

# SAFETY DIRECTOR BULLETIN

## TEMPORARY ICE SKATING RINKS BEST PRACTICES

An agency may consider permanent or temporary ice-skating rink installations for the winter months. Providing supervision at public skating rinks may help ensure dangerous behavior does not take place. However, providing monitors can be labor intensive and presents significant liability exposure to the owner. Discuss this with your agency's attorney. The following are best practices for Temporary Ice Skating Rinks.

### Construction and Maintenance

- Outdoor ice rinks should be constructed on surfaces that are flat and free from mounds, heaves, or other irregularities.
- The surface must also be free of stones and other debris.
- With hard surfaces, such as pavement or concrete, a pre-flooding inspection should take place to identify and repair any cracks or holes and to remove any debris.
- With surfaces such as grass, an inspection should take place to remove any sticks or other debris and a plastic sheet should be placed down before flooding, both to hold the water and protect the grass.
- Shovel snow off the rink after every snowfall to ensure safe, even surface conditions.
- Ensure proper flooding equipment is readily available and safely stored on site. This would include hoses, shovels, and an ice blade for scraping edges and bumps.
- If you choose to use an ice resurfacer (Zamboni), you need to ensure there is enough ice to support its weight. If the ice resurfacer is driven over gravel, bits of gravel may be transferred to the outside ice surface, as well as arena ice surfaces.
- Flood as often as necessary to maintain a smooth, safe ice surface.
- Don't flood the ice surface if it is snowing or if there is snow on the ice surface, as it can result in an uneven and potentially harmful surface when it freezes.
- Apply light sprays of water, pre-flush water supply systems to release any build-up and ensure adequate pressure.
- Flooding in colder temperatures (-4 degrees Fahrenheit or below) might cause ice to crack and boil, resulting in unsafe skating conditions.
- Trucks should not be used in the maintenance of the rink or for plowing snow. Vehicles bring debris onto the ice surface such as sand or salt, which can cause the melting of sections of ice.

### Surrounding Site Conditions

- There should be ample lighting around the rink if the rink will be used at night.
- Benches should be provided for users to rest and to put on/take off their skates.
- Waste receptacles should be available so that garbage isn't left on the ice.

## **Inspections and Documentation**

- Always perform a pre-flooding inspection of the ice and remove any debris or snow before flooding.
- It is recommended that inspections of outdoor ice rinks be made twice a day to ensure the ice remains safe for use.
- Inspections should be documented, including any repairs and/or maintenance done or maintenance that should be completed.
- A plan should be in place for closing and securing the ice rink if it is determined that the conditions are not safe for ice skating activities.
- Injuries occurring at or on the ice rink should be reported to and documented by your public recreation organization.

## **Recommended Posted Signage**

- Hours of operation.
- Helmets must be worn.
- Rules of conduct:
  - All persons on the ice must wear skates and helmets.
  - No food or drinks are allowed on the ice.
  - No horseplay.
  - No body checking or contact. Open or closed. Children must be supervised.
  - Contact number to report issues/concerns. In case of emergency, call 911.
- Skaters and spectators are deemed to have knowledge of and assume the inherent risks involved with ice skating. These include but are not limited to injuries:
  - From collisions or contact with other individuals on the ice surface.
  - From falls.
  - From equipment that may cause injury during routine activities connected to the sport.
- The agency is not responsible for lost or stolen items.
- If the agency decides to allow hockey, separate hours for use of hockey should be indicated on the signage.