

Subject: Recreation Facilities Allocation Policy

Prepared by: Community, Recreation and Culture Services

Approved by:

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Purpose

To assist the Corporation of the City of St. Catharines in the process of booking and allocating all municipally owned, managed and operated recreation facilities in an objective, fair, prioritized and consistent approach.

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Section 1: Guiding Principles

1. The policy is community focused, equitable, readily available, transparent, flexible, responsible, and responsive.
2. The policy is guided by the City's Recreation Facilities and Programming Master Plan and validates the slogan "The City Where Everyone Can Play".
3. The policy provides efficiencies throughout the allocation process.
4. The policy is informed by stakeholder and public consultation.
5. The policy is data driven.
6. The policy include an appeals process.
7. The policy is subject to review by the Recreation Master Plan Advisory Committee and/or City Council.

Section 2: Glossary of Terms

1. **Age Prioritization** – Defines children and youth as under 18 years, adults as 18+ years and older adults (seniors) as 50+ years.
2. **Allocation** - The distribution of facility bookings amongst users to provide fair access to City recreational facilities. Refers to the City's rental facility process for all recreational facilities.
3. **Allotment** – The amount of facility time allocated per user group.
4. **Appeal** - A process a group can use to question, clarify, or request a change in their facility allotment.
5. **City** – Refers to the City of St. Catharines
6. **CRCS** - Community, Recreation and Culture Services department at the City of St. Catharines.
7. **Documents**
 - a) Contract - A written agreement between the City and the event person/organization wishing to rent facility time.
 - b) Lease Agreement - A contract between the City and another organization for the use of a City facility for a specific period of time for a specific purpose.
 - c) Permit – A legally binding venue use agreement.
 - d) Venue Use Agreement – An agreement between the City and another organization for use of a facility by the City.

8. **Educational Institutions** – A place where people of different ages gain an education.
- Primary-elementary schools refer to preschools, childcare and junior kindergarten to grade 8.
 - Secondary-high schools refers to grades 9 to 12.
 - Post-secondary refers to technical/vocational/trade schools, colleges, and universities.
9. **Historical Precedence** – The number of consecutive years which an individual/organization has been active and the corresponding recreational facility usage history.
10. **Inclusion** – Organizations and/or programs which promote accessibility, diversity, and the inclusion of marginalized populations.
11. **Prime and Non-Prime Time**
- Prime and Non-Prime times are applicable to all recreation facilities.
 - Prime – Monday to Friday (5:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.) and Saturday and Sunday (7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.). All ice rentals in July and August are considered Prime Time. Statutory holidays are considered prime time.
 - Non-Prime Time (based on operating hours) - Monday to Friday (6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.), Saturday and Sunday (6:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m.) and daily (11:00 pm to 12:00 a.m.).
12. **Profit and Non-Profit**
- For Profit - Organizations with or without paid staff who offer a community-based activity or service and who are registered or recognized as a business and/or incorporated.
 - Not-for-Profit – Organizations with or without paid staff who offer a community-based activity or service and who are registered or recognized as not-for-profit, non-profit or charity.
13. **Public Programming**
- Recreational programming which is either directly or indirectly led by the City of St. Catharines, with or without instruction, such as leisure swimming, public skating, basketball courses, art classes and yoga classes. Programming which is open to the general public.
 - Children programming – ages 0-13
 - Youth programming – ages 14-17
 - Adult programming – ages 18+
 - Older adult programming – ages 50+ (seniors)
 - Family – Adults and children of an immediate family, living in the same household
 - Intergenerational programming – all ages

14. Recreation and Competitive

- a) Recreation – A level of play where the focus is participation, skills, and drills. No head-to-head competition outside of the home organization. Includes house league play.
- b) Competitive – A level of play where head-to-head competition between persons/teams from outside of the home organization. Includes travel teams.

15. City-Owned and Recreation Facilities

- a) City-Owned Facility – A facility which is owned by the City of St. Catharines.
- b) Recreation facilities rented, owned, operated, and managed by City of St. Catharines. Referred to as the ‘facility’ or ‘facilities’. Includes any building, structure, amenity, or green space. These spaces may include but are not limited to parks, sports fields, arenas, gymnasiums, pools, multi-use community meeting rooms, beaches, and pavilions.

16. Resident and Non-Resident

- a) Resident - Individual that is a primary resident of the City of St. Catharines; or a company or organization whose primary location, head office and mailing address is in the City of St. Catharines.
- b) Non-Resident – Individual whose primary residence is outside of the City of St. Catharines.
- c) Proof of Residency – Identification which includes the individual’s primary home address (government issued preferred), current utilities bill or proof of registration and/or attendance at a secondary or post-secondary institution in St. Catharines.

17. RZone Policy

Rzone is a zero tolerance behaviour policy for users and spectators at City owned recreation facilities. It represents the commitment to fostering an environment where there is Respect for yourself; Respect for others; and Responsibility for your actions. The goal of the Policy is to promote a positive, safe, enjoyable and supportive environment for all attendees and staff.

18. Seasons and Regular Season Play

- a) Seasons – For indoor recreational facilities, the spring/summer season is defined as April – August and fall/winter season as September – March. For outdoor recreational facilities, the spring/summer season is defined as April – October.
- b) Regular Season Play – Practices and games played within the corresponding season for that sport.

19. **Scoring Matrix** – A tool used by City staff to settle allocation disputes. A scoring mechanism which tallies eight different allocation priorities.

20. **Sponsor** - An individual, company or organization that pays some or all of the costs involved in staging a sporting or artistic event(s) in return for advertising.
21. **Stakeholder** – An individual, company or organization with an interest or concern in something, especially an individual/organization engaged in a recreation pursuit.
22. **Supporter** - A person who approves of and encourages someone or something.
23. **Tournaments and Special Events**
- a) Tournaments – Defined as a multi-person or multi-team championship which is not part of regular season play. May be regional, provincial, national or international in scope.
 - b) Special Events – Defined as gatherings for social, cultural, or sporting purposes. Includes, but not limited to festivals, concerts, trade shows, camps, try-outs, play downs, showcases, etc., which are not part of regular season play.
 - c) Primary Organizer – The prominent individual, company or organization which organizes an activity, tournament, or special event.
24. **Three-Year Historical Rolling Average**
- a) Actual usage averaged over 3 continuous years of uninterrupted seasons. Data from the oldest season removed as each new season’s data added.
 - b) Rolling Average - Data based on the last three consecutive years of uninterrupted scheduling and use by an organization at a facility, date, and time.
25. **Turnbacks** – Arena and sports field facility bookings which can be cancelled with no penalty to the customer within a specified period of time.

Section 3: Scope

3.1 Allocation Priorities

The City will allocate rentals at City recreational facilities in the following order:

1. Honour existing lease, license and/or contractual obligations entered into by the City.
2. Special events of which the City is a partner, supporter, sponsor or primary organizer
3. Public programming.

4. Requests from St. Catharines based primary and secondary educational institutions (applicable Monday through Friday 9:00 am - 3:00 pm only, September - June).
5. Allocation allotments, tournaments and special events.
6. All other requests.

Regardless of the above priority list or stated allocation criteria, the City reserves the right to take into consideration other factors not set out in this policy and, on a final basis, allocate use of facilities as it deems necessary to optimize facility utilization, particularly when demand exceeds supply.

Allotted time is reserved, not guaranteed, and the City retains the right to adjust, cancel, withdraw, or reschedule any and all allocated time. This will be necessary only as a result of inclement weather or unsafe conditions, or in the case of an emergency or unforeseen circumstance. All reasonable efforts will be made to advise affected groups as early as possible.

3.2 Allocation Eligibility

In order to be considered for inclusion in allocation every user group must:

1. Fully complete and submit an annual application. The application will include, but is not limited to, providing the following information:
 - a) Age of participants
 - b) Type of organization
 - c) Continuous years of operation
 - d) Inclusion programming information
 - e) Competitive, recreational or both
 - f) Organization size (number of unique individual participating members, City staff may contact the appropriate sport governing body to confirm registration numbers at any time)
 - g) Percentage of St. Catharines residents (proof of residency may be required)
 - h) Location of individual/organization (St. Catharines based or not)
2. For regular season sports, a minimum of 25 hours annual usage is required as part of regular and ongoing occurrences, within sport appropriate defined sessions or seasons.
3. For tournaments and special events, a minimum of 25 hours annually is required.
4. Financial account must be in good standing.
5. Must provide a Certificate of Insurance, unless purchasing insurance coverage through the City.
6. Must agree to abide by all City by-laws and policies, including the RZone Policy.
7. Must have an Inclusion Policy which outlines the organization's commitment to promote accessibility, diversity and marginalized populations (must be available if requested or be in progress with a one year grace period)

8. Must have a Concussion Policy (must be available, if requested)
9. Must have a Code of Conduct (must be available, if requested)
10. Must adhere to all Provincial Sport Organization and National Sport Organization guidelines (if applicable)

The information collected is for City allocation purposes only and is protected by the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Allocation Application Verification System

City staff have the right to ask for verification of proof of information provided in the allocation application. City staff would commit to performing audits on an annual basis using a random draw method to determine which user groups would be audited.

Removal from Allocation Process

A user group may be removed from the allocation process for any one or more of the following reasons:

1. Outstanding unpaid account balance.
2. Failing to provide complete and accurate information on allocation application.
3. Not following General Terms and Conditions of a rental/booking permit.
4. Regular and ongoing usage falls below the minimum allocation threshold (25 hours seasonally/annually).
5. Turn backs exceed 50% of actual time used.
6. Failure to comply or intending to breach (i) any requirement under this policy including the RZone Policy; or (ii) any municipal, provincial, or federal law or regulation.

3.3 Rzone Policy

- a) The City, with its major user groups, will administer a promotional and educational campaign aimed at raising awareness among all attendees of the Rzone Policy operating procedures and, in particular, the importance of their role in creating a positive atmosphere.
- b) The major user group is responsible for taking appropriate actions when inappropriate behaviours take place.
- c) Major user groups dealing directly with incidents are required to inform the City of a resolution within 30 days.
- d) A representative for each major user group must be on site at all times.
- e) Major user group representatives are required to understand the operating procedures.

- f) Prepare an Rzone Incident Report providing a full written report related to the incident within the required time frame and notify City personnel.
- g) Major User Groups by virtue of their signed agreements for use of City recreational facilities, programs and recreational properties, are expected to promote, support and endorse the City operating procedures within their organizations.
- h) In addition, it is the responsibility of the signatory to sign a code of conduct and to ensure all those involved with the group (including out of City groups) are aware of the City's Rzone Policy.
- i) Major User Groups must also provide the City with the names of any suspended parties outside the City's Rzone Policy.
- j) Failure to uphold Rzone Policy will have consequences that are directly tied to facility allocation. These consequences include:
 - I. Pending rental agreements will be cancelled.
 - II. User group not permitted to return for a specified period.
 - III. Recourse would be the Appeals Process (successfully demonstrate corrective action).

3.4 Allocation Allotment (Prime-Time Hours Only, Regular Season)

- a) The allocation allotment is based upon a scalable formula which takes the total number of prime-time hours available per facility type and divides them by historical actual usage per organization/individual based upon a 3-year rolling average. Data would be taken from typical seasons only, not from seasons impacted by COVID-19 or other abnormalities. This provides the maximum number of prime-time hour allocation per organization/individual per season on a proportional basis.
- b) The City calculates entitlements pre-allocation per season. This entitlement information will be posted on the City's website for transparency.
- c) Allocation entitlement calculations are applicable to usage at City owned and City operated facilities only.
- d) Tournaments and special events are not included in the regular season allocation entitlement.

3.5 Allocation Scoring Matrix

The allocation scoring matrix (Appendix A) is a tool for conflict resolution to rank competing allocation requests. The organization/individual with the highest cumulative score in all eight categories will be given allocation priority.

Section 4: Procedures

4.1 Allocation Requests

- a) Allocation requests for the current season cannot be more than 15% greater than the prior season's actual usage (prime-time and non prime-time combined). Exceptions for extenuating/special circumstances or new/emerging sports/organizations can be considered through the Appeals Process.
- b) Higher calibre of play (competitive, high performance) is not given priority over recreational play in allocation.
- c) Applicants are not permitted to transfer, trade or sublet any facility to another person or organization. If an applicant wishes to reschedule a rental with another person or organization, they must contact the City to make these arrangements. These reschedules are to be considered on a 'case by case' basis, and approval is not guaranteed.
- d) Age based prioritization applies to both prime and non-prime allocation.
- e) Adults will have priority allocation for facilities with larger playing surfaces (designed specifically for adult play).
- f) User groups have no exclusivity for dates, times, facilities or event types.

Section 5: Tournaments and Special Events Allotment

Applies to all tournaments and special events:

- a) Bookings will be allowed up to 12 months in advance if the tournament or special event is being booked using historical dates.
- b) For existing allocation user groups the number of tournament hours per season will be based upon historical precedence - 3-year consecutive rolling average (typical years).
- c) Allocation conflicts will be settled using the Scoring Matrix (Appendix A).

- d) The City will calculate tournament allotments prior to the season and will inform tournament and special event organizers.
- e) Allotment calculations are applicable to usage at City owned and/or City operated facilities only.

Turnbacks

- a) For tournaments and special events which are booked 6 months or less in advance, turnbacks are permitted up to 30 days prior.
- b) For tournaments and special events which are booked 7-9 months in advance, turnbacks are permitted up to 60 days prior.
- c) For tournaments and special events which are booked 10-12 months or longer in advance, turnbacks are permitted up to 90 days prior.

Section 6: Appeals Process

- a) Written appeals can be submitted to the Manager of Programs and Culture Services in the City's CRCS department. Appeals will be decided by the Manager of Programs and Culture Services in consultation with the Director of CRCS.
- b) Appeals can only be submitted between the time when tentative permits are distributed (while turnbacks are still permitted) and when final permits are sent out.
- c) The City of St. Catharines reserves the right to make a final determination on the allocation of all City owned recreational facilities.
- d) After a determination has been made, the City shall provide the appellant with a written copy of the determination.

Section 7: Financial

7.1 Regular Season User Groups

Only allocation clients who are in good standing financially with the City may participate in the allocation of facilities.

Deposit

All regular season user groups are required to provide a financial deposit prior to the first day of their permit, in an amount which is equivalent to the last months full invoice (1/6th of the regular season full value permit).

Monthly Installments

Allocation clients are permitted to make monthly installments on an approved payment plan. Monthly statements will be provided at the end of each month. Payment of the monthly installment is due in full no later than 10 business days after the monthly statement is provided.

Failure to Pay

Failure to make payment in full by the required deadline may result in the payment plan being terminated, resulting in payment of the entire rental permit becoming due. If behind/arrears in something else, the City may withhold future bookings.

7.2 Tournaments and Special Events

Deposit

Tournament and special event bookings which total over \$10,000.00 (pre-tax) are required to provide a financial deposit at the time of booking, in an amount which is equivalent to 10% of the entire booking. Current regular user groups are exempt.

Final Payment

Tournaments and special events must pay in full at time of permit finalization. Current regular user groups are exempt.

Permit Finalization

For tournaments and special events which are booked 6 months or less in advance, permits are finalized 30 days prior to the start date of the permit.

For tournaments and special events which are booked 7-9 months in advance, permits are finalized 60 days prior to the start date of the permit.

For tournaments and special events which are booked 10-12 months or longer in advance, permits are finalized 90 days prior to the start date of the permit.

Section 8: References

The following policies and procedures have linkages to this Recreation Facilities Allocation Policy.

1. [Rates & Fees By-Law](#)
2. [Parks By-Law](#)
3. [Rental Permits – General Terms and Conditions](#)
4. [RZone Policy](#)

5. [Municipal Alcohol Policy](#)
6. [Special Events Policy \(pending\)](#)
7. [Special Events Waiving of Fees Policy \(Reduction of Fees\)](#)

APPENDIX A: Scoring Matrix

The Scoring Matrix is a tool for conflict resolution to rank competing allocation requests. The organization/individual with the highest cumulative score in all eight categories will be given allocation priority.

AGE PRIORITIZATION

Children & Youth	10 points
Adults	9 points
Family & Intergenerational	9 points
Older Adults	7 points

CLASSIFICATION

Non-profit, not-for-profit, charity	10 points
For profit, commercial	6 points

HISTORICAL PRECEDENCE

40+ years	10 points
35- 39 years	9 points
30-34 years	8 points
25-29 years	7 points
20-24 years	6 points
15-19 years	5 points
10-14 years	4 points
6-9 years	3 points
1-5 years	2 points
Under 1	1 point

INCLUSION (Including Accessibility and Diversity)

All programming	10 points
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Select programming	5 points
No programming	1 point

ORGANIZATIONAL TYPE

Both competitive and recreational	10 points
Recreational only	5 points
Competitive only	5 points

ORGANIZATION SIZE

5,000+	10 points
4,000-4,499	9 points
3,500-3,999	8 points
3,000-3,499	7 points
2,500-2,999	6 points
2,000-2,499	5 points
1,500-1,999	4 points
1,000-1,499	3 points
500-999	2 points
0-499	1 point

PARTICIPANT RESIDENCY

100%	10 points
75-99%	8 points
50-74%	6 points
25-49%	4 points
25% or less	2 points

RESIDENTIAL PRIORITIZATION

St. Catharines Based	10 points
Niagara Region Based	5 points
Other	2 points