



# TORONTO STAFF REPORT

---

January 19, 2004

To: Economic Development and Parks Committee

From: Joe Halstead, Commissioner Economic Development, Culture and Tourism

Subject: Harmonized Permit Allocation Policy for Indoor and Outdoor Parks and Recreation Facilities

All Wards

Purpose:

The purpose of the report is to introduce the new, harmonized Parks and Recreation Division permit allocation policy framework for the equitable allocation of all Parks and Recreation indoor and outdoor facilities when demand for facility permits is greater than facility availability.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) Economic Development and Parks Committee endorse the new, harmonized Permit Allocation Policy and forward this report on to Council for approval; and
- (2) the appropriate City Officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

Since amalgamation, the allocation of permits for use of indoor and outdoor Parks and Recreation facilities to community and private groups has followed the policy of the former Parks and Recreation organizations from the seven former jurisdictions. In 2001, Council adopted a new, harmonized ice allocation permit policy that addressed the issue of equitable access to ice permits for all community groups. This policy has been implemented with considerable success, providing greater access for new and emerging groups such as women's

hockey. A similar policy for all Parks and Recreation indoor and outdoor facilities so that when demand for permits is greater than the supply of facilities, permits are allocated in a fair and equitable manner for all permit groups is appropriate and timely.

The mission of the Parks and Recreation Division states that Members of Toronto's diverse communities will have full and equitable access to high calibre, locally responsive recreational programs, efficiently operated facilities and safe, clean and beautiful parks, open spaces, ravines and forests. One significant means of achieving the Division's mission is through the permitting of Parks and Recreation facilities, both indoor and outdoor, to thousands of community organizations involved in the delivery of community-based sport and recreation.

Since amalgamation, the Division has utilized the seven former permit allocation policies. These policies did not account for the rise in newly developing and diverse community organizations but rather gave priority to historically held permits. In addition, these policies did not account for the recent rise in permit requests resulting from the increased permit fees for the Toronto District School Board facilities.

#### Comments:

The City of Toronto requires one consistent permit allocation policy for the purposes of fair and equitable distribution of indoor and outdoor sport and recreation facilities. The new policy is especially important to the fair and equitable distribution of permit time when demand for permits exceeds the available time. Such is the case for most sports fields, ball diamonds and gymnasias. The permit allocation policy is an important means to recognize the increased diversity of the City of Toronto and the growing interest in sport and recreation by developing groups such as girls' and women's soccer, sport for persons with a disability, and activities for different cultural groups.

To create the new, harmonized permit allocation policy, the Parks and Recreation Division undertook an extensive community consultation process. The Division held four community meetings, one in each district, and invited representatives from permit groups, community organizations, access and equity groups and community residents to attend. Each of the four meetings was well attended with a total of more than 400 people participating. In addition, the Division held five focus groups on the topics of specialized facilities, such as bocce, pools, tennis courts, outdoor sports fields, ball diamonds, indoor facilities, and girls' and women's sport and recreation. Approximately 150 people participated in the five focus groups held in various locations across the City. Finally, the Division accepted written briefs from any interested group or individual. Forty brief submissions were received.

All indoor and outdoor permitted Parks and Recreation facilities will be subject to this policy. Including pools, artificial ice rinks, recreation and community centre rooms, sports fields and sports courts. Excluded from this policy are picnic permits, wedding photography, hall rentals and garden plots, which are still handled on a first come first serve basis.

To aid in the transition between the current permitting process and the new allocation policy, the Division will implement a three-year phase-in period for the new policy that will include training

of permit groups and staff as a key component of the process. This process will begin once the policy has been adopted by Council. Step one will include permit group notification of the new policy and training on the policy requirements for all interested groups. This step will be implemented well in advance to each new season of respective sport and community groups to allow them to prepare for the change. Step two will include notification to groups of how their allocation will be affected by the new policy, but no change to their current allocation. Step three will be partial implementation of the new allocation policy with no permit group gaining or losing more than 25% of their previous allocation. Step four will be full implementation of the new permit allocation policy and the elimination of the current permit allocation policy. The seasonality of specific sports will largely dictate the notification and implementation of this allocation policy.

Conclusions:

The Parks and Recreation Division has consulted widely with permit holders and community residents to draft a harmonized permit allocation policy. This policy addresses fair and equitable distributions of facilities when the demand for permits exceeds the available time and when newly developing groups emerge. The phased implementation of the policy over a three-year period will allow for training of permit groups and gradual change of new allocations. Permit allocation remains a primary means of achievement of the Parks and Recreation Division's mission of full and fair access to parks and recreation programs and services.

Contact:

Brenda Librecz  
Acting General Manager  
Parks and Recreation  
Tel: 416 392-8182  
Fax: 416 392-8565  
Email: [blibrecz@toronto.ca](mailto:blibrecz@toronto.ca)

Joe Halstead  
Commissioner Economic Development, Culture and Tourism

**Background**

The City of Toronto is made up of people from diverse communities and underrepresented groups as defined in the City's Access and Equity Policy. In recognition and support of this diversity, and the Human Rights Code, Part I, the City will ensure that the users of a community facility will reflect, as closely as possible, the unique diversity and demographics of the relevant community, without discrimination or disadvantage.

To reduce barriers to access, parks and recreation division will undertake planned, monitored and co-ordinated activities aimed at enabling diverse communities to participate fully in their services, programs and decision-making.

**Policy Statement**

The Parks and Recreation Division will endeavor to provide fair and equitable access to its facilities to organizations and individuals across the City of Toronto.

This policy recognizes that the changing nature of the population of the City of Toronto and the emerging patterns of recreation participation affect the demand for access to Parks and Recreation Division facilities.

**Policy Framework**

**When the demand for permits for Parks and Recreation facilities exceeds the available space, this policy will be used for permit allocation in all facilities in all wards of the City of Toronto.**

Permits are allocated to organizations and/or individuals so that recreational services are available to diverse communities throughout the City of Toronto. As such, these guidelines do not, and cannot, cover all situations. Therefore, the Parks and Recreation Division will endeavour to ensure that the intended outcome of the policy is achieved.

Any permit applicant that wishes to appeal their final allocation status may do so through the Parks and Recreation Division.

**Priority Use  
by Participant  
Category**

**Parks and Recreation Division programs and services such as registered classes, drop-in programs and events will be allocated permits prior to all other groups.**

Permit allocation will be applied on a facility specific basis. The Parks and Recreation Division will use the following Participant Categories in priority when assessing permit applications and determining permit issuance:

Where organizations offer programs with a combination of age groups, priority category will be determined based on the category in which the majority of participants fall. Definitions for terms below identified by an asterisk\* will be defined at the end of the policy.

**1. RESIDENT COMMUNITY CHILDREN & YOUTH  
(AGE 0 TO 18 YEARS)**

Organizations or teams providing recreational\* children and youth activities that are not-for-profit\* organizations and that meet a 90% residency\* requirement. When demand exceeds supply, priority will be given to applications from under-represented groups \*. If demand still exceeds supply, girls and female youth will be the priority.

**2. RESIDENT COMMUNITY SENIORS (AGE 60 YEARS +) and  
ADULT (AGE 19 TO 59 YEARS)**

Organizations or teams providing recreational\* senior and adult activities that are not-for-profit\* organizations and that meet a 90% residency\* requirement. When demand exceeds supply, priority will be given to applications from under-represented groups \*. If demand still exceeds supply, senior and adult females will be the priority.

**3. COMMUNITY GROUP**

Organizations or teams that provide City of Toronto residents' recreational\* activities that are not-for-profit\* organizations and do not meet the 90% residency\* requirement. Groups with higher residency will be given priority. When demand exceeds supply, priority will be given to applications from under-represented groups \*. If demand still exceeds supply, females will be the priority. \*

**4. PRIVATE & COMMERCIAL GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS**

Organizations, teams, religious organizations or individuals who do not meet the criteria to be defined as a "Community Group" or who operate on a for-profit basis. When demand exceeds supply, priority will be given to applications from under-represented groups \*. If demand still exceeds supply, females will be the priority

## **Facility Classifications**

In recognizing the unique nature of each facility, the Parks and Recreation Division has classified each facility as being either **Premier, A, B or C**. These classifications are largely based on the amenities at each facility and the level of sports field turf maintenance. Clarification of facility classification is available by request to the Parks and Recreation Division.

- EDCT has special facilities within its inventory that are designed for specific purpose (e.g., theatre, pottery, tennis, etc.). Priority will be given to groups whose activities are in line with the activities for which the facility/space was designed.
- Health, safety and asset protection will also determine access to facilities (e.g., no full-team adult games on mini-soccer fields, no basketball in heritage facilities, etc.)

### **PREMIER FACILITIES**

Premier facilities have dedicated staff, additional amenities and high maintenance standards. Premier facilities are considered those facilities that host city-wide programs/events and are designated as city-wide in terms of allocation.

The Parks and Recreation Director responsible for the facility (in each respective District) is required to approve a percentage of space to be allocated at each Premier Facility for each Participant Category prior to the issuance of permits. The percentage designated to all categories will equal 100% after the Toronto Parks & Recreation direct programming allocation. Resident Community Children & Youth is designated the majority of time, followed by Resident Community Senior & Adult. A maximum of 30% of available time may be designated to Community Groups, Private & Commercial Groups and Individuals.

### **A, B, & C FACILITIES**

The Parks and Recreation Director in each District is required to approve a percentage of space to be allocated at each A, B and C facility on a facility specific basis for each Participant Category prior to the issuance of permits. The percentage designated to all categories will equal 100%. Resident Community Children & Youth is designated the majority of time, followed by Resident Community Senior & Adult. A maximum of 10% of available time may be designated to Community Groups (as identified in category 4), Private & Commercial Groups and Individuals.

At A, B and C Facilities, priority will be given to groups who have a high membership **within a 5 km radius** of the facility within the City of Toronto boundaries.

**Equity Allocation**

Where demand for space from City of Toronto organizations exceeds available space, the applicant's total number of resident participants will determine their time allocation.

Time allocated to each eligible applicant organization is calculated as the percentage of their total resident participants in relation to the total number of resident participants from all applicant organizations requesting the same space.

**Deadline for Permit Applications**

Deadlines for the submission of permit applications for Parks and Recreation facilities are set well in advance of the due date..

Applications received after the permit application deadline are considered ineligible and will not be considered until all eligible permit applications are reviewed and processed.

Permit application deadlines are set according to the type of facility. Some deadlines are seasonal and others are yearly.

**Fees**

Permit fees will be applied as approved by Council.

**\* Definitions**

**NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION**

A not-for-profit organization provides services, programs and opportunities for residents which support the principle of community building.

Volunteer trustees or a board of directors governs the organization and there is no personal financial gain for members, trustees or directors. Any excess of revenues over expenditures are turned back into the organization and funds can only be used for promoting its organizational purpose

Proof of Not-for-Profit status must be provided:

1. Where the organization's annual budget exceeds \$ 5,000.00 the group must have:
  - i. A volunteer executive elected at an Annual General Meeting;
  - ii. A constitution, by-laws and/or letters patent; and

- iii. Financial statements (Note: The City reserves the right To request and audited financial statement)
2. Where the organization's annual budget is less than \$5,000.00, the group must submit an application form, endorsed by a staff member, verifying not-for-profit status.

### **RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Programs and activities that are recreational, cultural or leisure focused such as, but not limited to, aquatics, arts, camps, crafts, festivals, heritage, hobbies, fitness and wellness, sports and life skills.

### **RESIDENCY**

Residents are people who live in, own property in, or own or operate a business in the City of Toronto. Residency can be verified through, for example, a current utility bill, assessment notice or telephone bill with a current address.

### **UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS**

Under-represented groups refer to those identified by the City of Toronto Access and Equity Task Force as being under-represented based on their percentage of the population. Groups include: females; Aboriginal; disabled; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender; and racial.