplying their own rink tarps and must remove tarps and store or dispose of the tarps at the end of each season in a timely manner. Tarp usage must adhere to the guidelines set out in section 5.0.
- 3.12 Rinks should have no more than one rink board height (10 inches) of standing water at any time. Signage will be posted at the rink site and information included on the City's website to communicate standing water risks when surfaces are wet or thawed.

- 3.13 City staff will dismantle outdoor rinks and collect storage boxes and all City-owned equipment at the end of each winter rink season. Rink volunteers must remove all rink committee-provided equipment from the rink site at the end of the winter rink season.
- 3.14 Incidents of non-compliance with this policy, the Operating an Outdoor Rink handbook, or other communicated volunteer requirements will be addressed by City staff, and may include terminating the volunteer agreement.

4.0 Modifying an Existing Outdoor Rink

- 4.1 Modifications to outdoor rinks include but are not limited to actions such as creating an alternative rink structure, altering board heights in one area of an outdoor rink or making minor changes to rink structure to accommodate tarps.
- 4.2 Rink committees that wish to modify or identify a need for repairs to existing outdoor rinks must contact City staff at waterloorinks@waterloo.ca with details of the requested modification. Rink committees that wish to request an alternate layout from previous seasons must submit their request to City staff at the beginning of the rink season. Rink committees should specify if any of the volunteers have the skills and confidence to use household hand tools or power tools to complete the requested modifications.
 - 4.2.1 Requested alternative layouts for outdoor rinks must not damage or create safety, maintenance and/or park user concerns within the park or surrounding property.
- 4.3 City staff will review requests for modifications or repairs to existing outdoor rinks and will notify rink committees as to the outcome of the request review.
- 4.4 Rink committees that have been approved to repair or make a modification to an outdoor community rink must follow communicated conditions.
- 4.5 Once a modification or repair has been approved, rink committees may make the modification or repair using acceptable hand or power tools.
 - 4.5.1 Should a rink committee wish to use household hand tools or power tools, these must be supplied by the rink committee, including any associated costs. Tools are to be used by approved program volunteers who are 18 years of age or over and have the requisite skills and experience to operate items safely. Tool operating

manual guidelines should be followed at all times when in use. Equipment should always be in proper working order.

- 4.5.2 Acceptable tools include simple residential-grade tools such as hand tools (hammers, screwdriver, handsaws), power tools such as drills, power screwdrivers, and hand sanders that are intended for home use. Commercial grade equipment such as nail guns or screw guns are not permitted. Power saws and circular saws are not permitted.

5.0 Tarps

5.1 Eligibility

- 5.1.1 Rink locations on school property, turf sport fields, or areas with high spring water levels are not eligible for tarps.

- 5.1.1.1 Rink committees overseeing rinks at all other locations may use their own tarps. Tarps must be supplied by the rink committee each season.

5.2 Use and Safety

- 5.2.1 To assist with and avoid safety risks, tarp placement should be no more than one rink board (10 inches) in height.

- 5.2.2 Rink volunteers must follow all guidelines regarding tarp use as set out in the Operating an Outdoor Rink handbook, including monitoring rink hoses at all times when flooding.

- 5.2.3 Rink volunteers are responsible for prompt tarp removal and storage/disposal at the end of the season.

5.3 Costs

- 5.3.1 Rink volunteers are responsible for supplying their own rink tarps. Rink committees may apply for financial support for the cost of tarps through the City. Interested committees must contact waterloorinks@waterloo.ca.

6.0 Lighting

- 6.1 Lighting in parks or surrounding areas near outdoor rinks are controlled by a timer and programmed to turn on at 5 p.m. and off at 11 p.m. during the winter rink season, as per the designated park closing time set out in the City's Park By-law.

- 6.1.1 Rink committees or volunteers cannot access lighting timers.

- 6.1.2 Some rink lights also have an on and off button for on-

demand use during the eligible lighting times to help conserve energy and minimize lighting impacts to surrounding residences or other park users.

- 6.2 New rink locations are eligible for a rink light after three consecutive seasons of operation. City staff will coordinate all lighting details and will notify the convenor and residences directly surrounding the rink location prior to the installation of the new light.

7.0 Responsibilities

7.1 Responsibilities of Rink Committees

7.1.1 Rink convenors are responsible for the following:

- a) Understanding and complying with the “Operating an Outdoor Rink” handbook;
- b) Participating in any required volunteer training;
- c) Acting as the primary contact for City staff for information distribution regarding the rink;
- d) Identifying prospective rink volunteers and establishing a rink committee;
- e) Referring all prospective rink volunteers to the online application and applicable volunteer forms;
- f) Relaying information from City staff regarding the rink to the committee and volunteers;
- g) Coordinating rink volunteer schedules, ensuring two volunteers per shift;
- h) Working with City staff to determine a schedule for the outdoor rink;
- i) Overseeing rink operations;
- j) Determining base guidelines for rink volunteers and rink users to encourage safe play;
- k) Encouraging rink users to play safely on outdoor rinks;
- l) Ensuring that all maintenance tasks associated with the rink, including flooding and snow removal, are accomplished, as stated in the Operating an Outdoor Rink handbook;
- m) Ensuring appropriate care and maintenance of all rink equipment, rink boards and storage boxes;
- n) Recording and reporting to City staff all incidents and/or accidents that occur at the rink site, using the appropriate report templates;
- o) Maintaining an updated list of all volunteers who assist with the rink operation and maintenance;
- p) Other responsibilities as stipulated in the City’s rink convenor position description.

- 7.1.2 Rink volunteers are responsible for preparing and maintaining outdoor rinks, as detailed in the Operating an Outdoor Rink handbook. This includes but is not limited to:
- a) Flooding the rink site appropriately to build multiple layers of ice, ensuring the surface is as even as possible;
 - b) Assisting in establishing and advertising the outdoor rink's skating schedule;
 - c) Operating water taps safely and ensuring the tap is off and locked when not in use;
 - d) Clearing snow when needed;
 - e) Maintaining tidiness of the rink site, including picking up debris and removing or notifying staff of hazards when needed;
 - f) Providing appropriate care and maintenance of rink equipment, including shovels, hoses, boards and storage boxes;
 - g) Storing all rink equipment in the storage box when not in use;
 - h) Reporting damaged equipment, including water taps, or stolen equipment promptly;
 - i) Recording and reporting all incidents/accidents occurring at the rink location;
 - j) Understanding and complying with the Operating an Outdoor Rink handbook
 - k) Participating in any required volunteer training;
 - l) Other responsibilities as stipulated in the City's Rink Volunteer position description.

7.2 Responsibilities of City Staff

- 7.2.1 Environment and Parks Services staff are responsible for the following:
- a) Maintaining and monitoring program budgets;
 - b) Assessing rink sites to determine appropriate locations for ice surfaces;
 - c) Conducting seasonal repairs and/or replacements of malfunctioning water taps;
 - d) Conducting lighting maintenance and adjusting lighting timers;
 - e) Coordinating storage, distribution, maintenance and repair of rink equipment and supplies;
 - f) Providing rink committees with keys;
 - g) Assessing and documenting rink surfaces and site conditions through regular inspections;
 - h) Developing and distributing monthly reports on rink site observations;
 - i) Assisting rink committees in development and success of outdoor rinks through in-person, phone and email communications;

- j) Providing on-site training for all new rink sites and new rink convenors at the start of the rink season;
- k) Providing site visits, as requested by rink convenors, to address site concerns;
- l) Responding to maintenance requests and operational requests received through waterloorinks@waterloo.ca, related but not limited to:
 - Water tap issues;
 - Park seating or garbage requests;
 - Program equipment (i.e. storage boxes, shovels etc.);
 - Providing input on team discussions related to maintenance and operational concerns.

7.2.2 Community and Neighbourhood Services staff are responsible for the following:

- a) Conducting program-specific volunteer management and administration, including recruitment, intake, monitoring and volunteer recognition program;
- b) Application of this policy, volunteer role descriptions and other volunteer requirements as they arise;
- c) Addressing rink convenor and/or volunteer non-compliance with position descriptions, responsibilities set out in this policy, or rink operation guidelines set out in the Operating an Outdoor Rink handbook;
- d) Encouraging compliance through education of risk management policies and procedures and applicable park bylaws;
- e) Responding to waterloorinks@waterloo.ca requests related to:
 - General public inquiries;
 - Volunteer matters;
 - New location or volunteer inquiries;
 - Volunteer forms;
 - Other requests from rink volunteers that are not routine maintenance or operational concerns; and
 - General program inquiries related to program expectations, costs, and/or conditions.
- f) Developing and maintaining program documentation for program-specific volunteer and community communication (i.e. handbooks, policy, City webpage);
- g) Coordinating requirements for incident and accident reporting;
- h) Supporting neighbourhood activities centered around outdoor rinks;
- i) Supporting rink committees through regular communication;
- j) Assisting with communication to neighbourhood residents regarding rink needs or changes.

- 7.2.3 Volunteer Services staff are responsible for the following:
- a) Supporting volunteer recruitment each season;
 - b) Monitoring opportunities for reviews of volunteer role descriptions and rink assessments, based on corporate practices;
 - c) Facilitating the Better Impact program and training updates;
 - d) Supporting Better Impact and volunteer-related program questions;
 - e) Providing annual corporate volunteer information;
 - f) Notifying Community and Neighbourhood Services program leads of corporate changes impacting volunteers.
- 7.2.4 Corporate Communications staff are responsible for the following:
- a) Supporting program communications, including but not limited to: recruitment plans, outdoor rink community education, and other key messages;
 - b) Leading communications to ensure community understanding that stormwater management ponds and impoundments cannot be used as outdoor rinks.
- 7.2.5 Management are responsible for the following:
- a) Supporting staff in the administration of the Outdoor Rink Program and this policy;
 - b) Providing leadership to staff in the administration of the Outdoor Rink Program;
 - c) Providing support and leadership related to volunteer support, community support, conflict resolution, and risk management related to the Outdoor Rink Program.

8.0 Safety and Risk Management

- 8.1 Rink committees are responsible for encouraging safe play and communicating the rules of the outdoor rink to rink users.
- 8.2 To maintain safety and ensure the enjoyment of all rink users and the surrounding neighbourhood, pucks and sticks should remain on the ice surface and slap shots should be discouraged.
- 8.3 When acting within program guidelines as set out in this policy, volunteer position descriptions, and the outdoor rink handbooks, all registered volunteers are covered under the City's liability insurance.
- 8.4 Approved rink volunteers who use snow removal items or City-approved tools for snow clearing, modifications or fixes approved by City staff, must be 18 years of age or older. Use of these tools or items should only be for approved volunteers that have the requisite skill and experience to operate items safely. Operation manuals should be followed at all times

when in use. Tools or snow removal items used should always be in proper working order.

- 8.5 Rink committees must complete an accident report any time there is an incident or accident with rink users and/or volunteers. This includes situations in which:
- a) There is bleeding, pain from an injury, or any kind of injury to the head;
 - b) There is property damage; or
 - c) Any time anyone is in doubt and an accident report may be necessary.
- 8.5.1 Completed accident reports should be given to the rink covenor who will submit the form to City staff at waterloorinks@waterloo.ca.
- 8.6 If an accident or injury takes place after hours (after 4pm), rink committees should consult the Operating an Outdoor Rink handbook for appropriate contacts.

1.17 COMPLIANCE:

In cases of policy violation, the City may investigate and determine appropriate corrective action.