Risk Management Considerations for Outdoor Skating Rinks

Managing the risk

November 2020

BUILDING THE OUTDOOR RINK (NATURAL BODIES OF WATER IS NOT PERMITTED).
Please consult with MSBA Risk Management prior to installing a new ice rink.

Surface conditions

- 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 prior to flooding, both to hold the water and protect the grass.
- Shovel snow off the rink after every snowfall to ensure safe, even surface conditions.

Equipment

- Lighting - there should be ample lighting around the rink if after school hour use is permissible by the Division.
- Benches should be provided for users to rest and to put on/take off their skates.
- Waste receptacles also should be available so that garbage isn't left on the ice.
- Flooding equipment – ensure that 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.
- Ice Resurfacing Machines (Zamboni) – if you choose to use an ice resurfacer (from neighbouring Community Centres), you need to ensure that 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.

Flooding

- Flood as often as necessary in order 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.
- Always perform a pre-flooding inspection of the ice and remove any debris or snow prior to flooding.
- Apply light sprays of water, pre-flush water supply systems to release any build-up and ensure adequate pressure.
- Flooding in colder temperatures (-20 degrees Celsius or below) might cause ice to crack and boil, resulting in unsafe skating conditions.

Ice Thickness and Conditions

- Outdoor ice rink thickness is recommended at 2 to 2.5 inches.
- Any thickness less than this has the potential to thaw more quickly.

Rink Boards

- Rink boards serve to outline the skating surface.
- They can also be used to divide the ice for public skate areas (skill/age).
- Rink boards should be installed properly without protruding stakes or other materials.
- If boards have fallen down, repair them immediately or remove them.

Hazards of Outdoor Rinks

- All hazards found during inspection should be documented and repaired immediately.
- Rinks should be closed as soon as the hazard is found and remain closed until repairs are completed.
- Common hazards consist of:
  - Cracks.
  - Frost boils.
  - Exposed ground.
  - Chopped up ice surface.
  - Ice shavings.

Maintenance and Inspections of Outdoor Rinks

- 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.
- 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 melting of sections of ice.
- Providing supervision at public skates can also help ensure that dangerous behavior does not take place.

Staff/Volunteers

- Staff/Volunteers can help to ensure that rink conditions remain safe by supervising skates or conducting inspections and maintenance operations.
- Volunteers should be trained by school staff in the correct ways to perform their duties.
- The same school documents should be used for inspections performed, or incident reports similar to playstructure checklists.

Signage

- Signs should be posted around the rink including information such as:
  - Hours of operation.
  - CSA approved Helmets must be worn (face cages recommended).
  - Rules of conduct:
    - All persons on the ice must wear skates and helmets.
    - No food or drinks allowed on the ice.
    - No horseplay.
    - No body contact or checking.
- Open or closed.
- Children must be supervised.
- School/Division contact number to report issues/ concerns.
- In case of emergency, call 911.
- Alcohol prohibited.
- MSBA Risk Management advises that no outdoor fire pits be used at any time.

Name of School/Division
Contact info
Hours of Operation/Weather Permitting
Allowable Usage (Example: Pleasure only)

The ice surface is for the enjoyment and safety of all (School) participants, please follow the guidelines/rules posted.

GENERAL

This is an unsupervised skating rink after school hours. All children must be supervised by an adult at all times.

SAFETY

Hours of operation.

CSA approved Helmets must be worn (face cages recommended).

Rules of conduct:

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- No food or drinks allowed on the ice.
- No horseplay.
- No body contact or checking.

Open or closed.

Children must be supervised.

School/Division contact number to report issues/concerns.

In case of emergency, call 911.

RISK

Skaters and spectators are deemed to have knowledge of and assume the inherent risks involved with ice skating. These include but not limited to:

- injuries from collisions or contact with other individuals on the ice surface.
- injuries from falls.
- injuries from equipment that may cause injury during routine activities connected to the sport.
- School/Division is not responsible for lost or stolen item.