

## **2013 Summer Playground Program Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. Q: How do you decide when the season starts and when the season ends?**

A: The summer season is based on a number of considerations:

- **Budget:** The available budget allows the City of Saskatoon (City) to hire staff for eight weeks and seven weekends. This includes staff training time.
  
- **Weather:** Historic weather patterns show that the hottest weeks of the summer are from early July to late August. While paddling pools will close in late August, spray pads are kept open until the end-of-the-day Labour Day. After Labour Day, the water lines need to be blown out for winterization purposes along with all of the other outdoor pools and park irrigation systems. The winterization process of the water lines starts immediately after Labour Day to complete the process for all parks, outdoor pools, and spray parks, ahead of any risk of frost.
  
- **School Season:** The City works in collaboration with the school boards to coordinate access to the schools for programming. Schools need time prior to the beginning of the school year to prepare the gymnasium and mud room floors, and to begin preparations for the teachers' return/classroom set up.

### **2. Q: Why are some sites open on the weekend when others are not?**

A: Based on public feedback, the City is now offering a full-service arts, crafts, and playground program at select sites on weekends.

To offer this new weekend program and to ensure adequate supervision, 16 double leader sites replace 30 single leader sites. Selection of the 16 sites was based on attendance in recent years and the geographical closeness of both nearby paddling pools and spray pads.

### **3. Q: What steps has the City taken to ensure the safety of the staff?**

A: Safety for all civic staff is a City priority. All playground and youth centre leaders receive provincially designated courses and testing in Occupational Health and Safety/Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System, as well as Pool Maintenance Training.

Safety is also the responsibility of each staff member and staff are provided extensive training and the tools to help protect them while at work (i.e.) personal protective equipment to ensure safety during chemical additions.

Staff are also trained to complete site environmental scans to look for any dangers such as broken glass and other hazards.

**4. Q: Are park upgrades going to impact the summer program this year?**

A: There are no park upgrades that will impact the summer program in 2013.

**5. Q: Paddling pool fill and drain times: Why can't patrons go in the water when the site opens for the day? Why does the staff start draining the pool before it closes? Why does the staff have to add chemicals so often?**

A: The safety of the patrons and staff is of utmost importance to the City:

- Staff begin their shifts 30 minutes prior to the opening of a playground site to allow time to clean the pool basin or spray pad and to start filling the pool.
- The pool's chemicals need to be tested every 20 to 40 minutes (more frequently on hot days) to ensure the sanitary conditions of the pool are maintained. This is by Provincial government regulation.
- It takes approximately 20 minutes after the addition of pool chemicals to fully dissolve and become effective.
- During chemical addition, children and leaders are free to play sports and other activities on the playground or in the park.

**6. Q: What is the Preschool policy?**

A: Playground Leaders direct and organize recreational activities for neighbourhood children. Their role is to supervise participating children and to lead recreation and sport activities.

Due to the nature of the program and the number of children at the sites, it is not possible for the leaders to provide the type of constant care and attention necessary for children under the age of six without a parent or responsible youth present.

To keep children safe in the water, any child under the age of six must be accompanied by, and be within arm's reach of, a responsible adult or youth over 16 at all times. This is a standard that has been established by both the Canadian Red Cross and the Lifesaving Society.

**7. Q: Why are most City Youth Centres in elementary schools?**

A: Youth Centres are geographically located around the city to ensure for ease of access to Saskatoon's youth. The City works in partnership with the two School Boards to offer these programs. Because of the detailed and labour-intensive cleaning and repair schedule in Saskatoon's high schools and gymnasiums, the City is unable to utilize space in the larger high school gymnasiums.

**8. Q: Why do people need to register? What is the information used for and what is done with my personal information?**

A: No personal information need be given to our playground staff. The neighbourhood you live in is documented only under your permission so that the City can collect statistics on where our patrons are arriving from.

Children sometimes inform our staff of their parents' contact numbers (locked in the staff room) to use in case an emergency occurred and the parents need to be contacted, for example when a child falls from a bike, or returns to the playground program because they are locked out of their home.

**9. Q: Why are park recreation buildings locked when the leaders are outside?**

A: Safety is a primary concern for City staff and patrons. When both Leaders are outside (i.e. one on pool deck and the other in the park), the recreation unit is locked to ensure leaders can see all children at all times. If someone needs access to the washrooms or recreation unit, the staff will be happy to unlock the doors.

**10. Q: Who should I contact for questions, information, and concerns?**

A: The City's Community Development Branch runs the Summer Playground and Youth Centre Programs. Contact 975-3378 or email [play@saskatoon.ca](mailto:play@saskatoon.ca) to reach a supervisor.