



MODULE 10

# FACILITIES AND OUTDOOR SPACES



## FACILITIES AND OUTDOOR SPACES



### MODULE 10 OUTCOME:

*Leaders assist in maximizing the safety,  
use and programming of community facilities  
and outdoor spaces.*

## **MODULE 10 – FACILITIES AND OUTDOOR SPACES**

- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 Community Facilities and Outdoor Spaces
- 10.3 Planning and Development
- 10.4 Operations and Maintenance
- 10.5 Preventive Maintenance
- 10.6 Facility-Specific Training

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

- Understand the factors involved in the planning and development of community facilities.
- Understand the role of community in planning facilities.
- Clearly express the importance of recreation facilities in building community capacity.
- Understand the role of the recreation director in the planning and management of community recreation facilities including parks and trails.
- Describe the preventive maintenance requirements for different community facilities, including arenas, curling rinks, pools, parks and trails.
- Access resources required to maintain a healthy and safe facility.

## 10.1 INTRODUCTION

Whether you live in Whitehorse, Mayo, Teslin or another Yukon community, chances are your town is equipped with publicly accessible recreation and parks facilities. These facilities could include anything from a community hall to a swimming pool.

Access to public facilities is an important part of developing and maintaining a healthy community. Studies have shown that the infrastructures for recreation and sport are critical to the strength, vitality and economies of local communities (ISRC & CPRA, 2015). In many countries, access to green space, public parks and recreation opportunities are recognized as important aspects in growth of a local economy, improved health outcomes and the growth of conservation initiatives at a community level (Krueger, 2013).

In Yukon, where opportunities to interact with the outdoors are unlimited, facilities play an increasingly important role in our communities. Facilities become a gathering place; a shared space for locals to engage in a variety of activities, to interact with one another, and to have a sense of pride and ownership for their community.



As an operator of community facilities, there is an implied responsibility to manage these. Things like equipment management, building maintenance and risk management fall under the category of facility management. When done properly, you can vastly increase the success of your programming by offering people a safe, reliable and organized space to enjoy.

This module explores the ways communities and recreation leaders can develop and maintain their facilities in a healthy, sustainable way so generations can enjoy the opportunities community facilities provide. Risk management, an important component of facility management, is explored more fully in [Module 7 \(mod7\)](#).

Parks are usually associated with recreation, particularly in the context of public or municipal recreation. They encompass more than municipal parks; they are outdoor environments developed for recreation purposes and include playgrounds, developed and natural green-space, land and water trails, and government-designated parks.

Playgrounds are outdoor spaces set aside for recreation and play. Some playgrounds have natural elements such as trees, rocks and hills to encourage activity, while others offer man-made equipment to draw out structured and unstructured play.



Outdoor Spaces refer to outdoor environments where people choose to recreate. They include parks, playgrounds, streets, school yards and fields, trails, waterways, campgrounds, green-space, and “the Bush”.

Recreation Places generally refer to facilities and community infrastructure. They provide opportunities to participate in recreation and include community halls, recreation complexes, arenas and pools, libraries, schools, museums, art galleries, private gyms, etc. These are generally the indoor spaces that people might use for recreation and leisure.

Capital and operating expenses are important to understand with regard to facilities. Capital expenses refer to costs for building or establishing a permanent facility, structure, space or equipment. Operating expenses are those needed to run and maintain the facility or space. These can sometimes involve hidden expenses so budgeting, as described in [Module 3 \(mod3\)](#), is an important skill.

## 10.2 COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND OUTDOOR SPACES

In 2010, the Physical Activity Monitor conducted a study that found 94% of parents reported having access to local parks and outdoor spaces in their communities (Canadian Fitness & Lifestyle Research Institute, 2011). Under the Yukon Recreation Act, Yukon Government acts as the primary supporter of recreation facilities in Yukon communities (Lorimer, 2006). These spaces range from community halls, to gymnasiums, to playing fields. In some communities, the recreational facilities are owned and maintained by Yukon Government whereas in others, they are owned and maintained by local organizations identified in the Yukon Recreation Act as Local Authorities for Recreation. As *Module 2 - Recreation Foundations (mod2)* explains, Yukon Government (YG) provides partial funding to the Local Authority to support capital expenditures and operation and maintenance costs (Lorimer, 2006).

The planning and management of community recreation facilities, whether they are owned and operated by YG, a recreation board, community association, municipality or First Nation, may be assigned to a recreation director or facility manager. Responsibilities may involve acquiring insurance, building management and maintenance, careful budget work, and ensuring accessibility for all community members. You may also be responsible for creatively using the space available. A community hall is never simply a place for meetings; it is a dance hall, a roller-rink or a teahouse depending on the time of day and the people using it!



As a facility manager, be familiar with your policies and insurance coverage. Do you have a clear, written policy on how to deal with the loss or damage of facilities, equipment and tools? Having something prepared in advance will help you clearly communicate the expectations and recourse whether it is with employees, volunteers or public users. (Information about user agreements can be found on the last page of *Module 11 - Working with Groups and Partnerships (mod11)*).

Ensure your facility is welcoming and accessible. Use this [\*\*10-Point Facility Accessibility Check List \(url55\)\*\*](#) to assess how inviting your facility is to community members and visitors. Recommendations in the guide provide ideas for improving access by addressing physical, financial, attitudinal and environmental barriers.

In many communities, schools play an important role in the delivery of recreation. Recreation leaders maximize opportunities by working with school administrators to identify how and when school facilities are used for community recreation programs. In Yukon, recreation leaders work with the administrator of the school to reach an agreement. Administrators are directly responsible to Yukon Education as there are no school boards. More information on working with schools is available in these resources:

- [\*\*A Joint Use Agreement Guide \(url56\)\*\*](#) published by the British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) includes checklists, templates and information on legal considerations to help facilitate reciprocal agreements between schools and facilities.
- [\*\*Manitoba Education \(pdf43\)\*\*](#) provides a comprehensive handbook on Community Use for Schools and School Use of Community Facilities. It explains how to develop facility-use policies, procedures and agreements for schools, recreation organizations and municipalities.
- [\*\*New Brunswick Department of Education \(url57\)\*\*](#) explains the value of Community Schools and how building an alliance between the schools and the communities benefits the children and brings residents closer together.

WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW
Facilities are both an asset and a liability. They are valuable, but need ongoing care and maintenance.
Sometimes you have to invest in the facility in order for it to be more useful or accessible. Budget in advance for large improvements.
The more that people use community facilities, the more they feel ownership and pride.
Consider vandalism in facility planning and invite potential offenders to help with the plan.
A large meeting area is a good idea for revenue generation and can be an ideal place to showcase local talent and art.
Demonstrate and encourage good habits like cleaning up after events and functions.
Expand your knowledge and keep current. Take arena and facility management courses.

## TIPS AND ADVICE

- Develop an inventory of equipment, tools and facilities and update it each year.
- Work with all community groups to find new ways to use facilities. Be creative!
- If the facilities are not being used well, ask why and try to remove barriers.
- Always have insurance.
- Facility policies should be clear and understood by everyone involved.
- Be on the lookout for new infrastructure grants to make capital improvements.
- Know your projected costs for annual facility operations so there are no surprises.

## 10.3 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

When planning to develop a new facility, it is essential to engage with community members and groups to ensure development reflects their strengths, interests and capacity. Be sure to read [\*Module 5 - Building and Engaging Community \(mod5\)\*](#) and [\*Module 6 - Planning for Recreation \(mod6\)\*](#) before embarking on a facility planning project.

In the early stages of this type of project planning, work with local government, community groups and citizens to answer several key questions. The information you gather will help to develop a mission statement (purpose) or terms of reference. Make sure you can answer:

- What do we want to do?
- What do we need?
- Why do we need it?
- How will we use it?
- Do we have the capacity to develop, operate and maintain it?

The cost of building facilities in the North is high. Before you look at developing a new facility or acquiring new equipment, look around your community. Consider current assets as well as potential partnerships and collaborations. Is there a space already in existence that can be adapted to fit the needs of your programming? Is there a local business that would be willing to partner with you in exchange for shared equipment? The practice of working in collaboration and shared partnership with private enterprise is one that is becoming increasingly successful in the recreation sector. In small communities with limited resources, these are important opportunities to consider.

Another important consideration is community feedback. Does your community agree with the need? Will this proposal address an important gap in their services? Consult the public using a variety of survey tools either online (e.g. Fluid Survey or Survey Monkey) or by using a paper survey. Some questions about facilities are found in this sample [Yukon Community Survey \(pdf22\)](#). Once you have collected feedback, work with key stakeholders using it to help outline the priorities of your mission statement, and as research when putting together your funding proposal. The Planning Framework introduced in [Module 6 \(mod6\)](#) uses a community development approach that is important for engaging the public.

The next step in planning and development is to assess the costs. What is the initial cost projected to build a facility? How long will the equipment in the facilities last? Consider heating, maintenance and operational costs, as well as facility insurance. Frequently, Northern communities find it easier to access capital funding to build a facility. Where we fall short is in our estimation of the scope of operational and maintenance costs involved with day-to-day facility operations. These costs are always much higher than the revenue from local taxes and territorial operating grants. Talk to other communities and learn from their experiences.

Once you have developed a budget, it is time to review the plan with the community. Is the project financially viable? Who will pay for operations and maintenance year after year? Can the idea be adjusted to make it more feasible? If you decide to proceed, ensure your community is well represented on the planning committee. (Refer to [Module 11 - Working with Groups and Partnerships \(mod11\)](#) for strategies on working with groups.) A motivated working group and community partners are integral to moving the vision forward.

#### DEVELOPING THE FACILITY PLAN

- Determine the need
- Develop a budget
- Assess capital/building costs
- Assess long-term maintenance and operating costs
- Work with local governments and boards, making sure to include community stakeholders
- Apply for grants

## 10.4 OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

The operation and maintenance of a recreation facility is often the responsibility of the public works staff or recreation director or, when a community doesn't have staff, volunteers. Primary responsibilities are to make sure the property is in good working condition and is safe. The continued proper use and care of equipment and facilities ensures that programming runs smoothly and in safe conditions.

Maintenance functions can include:

- Custodial - cleaning, washing, emptying trash, shovelling snow
- Repairs/replacements - replacing light bulbs, pump repairs
- Servicing - lubricating moving parts, fluid changes, special equipment cleaning
- Monitoring - planned inspection of all parts of the facility
- Standards - set to communicate when a job is complete.

It is important to support the people fulfilling these roles and ensure they have access to training resources and policies that can help them do their job. Please refer to Section 10.6 on page 10-12 in this module for more information on facility-specific training.

When it comes to the public use of facilities, safety is a big concern. Risk management is a facility manager's responsibility. It is important that assigned staff or volunteers make the time to review the facilities and consider the potential risks associated with the location. Here are some examples of what should be included:

- Emergency exits are clearly identified.
- First aid kits are easily accessible.
- The location of telephones, and other facility-specific items such as lifesaving equipment, automated external defibrillators (AED's), warm jackets, etc. are clearly identified in accessible areas.
- An Emergency Response Plan for each facility is developed and communicated to all leaders and facility operators.

For more information on risk management, visit [Module 7 \(mod7\)](#).

## 10.5 PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE

Preventive maintenance is defined as a systematic way of inspecting and maintaining facilities to prevent further maintenance problems.

Each of the wide range of Yukon facilities should have specific preventive maintenance plans. The careful upkeep of facilities and equipment helps to prevent unexpected challenges, expenses and disruptions to programming and events down the road.

### Create a Logbook

A logbook can help you with the systematic inventory and inspection of equipment.

To begin, it can include:

- site drawings, building plans and key control systems;
- an inventory of all mechanical and electrical equipment; and
- grounds information including maps and town plans.

Once you have established the basics, move on to develop a set of goals and objectives for maintenance. Identify the primary concerns for repair and upkeep. Next, consider your budget and acquire the necessary equipment, supplies and expertise. This may involve contracting out some of the work. Once goals, financial plans and service providers have been identified, compile a log for regular inspections and routine maintenance. A master schedule can help outline the various requirements of your facility and keep you on track with regular upkeep.

Another useful tool in the successful maintenance of recreation facilities is to develop a clearly communicated policy regarding anything that is lost or damaged by carelessness or theft. While hopefully these instances will never occur, it is important to have a clearly outlined set of steps to follow.

Diligent care of a facility results in a more efficient use of equipment, smoother implementation of programming, energy cost savings, and ultimately a more enjoyable environment for users, staff, and volunteers.

View general safety lists and inspection forms from the Manitoba [\*Recreation Director's Handbook \(pdf11-16\)\*](#).

## 10.6 FACILITY-SPECIFIC TRAINING

### Food Safe

The Yukon's Food Safety and Quality Program is targeted at working with members of the public to identify and minimize food safety risks and to generally increase the safety of food produced in the territory.

Food Safe Level I and II training courses are offered at Yukon College in Whitehorse and through community campuses.

Food Safe Level 1 covers the safe handling of food, proper sanitation practices and workplace safety. This course is important for anyone storing, preparing, serving food, cleaning and sanitizing. Nonprofit organizations are eligible for full cost coverage of these courses.

When preparing and/or serving food for public consumption, at least one person on site must have their basic Food Safe Level 1 certification.

### Pools

Yukon has active summer swimming pool programs in 10 rural communities. All pools in rural Yukon are seasonal, most of which have a greenhouse-style structure that provides a comfortable environment for swimming from May to the end of August. A more permanent structure houses the pool in Dawson City allowing for an extended season.

The municipalities of Carmacks, Dawson City, Faro, Haines Junction, Mayo and Watson Lake own and operate their swimming facilities. In Beaver Creek, Carcross, Pelly Crossing and Ross River, pools are the property of the Yukon Government. These communities act as operators for the pool with Sport and Recreation Branch, and Property Management Division providing facility support.



### Aquatic Training and Certification

Courses may be offered in rural communities to train local lifeguards, instructors and swimming pool staff. There is also a program to re-certify awards that are required to supervise swimming pools. Aquatics training includes, but is not limited to:

- [\*Canadian Red Cross - Swimming and Water Safety \(url58\)\*](#)
- Water Safety Instructor (WSI)
- [\*Lifesaving Society \(url59\)\*](#)
- Bronze Medallion and Bronze Cross
- National Lifeguard Award (NL)
- Lifesaving Instructor (LSI)
- [\*Sears I Can Swim Instructor Training \(url60\)\*](#)



### Spring Aquatics Workshop

Yukon holds an annual [\*Spring Aquatics Workshop \(url61\)\*](#) for pool staff early May. The workshop integrates current Pool Operator Level 1 and Northern content designed specifically for Yukon's rural pool operators. Other Yukon-specific training and workshops available through various organizations may include the Junior Lifeguard Club Program and Boat Safety Education.

## Ice

There are a variety of artificial and natural ice surfaces in Yukon's recreation facilities. Different tools for maintaining curling ice, whether it is natural or artificial, are required. Furthermore, if you are hosting an event on a lake (e.g. a curling bonspiel), be aware of the risks involved in preparing the surface. Take precautions such as measuring the ice depth ([url62](#)) before allowing people access. When working with an artificial ice surface, certified technicians are required to operate the plant.

Yukon is home to several indoor arenas housing a variety of ice surfaces. In addition, many more communities have outdoor ice rinks that are friendly, social spaces where people can gather in the long winter months.



Keeping ice in good playing condition can be a difficult job! For indoor skating rinks this includes Zamboni operations and the knowledge of how to work with a cool ice compressor machine. These compressors work as giant refrigerators to create the rink's cool environment. Find out how ice refrigeration works ([url63](#)). Good ice is defined as being cleared of excess snow, free from deep grooves and gouges, and maintained at a consistent level of hardness and thickness.

Comprehensive training to become an arena ice maker is available for people just starting out. The Arena Ice Maker course covers topics such as principles of ice making and painting, humidity and building conditions, ice temperatures, water quality, ice installation, and ice energy management.

Courses you may wish to consider for your operations staff or volunteers include Arena Ice Maker, Ice Facility Operator and Refrigeration Safety Awareness. These programs are offered in various locations throughout Canada. For maintenance of curling ice, visit [Curl BC \(url64\)](#) or the [Northern Alberta Curling Association \(url65\)](#). For other course information and registration details, visit the [Recreation Facilities Association of British Columbia \(url66\)](#).

## Playgrounds

Playgrounds can be found in neighborhoods across Yukon. These multi-use spaces are designed with equipment to encourage physical participation, non-structural based play areas, imaginative play areas, and a space for caregivers and adults. Training in this field is typically offered through the [Canadian Playground Safety Institute \(url67\)](#). Operators are encouraged to receive this training as it systematically teaches people how to properly plan, install, inspect and maintain playground equipment.



## Parks and Trails

From a community perspective, recreation leaders may be involved in planning and/or supporting the development and maintenance of parks and trails that are located within the community.

Parks and trails provide many of the outdoor spaces where Yukoners recreate. In communities, parks may be developed areas with fields, playground structures, bird watching platforms and picnic areas. Typically when we think of parks, there is an element of planning and alteration to the natural environment.

Trails may also be planned, designed, developed and maintained. Within a community, they are usually shorter and cater to activities like walking, biking, snowmobiling or snowshoeing. Yukon is fortunate to have many longer trails where people may be out on the land for several days or weeks. They are often land-based but they also include waterways such as the well-known Yukon River. The Chilkoot Trail is a renowned land-based historic trail passing through the traditional territory of Carcross Tagish First Nations. The [Trans Canada Trail \(url68\)](#) passes through several Yukon communities.

There are a number of groups in Yukon involved in trail building (e.g. Klondike Snowmobile Association, Contagious Mountain Bike Club). Environment Yukon, a Yukon Government department, has parks planners who can also provide support.

Parks and trails are just like facilities. They need proper risk management plans and regular maintenance. Volunteer groups or paid staff need to look out for hazards such as erosion, damaged trees, fallen signage, overgrown bushes, etc. The Alberta Recreation and Parks Association hosts an annual parks forum that offers expertise in planning and maintaining parks and trails.

Something else to consider is the enhancement of green spaces through community engagement. *Communities in Bloom* ([url69](#)) is a national nonprofit organization that fosters civic pride, environmental responsibility and beautification in communities across Canada by providing resources, support and awards. Recreation leaders have the ability to positively influence decision makers and citizens in creating a welcoming community that will make everyone proud.