



ONTARIO RECREATION
FACILITIES ASSOCIATION INC.

**SUGGESTED GUIDELINES
FOR
PUBLIC SKATING**

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The Ontario Recreation Facilities Association (O.R.F.A.) presents a guideline for “Public Skating” in the province of Ontario. These guidelines will assist Facility Owners and Personnel in running a safe and enjoyable program for its users.

Definition

Public Skating is defined as a regularly scheduled skating program, which is offered to the public with or without an admission being charged for admittance. It may or may not be a program completely sponsored by the owner/operator of the facility.

History

Since the beginning of community ice rink operations Public Skating has been offered. It is an event that any member of the community may take part in regardless of their age or skill level. The benefits of open Public Skating were touted in any funding application made to government. To ensure quality community access and to meet the set requirements of the application process, the facility managers would book block ice-time to allocate a specific period for Public Skating.

Public Skating has been tailored to meet each community needs. There is no set days or times to hold open community ice-skating. Traditionally, a minimum of a 1-hour block is scheduled with some programs taking a 2-hour block. A traditional hour block is accepted to be 50 minutes to allow for the reconditioning of the ice surface. Ice resurfacing may or may not take place halfway through a 2-hour block ice skating program. The number of persons participating in the program and ice conditions will dictate flooding requirements of a particular facility. The Building Code Act, Egress from Public Buildings Act, Fire Marshals Act and Occupiers Liability Act, governs capacity loads for such events.

On ice, supervision may or may be apart of such events. The use of “skate patrol”(terms such as skate guard, cruisers and ice supervisors are also used) personnel has been left up to the discretion of the facility manager. Skill level and training of such persons has also been left to the facility manager. Persons employed as on ice supervisors are governed by the Employment Standards Act, Human Rights Code and Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Other legislation that may affect Public Skating includes the Copyright Act of Canada, Liquor License Act, Retail Sales Tax Act, Goods and Services Tax Act and Trespass to Property Act. Litigation directly related to the provision of Public Skating has occurred throughout Canada. Claims have involved ice quality, dangerous conditions, horseplay and supervision. The O.R.F.A. represents the majority of the provinces community ice facilities. The Association is also recognized as an industry leader in the proper and safe operation of recreation facilities and as such, from time to time, is called upon by legal counsel to provide expert opinion.

The O.R.F.A. recognizes the lack of set guidelines with regards to Public Skating and as such will offer its recommendations for the provision of a safe open community ice-skating programs.

Programming

Although there are no recommended days and times to offer Public Skating, it is most important that the facility manager consider the other scheduled events leading up to the program. As with all other scheduled ice events, ice conditions must be evaluated for safety prior to the program-taking place. Programs such as figure skating are high performance events such as hockey games or

practices may leave the ice in a poor condition. Allowing the general public access to a poor ice pad condition is unacceptable and poses serious risks to skater safety.

Poor ice may include deep gouges, paint or paper lines which migrate to the surface, net peg holes areas, unfrozen areas, dirt from the ice resurfacer tires, debris dropped by skaters or any other item which may cause a skater to fall and/or hurt themselves or others. Staff must check continuously for deteriorating factors and must monitor ice conditions. Any detection of poor ice must be dealt with immediately.

Admissions

Programs that charge an admission must submit GST on such fees. At times, public skating programs become a “hangout” for community youth, which creates a control problem for staff. It is considered an acceptable practice to charge all those entering the facility during a public skating session as a control measure.

Statements such as the following are encouraged:

“Violent or abusive behaviours such as verbal threats and insults, attempts to intimidate as well as physical assault and battery have no place in the *(your community name here)* recreation facilities.”

“Please use but not abuse your facility”

Some facilities have posted the actual annual operational costs related to their facility. “It costs \$0.00 per-minute to operate this facility... please use your time here wisely.”

Ice Load Capacity

“Occupant Load” is controlled under Section 3.1.16 of the Ontario Building Code. Section 3.1.16.1. Occupant Load Determination does not speak directly to ice skating activity. Table 3.3.16.1. of the Code suggests that ice skating activity may be classified under “exhibition halls other than those classified in group E” requires 30.1 feet per-person. This calculation combined with the “public corridors intended for occupancies in addition to pedestrian travel” of 39.8 feet per-person might best serve as a starting point to all calculations.

The O.R.F.A. recognizes that the standard ice surface size in the province of Ontario is 85ft X 185ft or 15,725 square feet. The standard ice surface construction has a minimum of 3-access/egress points to and from the surface area. The set standards outlined in the Ontario Building Code are for a total of 69.9 square feet per-person. The O.R.F.A. recommends that the load capacity for an average ice surface be no more than 160 persons (approximately 100 square feet per skater). Use this as a general guideline for any one time during the open community skating session.

Facility managers are encouraged to place their ice surface dimensions and adjust their capacity numbers higher or lower based on the actual square footage as well as considering the actual access/egress doors to the above noted recommended participation template.

It is important that all exit doors are clear at all times. Nets or any other item should never be stored in front of any point of egress!

On-Ice Supervision

Competent personnel shall supervise each open community skating program. No person under the age of 14-years of age shall be allowed to act as a skate patrol. Persons 16-years of age and younger should not be allowed to solely supervise open community skating programs. However, a person under the age of 16 may be permitted to assist if directly supervised by a person over 16 years of age.

The O.R.F.A. recommends that for an average ice surface, all Public Skating Programs will have on ice supervision as follows:

Patrol On Ice	Patrol to Skater Ratio
1 Skate Patrol	1 to 59 persons
2 Skate Patrol	60 to 119 persons
3 Skate Patrol	120 to 160 persons

Source: O.R.F.A. Recommendation

Facilities, that increase their attendance levels because of a larger surface and/or additional access/egress doorways, should adjust the on ice supervision accordingly. It is further recommended that private parties and school ice-skating events be governed by this same on ice supervision requirements.

Programs, which do not exceed a 2-hour period, require on ice supervisors for the full program. Programs that exceed a 2-hour period must allow for break periods as outlined in the Employment Standards Act.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act requires that all employees will be provided with adequate training to properly provide service. It is recommended that each on ice supervisor be assessed for and provide with WHMIS training, First Aid, Emergency Evacuation and any other identified training requirements.

To meet the requirements of the Trespass to Property Act no Skate Patrol will have the power of eviction for unruly patrons. It is recommended that each facility create and adopt a policy to govern unruly patrons.

Each facility should have a logbook to record open ice skating events. All acts of vandalism, unruliness, violence, injury or general concerns must be recorded

Any verbal/physical abuse by patrons of staff should have “zero tolerance” applied. Privileges of those found to be abusing staff should be immediately removed.

It is recommended that Skate Patrol wear a helmet at all time while on the ice. It is further recommended that identification of their employment be worn. A whistle for control purposes should be provided. Staff should have access to a phone for emergency purposes. Other equipment may include a disposable camera flashlight, walkie talkie/radio, and a First Aid fanny pack

There should be a constant flow of skaters. Skaters should not be allowed to gather in any area. Skaters should not be allowed into player seating areas. Skaters should leave the ice surface area to rest.

The O.R.F.A. will soon have a complete training program for on ice supervisors, which is available to its membership by calling 1-800-661-ORFA or 416-426-7062.

Alcohol

Any person under the influence of alcohol should not be permitted to participate in any Public Skating event.

Ice Resurfacing

The ice should be resurfaced as per set corporate policy prior to each open community skating event. No person should be permitted on the ice when the ice-resurfacing unit is in operation. Skate Patrol must ensure that all doors are closed (except the ice-resurfacer door) and all patrons are a safe distance away from the equipment. Once secure s/he must leave the ice until the entire process is complete and the ice-resurfacing doors are closed. However, while on the ice it is the requirement of the Skate Patrol to:

- Be in clear visual sight of the ice resurfacer operator at all times. The Skate Patrol will never hang on to the ice resurfacing unit
- To ensure no persons are on the ice at anytime prior to, during or until the ice-resurfacer is off the ice and access doors are secured.
- To ensure all ice surface doors are closed
- That all persons are well back from the edge of the surface as to not distract or interfere with the ice resurfacer operator
- That no foreign matter is on the ice surface before or after the flooding process
- To evaluate ice conditions, giving any concerns immediately to the ice resurfacer operator, with specific attention to goal areas and net peg holes being given
- To evaluate the board/glass any other area that the public has access to for poor or dangerous conditions

Skating Aids

No person should enter on to the ice surface during any public skating program unless on ice skates. Street shoes should never be worn on any ice surface. The use of any skating aids should not be permitted on the ice during public skating programs under any conditions. Facility staff should be educated on when “learn to skate” programs are held and advise patrons of such services.

Physically Challenged Persons

The Ontario Human Rights Code, 1981 received royal assent on December 11, 1981. It was proclaimed and enforced June 15, 1982. It was enacted as Chapter 53 of the 1981 Statutes of Ontario.

Section 1 of the Ontario Human Rights Code Act reads as follows:

“Every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to services, goods and facilities without discrimination because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, age, marital status, family status or handicap.”

- For the safety of all involved it is permissible to designate a specific area for wheelchair use during public skating i.e. close to the boards. Wheel chairs must not interfere with the flow of the skaters.
- Physically challenged persons who wish to participate in open ice skating programs by using their wheelchair or ice sledge should be permitted to do so. However, persons accompanying physically challenged persons on to the ice must do so on ice skates (being a skilled skater) or ice cleats.
- For the safety of all skaters a wheelchair shall have there wheels cleaned prior to entering on to the ice surface as to not track dirt or deposit any other foreign matter on to the surface.

Blood Disposal

Anyone with occupational exposure to blood and other body fluids is at risk of contacting an infection and as such must be properly trained to meet the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Personnel involved in the operation of sports facilities are likely to encounter blood and/or body fluids during the performance of their duties. Blood and body fluids infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) or Hepatitis B (HBV) presents the possibility of transmitting infection via contact with other blood (e.g. open sores or cuts) or mucous membranes. Although the risk of infection occurring in persons is minimal, the risks can virtually eliminated by following a blood fluid management plan.

After 5-hours outside the body, no infectious HIV is detectable. However, HBV may live up to one week outside the body. Therefore, universal precautions must be followed for blood, which is wet or dry. All must be treated as potentially infectious. Latex gloves must always be worn when dealing with blood or body fluids.

Latex gloves must be stored in a cool place to ensure that they do not break open during use. Hands should be washed with an anti bacterial soap immediately after removing gloves. Gloves, gauze pads and other materials should be on hand to contain exposed materials. The proper WHMIS label must be applied! To dispose of contaminated materials in regular garbage they must be first soaked for a minimum of 4-hours in a 1:10 bleach to water solution or a glutaraldehyde based solution. Clothes must also be considered during this process. Alternatively, taking all items to a hospital for disposal may be considered. Proper WHMIS bio-hazardous waste labels must be applied

Vomit/spit should have a congealing compound spread over the area. After absorption has taken place, it should be placed in a double plastic bag with appropriate WHMIS labelling and then disinfected using the noted bleach solution. Person exposed to blood or body fluids must immediately report to their supervisor and get medical attention!

Suggested Supplies And Protective Equipment For Blood/Body Fluid Contact

- Latex gloves (must be worn as a care giver)
- 1:10 bleach spray solution
- Gauze pads

- Antibacterial soap
- Waterproof bandages
- Plastic bags for disposal purposes
- Paper towels
- Pocket face masks
- N.B. ➔ Contact your local Public Health Department for further direction on how to safely remove blood /body fluids at your facility.

Sharps

Are defined as needles, syringes or lancets that could be contaminated with blood or other body fluids. These items could cause a puncture or cut which could lead to infection. Workers must be trained on how to dispose of such items using puncture proof gloves, tongs/pliers, how to handle the object as to not harm themselves, use of a puncture proof container and where to properly dispose of the contents.

Video Taping Sessions

A family member or close friend usually supports claims involving open ice skating programs. Litigation may surround out of control skaters who create a situation that affects other skaters that become injured. How does a facility manager mount a defence on such situations? Capturing skating sessions on tape may help reduce litigation. Each facility must determine if such an approach is affordable or worthwhile.

Skaters Code Of Ethics

Rules of conduct are a positive risk management tool. However, they must be posted to achieve their full potential! The use of professional legible signs is important. Advising of the “assumption of risk” involved with any skating sport is a good defence and may help avoid litigation. It is acceptable for facility operators to set an age limit for persons attending public skating sessions without supervision. For example, “persons under the age of 12 years must be under the care and control of a person 18-years of age or older while participating in our open ice skating program”

Facility operators must create and post their “Rules of Conduct”. Signage should include but not be limited to the following:

- All patrons who participate in ice-skating programs must respect the following rules:
- No food or drink on the ice surface
- No horseplay/games
- No skating backwards
- No figure skating manoeuvre
- No erratic/ excessive speed skating
- No balls/pucks/chairs/pylons/strollers/sticks or any other item which might interfere with the safety of any skater while on the ice surface
- No headsets, cell phones or hand held electronic devices are to be used while skating
- No carrying of children is to be permitted
- No sitting on the boards
- Skate with the direction of all skaters
- Conduct themselves appropriately at all times

- Listen and adhere to the Skate Patrol at all times
- All participants must be wearing skates while on the ice surface
- Consider the use of a helmet as they are strongly recommended

PUBLIC SKATING ANNOUNCEMENTS

It is recommended that each facility create an audio announcement or have staff read from a set form through a public address system several times throughout the session. It should be done more than once to make sure late arrivals hear the announcement. It should include all set policy/controls.

Example:

Welcome to Public Skating "*Your facility name here*". This is a friendly reminder to all skaters to please obey the rules for public skating. These rules are for your safe skating and enjoyment.

We do not permit horseplay or games such as tag, racing, backward skating, figure skating type manoeuvre such as jumps or twirling. Please enjoy all food and drinks in approved areas. No food or drinks are allowed on the ice surface or in the player's box at anytime.

For skater safety, we do not allow skating aids or strollers on the ice. (*Your policy on physically challenged persons/equipment should be placed here*)

Our Skate Patrol is here to help provide a safe environment. They are wearing the visual skating vests. Please follow their direction at all time. Our policy is to reverse directions halfway through the session we will be reversing skating direction; please make the change in direction when advised by our Skate Patrol staff. It is important that you listen and obey all Skate Patrol staff at all times. Please contact the facility manager with any Skate Patrol concerns.

Please keep away from the ice-resurfacing unit at all times.

Thank you for your co-operation and please enjoy your visit with us today.

Music

The music being played as background effect should be chosen and approved by the facility staff. It is recommended that tapes/CD's which are brought to any skating session with no cover or list of songs should not be played for public events. The Copyright Board of Canada under Section 67.2 "Public Performance of Music and Communications of Music to the Public by Telecommunication" Act controls the use of music. Tariff number 7 and/or 21 may be applied under different circumstances. It is the facility manager's responsibility to collect and submit all applicable Tariff fees. It is important to remember that any event, which uses radio music, is exempt from all applicable Tariffs.

It is not acceptable for any person to wear headphones or listen to a personal music source while public skating.

Illumination Levels

It is the recommendation of the Ontario Recreation Facilities Association that all-available surface lighting is operated to its full capacity, while public skating events are taking place. Facility managers who wish to conserve energy may wish to reference the lighting standards, which are set through the Illumination Engineering Society (I.E.S.) Lighting Handbook. The recommended levels are designed

with safety, degree of difficulty, activity, task stress and participants involved. The below noted data is current at time of printing and should be reviewed as required.

BUILDING AREA/ACTIVITY LEVEL	LIGHTING	
	Footcandles	Lux
Recreational Skating (I.E.S)	15	150
*O.R.F.A. recommends increasing levels to	50	500
Recreational Hockey	50	500
Dressing Rooms	30	300
Lobbies	30	300

Source-I.E.S. Handbook

**The O.R.F.A. recognizes these as minimum levels for recreational ice-skating. With public safety, a high priority the Association suggests raising lighting levels for public skating to 50-footcandles and 500 lux in keeping with the levels for recreational ice hockey.*

Emergency Evacuation Planning

Should there be a toxic leak, fire, bomb threat, hydro interruption etc. skate patrol, along with all other staff must be provided with adequate emergency evacuation techniques/training. Skate patrol must be prepared to provide guidance to all patrons during emergencies. They must know their responsibilities and limitations under extreme circumstances. It is recommended that Skate Patrol be equipped with two-way communication systems too full-time staff and access to a flashlight. Facility managers must be aware that a power interruption may affect P/A use; clear evacuation announcements for the facilities P/A system(s) both permanent and portable must be in place. Training should be done regularly so, that staff is properly prepared for all situations.

Open Skating Checklist

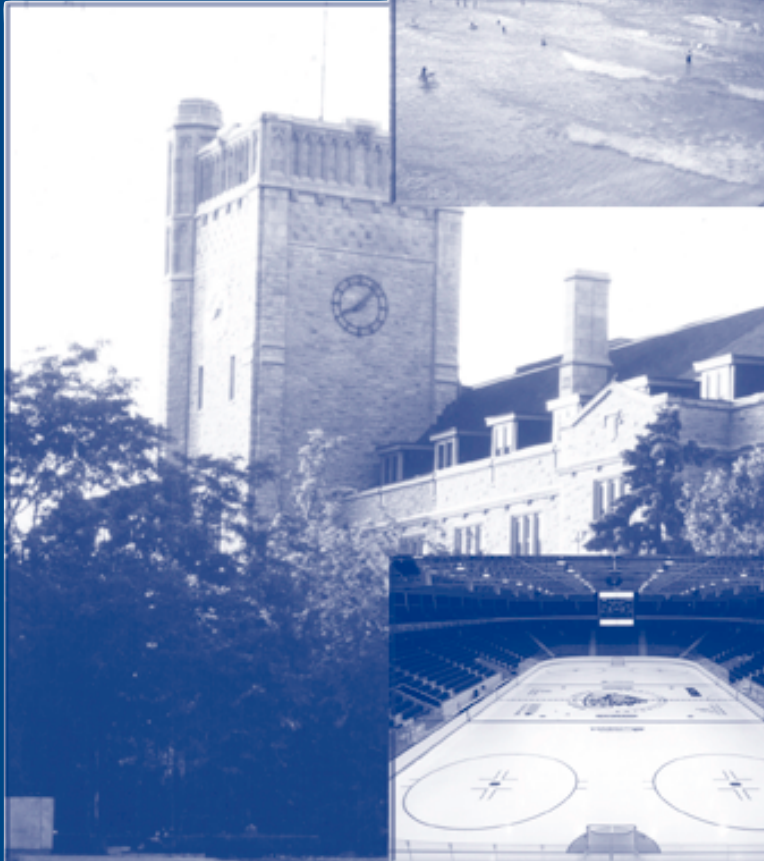
- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Have you recently thought of what your Public Skating responsibilities are? | Yes | No |
| 2. Have you recently compared your Public Skating operations with any other communities? | Yes | No |
| 3. Do you have a proper calculation of ice load capacity (width x length divided 100)? | Yes | No |
| 4. Do you have proper signage in place to advise of your rules of conduct? | Yes | No |
| 5. Does Skate Patrol know what to do about evacuations in case of an emergency? | Yes | No |
| 6. Does Skate Patrol know what to do about Blood disposal? | Yes | No |
| 7. Do you have adequate First Aid trained persons available during sessions? | Yes | No |
| 8. Does Skate Patrol have a Log Book in place to properly record session activity? | Yes | No |
| 9. Does Skate Patrol have the skills to identify poor ice conditions and what action should be performed if discovered? | Yes | No |
| 10. Does Skate Patrol know how to properly/safely work around the ice-resurfacing unit? | Yes | No |
| 11. Does Skate Patrol know how to deal with the use of “skating aids” as per set policy? | Yes | No |
| 12. Do you use a skating announcement to inform patrons of your facility rules? | Yes | No |
| 13. Is facility staff/skate patrol aware of your “music use policy”? | Yes | No |
| 14. Is Skate Patrol aware of the proper setting for lighting the ice surface? | Yes | No |
| 15. Does your staff know what to do in case of an emergency? | Yes | No |

How did you do? If you answered “no” to any of these questions, you could be putting your community at risk. It is recommended that you take the steps necessary to reduce the risks to public safety while at your facility. Need help? Contact the O.R.F.A. office to receive information on “safe open skating hosting.”

management



aquatics



buildings & grounds



ice



“TO BE THE WORLD-CLASS LEADING
AUTHORITY DEDICATED TO THE
RECREATION FACILITATION PROFESSION.”

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