

# CITY OF SASKATOON COUNCIL POLICY

NUMBER

C10-024

<b>POLICY TITLE</b> <i>Recreational Uses of Storm Water Retention Ponds</i>	<b>ADOPTED BY:</b> <i>City Council</i>	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b> <i>December 3, 2007</i>
<b>ORIGIN/AUTHORITY</b> <i>Clause 3, Report No. 14-2007 of the Planning and Operations Committee</i>	<b>CITY FILE NO.</b> <i>CK. 7820-2 and 5500-1</i>	<b>PAGE NUMBER</b> <i>1 of 5</i>

## 1. PURPOSE

The objectives of the policy are:

- To provide the public and civic administration with information about services, programs and a list of criteria for recreational uses of all ponds including storm water retention ponds.
- To increase the public's overall awareness and understanding of recreational uses of storm water retention ponds.
- To ensure all ponds including the storm water retention ponds are used in a manner with the least amount of risk.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 Storm Water Retention Ponds – are typically artificial bodies of water situated within city limits with the primary function of providing storm-sewer overflow retention. For the purpose of this policy they shall be limited to those ponds directly located within neighbourhood parks and/or readily identified as being used for recreational purposes by the public. Other bodies of water most commonly located on golf courses are not considered part of this program.
- 2.2 Non-contact water activities – any recreational activities which restrict direct body contact with the storm water in the pond.
- 2.3 Red or High Risk Zones – the areas of the pond which are identified by the Engineering reports as the thin ice zones and are typically adjacent to the inlet and outlet locations in the pond.
- 2.4 Special Events – an event held in or around the storm water ponds both in neighbourhoods as well as those ponds not typically located within a neighbourhood (i.e. The North Industrial Storm Pond located in the north industrial area of Saskatoon), lasting for a maximum of three consecutive days and which anticipates drawing a large number of spectators and/or participants.

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### 3. POLICY

Subject to conditions outlined in this policy, the ponds identified in 2.1 above may be used for winter ice activities such as skating, broomball, shinny in the winter and non-direct contact water activities in the summer. These summer activities include non-motorized boating with boats propelled solely by human power such as paddle boats or canoes.

Since storm water ponds help control flooding during heavy rainstorms, water quality cannot be guaranteed because the ponds collect street runoff. Therefore, the ponds are not recommended for use for activities such as swimming, wading, fishing, board-sailing, water skiing, kayaking, scuba diving, and any use of inner tubes and small inflatable or any activities that may result in direct contact with the water.

3.1 Ice thickness evaluation/management program - shall be carried out by the Fire and Protective Services staff on a weekly basis until sufficient ice thickness has been reached. Specifically, the ice must be 8” to allow people on and 12” to allow snow clearing equipment on. The ice will then be tested every 30 days after that. Fire and Protective Services staff will specifically:

- a) Do a minimum of 3 test holes per pond including tests in and around the high risk zones.
- b) Produce a news release to update the public and civic staff on the results of the ice testing only.

3.2 Evaluation of Physical Properties of storm water retention ponds – shall be carried out or commissioned by the Infrastructure Services Department staff, and will be reviewed every 2 years to document any possible changes in the high risk zones.

3.3 Restrictions for summer recreational use

- For public safety, any activity that may result in direct contact with water in storm water ponds is not recommended and the City makes no representation on the quality of water in the storm pond.
- Any interested group or individual will be allowed to use storm water ponds for non-direct contact activities at their own risk.
- Non-direct contact activities include boating activities with boats propelled solely by human power such as paddle boats or canoes.

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### 3.4 Restrictions for winter recreational use

- Users must obey posted signs relevant to ice safety and ice thickness.
- Ice thickness is monitored on an ongoing basis - once it has reached an acceptable level of thickness, (eight inches thick or greater) warning signs are removed or covered and the pond is open for use at the user's discretion and risk.
- Any interested group or individual will be allowed to use storm water ponds for winter activities at their own risk
- Vehicles are not permitted on the ice. Small, push-model snow blowers are allowed. Any other ice clearing activities will be approved by special permission only.

### 3.5 Restrictions for Special Events

- Will be required to make application to the Community Services Department for permission to host the special event.
- Will be required to have the applicable insurance and indemnity agreements.
- Will be required to adhere to all specifications outlined in the Pond Usage Agreement.

### 3.6 Special Consideration for Other Allowable Uses

- The Administration recognizes there are also situations where it is advantageous to consider other allowable uses for the storm water retention ponds. For all special consideration requests, the restrictions noted in Clause 3.5 above also apply.

### 3.7 Recognition of Risk. – Any advisories or signage regarding existing ice thickness on storm water retention ponds are provided as information only and are limited to the time and date of measurement, and is not a representation that the ice is safe to use for any purpose. Persons using the ice surface are advised to beware that the ice may become unstable at any time, and that ice thickness may change at any time for a variety of reasons, some of which are unpredictable. Anyone using the ice surface on a pond does so at their own risk.

### 3.8 Maintenance – Users assume all maintenance responsibilities (flooding, shoveling, etc.)

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#### 4. RESPONSIBILITIES

##### 4.1 Fire and Protective Services Department

- a) Shall test the ice thickness of each of the ponds during the “winter ice season” (approximately November 15 to March 1).
- b) Shall issue news releases to coincide with the information gathered during the ice thickness testing.
- c) Shall respond to reports of ice anomalies for emergencies.

##### 4.2 Community Services Department

- a) Shall administer this policy, ensure all requirements are met, and recommend updates to the policy as required.
- b) Shall prepare and distribute the educational information and brochures related to the safety awareness program for recreational uses of storm water retention ponds.
- c) Shall be the designated point of contact for information related to recreational uses of ponds.
- d) Shall develop and maintain a web page with information on the recreational uses of ponds.
- e) Shall annually provide informational brochures to schools located in proximity to the ponds and provide contact information for organizations that provide water and ice safety sessions.
- f) Shall coordinate the application and allocation of storm ponds for special event use.

##### 4.3 Infrastructure Services Department

- a) Shall conduct formal evaluations of the physical properties of the identified storm water retention ponds on an as needed basis. The study will also include a map identifying zones of highest risk for skating on the ponds.
- b) Shall investigate statements about ice anomalies and every two years conduct a re-evaluation of the ice physical properties.
- c) Shall supply, install and maintain the signage required for the ponds.
- d) Shall update the signage at each pond to indicate when the ice thickness was last tested and whether or not it is now authorized for use to skate on.
- e) Shall provide the services or contract the services to dredge the ponds or pick debris from the ponds that was left on the ice during spring melt.

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- f) Shall investigate all reported situations of water main breaks during the winter months, to see if the water flow has compromised the condition of the ice.
- g) Shall test the water quality of all storm water retention ponds to ensure they meet the National Guidelines for Water Quality as it relates to recreational use of storm ponds.

#### 4.4 City Council

- a) Shall be responsible for approving changes to this policy as required