

CORPORATE POLICY



Name of Policy:	R-Zone
Policy Number:	COMS - 001
Responsibility:	Manager, Recreation and Planning
Approval:	General Manager of Community Services
Approval Date:	November 23, 2020
Date of Next Review:	November 23, 2024

1.0 Purpose

The City of Sarnia is committed to ensuring the safety of service users and staff in its recreational programs, facilities or properties, and fostering an environment where there is Respect for others, and Responsibility for all actions. The purpose of the R-Zone Policy is to provide the standards and expectations for recreational-user behavior when engaged in sport and leisure activities within City facilities. The City will exercise no tolerance to any form of violence, vandalism or inappropriate behavior in its programs, facilities or properties.

The City's programs, facilities and properties are places that promote learning and leisure for residents. All users and staff have the right to be safe and to feel safe while attending a program, facility or property. With this right comes the responsibility to be accountable for actions or behaviors that put at risk the safety of others.

This Policy outlines the measures and enforcement steps to be taken by staff, volunteers, organizations and users in order to address inappropriate behavior or violence in Parks, Recreation, & Cultural programs, in City owned or leased facilities and properties.

2.0 Scope

This Policy and procedure shall apply to all staff and all persons using recreation, parks and culture programs, facilities and properties, including but not limited to patrons, guests, spectators, fans, coaches, players, parents, volunteers, staff and the general public. The Policy covers structured (i.e. permit issued) and unstructured (i.e. no permit issued) activities.

The actions of the City that may be taken under this Policy arise from the City's authority as owner occupier of its property pursuant to the *Trespass to Property Act* and the *Occupiers' Liability Act*.

Inappropriate or violent behavior prohibited for the purpose of this procedure includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Verbal assaults directed at any person, including but not limited to, participants, officials, members of the public or City staff, which are aggressive or intimidating or have the potential of inciting violence;
- Threats and/or attempts to intimidate;

- Throwing of articles in a deliberate or aggressive manner;
- Aggressive approaches to another individual (physical/verbal assault);
- Actual or attempted physical striking of another person;
- Attempts to goad or incite violence in others;
- Theft of property;
- Possession of weapons;
- Vandalism to buildings, structures or property owned or leased through the City;
- Refusal to follow permit details, this Policy and procedure and other related City Policies / Procedures;
- Racial or ethnic slurs;
- Intoxication or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
- Harassment (“engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome” as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code);
- Bullying, mistreatment which intimidates, humiliates or demeans another person;
- Contravention of City by-laws or policies.

3.0 Definitions

N/A

4.0 Policy

The City shall promote a positive, safe, enjoyable and supportive environment for all users and staff in City recreational programs and facilities, and to increase the level of understanding and awareness of this Policy. This policy will foster a more positive relationship among user groups and organizations moving forward.

4.1 Procedures

Education & Public Awareness

- 1) Community Services, Parks and Recreation with its community partners, will conduct a promotional and educational campaign aimed at raising awareness among parents, participants, volunteers, officials, spectators and patrons of the R-Zone operating procedures and, in particular, the importance of their role in creating a positive atmosphere;
- 2) Posting R-Zone Policy and related information on the City's website;
- 3) Posting R-Zone signage at City Recreational Facilities;
- 4) Include R-Zone Policy awareness in City Recreation employee, convener and program leaders training programs.

Reporting R-Zone Violations

- 1) The City's primary concern is the safety of the service users and staff. If at any time users or staff feel personally threatened, they are to call Sarnia Police immediately. It is NOT the expectation that staff or users put themselves at risk or jeopardize one's safety in dealing with any perceived or real situation;
- 2) City staff are to report acts of violence, vandalism or inappropriate behaviors to the Sarnia Police and their immediate supervisor and convey a report to appropriate association(s) within 24 hours;
- 3) Organizations and users of City facilities are to report acts of violence, vandalism or inappropriate behaviors to the Sarnia Police and/or a designated person of the appropriate organization within 24 hours;
- 4) Organizations dealing directly with incidents are required to inform Community Services of a resolution within 30 days.

Enforcement/Steps

The City will take appropriate actions when incidents pertaining to this procedure occur in City facilities, programs or properties. City staff is authorized to act if inappropriate behavior or violence are observed or reported in the following instances and will contact Sarnia Police:

- 1) Observation (or potential) of any physical violence or vandalism;
- 2) Observation of verbal abuse or (potential) threat;

- 3) The request of an organization representative (i.e. coaches), who acting reasonably is unable to get co-operation from parents, participants, coaches, officials, or spectators;

4.2 Requirements for Organizations, Groups and Users

- 1) If any of the prohibited behaviors occur during an event organized or administered by the organization, group, permit holder and or licensee, the aforementioned shall make all reasonable efforts to stop the prohibited behavior prior to seeking the assistance of the Sarnia Police. What is reasonable will depend on the degree of sophistication of each user. An organization or sports association will be expected to deal with prohibited behavior in a much more sophisticated manner than a person who rents a pool for a birthday party;
- 2) A representative for each group or team must be on site at all times;
- 3) Responsible to undertake appropriate actions when inappropriate behaviors take place including following operating procedures identified in this document. City staff should only be asked to intervene after the organization or permit holder has made reasonable efforts to request the offending individual to leave and have contacted the Sarnia Police;
- 4) Representatives are required to understand the operating procedures;
- 5) Without jeopardizing one's safety, advise the identified party that they are contravening the departmental operating procedures and contact the Sarnia Police if necessary;
- 6) Provide full written report related to incident within the required time frame and notify City personnel.

Upon **witnessing or suspecting physical violence**; enact the following operating procedures and contact Sarnia Police immediately:

- 1) Without jeopardizing one's safety, advise the identified party to stop the activity immediately or they will be asked to leave;
- 2) If party does not co-operate, ask them to leave and call Sarnia Police if call has not already been made;
- 3) If individual refuses to leave, do not engage in argument or physical confrontation but wait for Sarnia Police to arrive;
- 4) Advise authorized staff supervisor or on call supervisory personnel immediately;

- 5) Prepare R-Zone Incident Report to be reviewed by staff;
- 6) All staff, permit holders and organizations shall cooperate and support Sarnia Police during any investigation and prosecution process resulting from any charges laid.

Upon **witnessing** continued **verbal abuse** or activity:

- 1) Assess the situation;
- 2) Advise identified party, without jeopardizing one's safety, that they stop the activity immediately or they will be asked to leave;
- 3) If party does not co-operate, ask them to leave and inform identified party that Sarnia Police have been called;
- 4) If individual refuses to leave, do not engage in argument or physical confrontation, leave and wait for Sarnia Police to arrive;
- 5) Advise authorized staff supervisor or on call supervisory personnel;
- 6) Provide full written report from community group / representative;
- 7) Prepare R-Zone Incident report;
- 8) Incident to be reviewed by staff.

Upon Reported Actions of Physical Violence or Verbal Abuse:

- 1) Upon reported actions of physical violence and verbal abuse by community organizations, groups, users, representatives; enact departmental operating procedures and contact Sarnia Police immediately:
 - Without jeopardizing one's safety, advise the identified party to stop the activity immediately or they will be asked to leave;
 - If party does not co-operate, inform the identified party that they are now trespassing (as Sarnia Police have already been called);
 - If individual refuses to leave, do not engage in argument or physical confrontation, leave and wait for Sarnia Police to arrive;
 - Advise authorized staff supervisor or on call supervisory personnel;
 - Prepare and R-Zone Incident report to be reviewed by staff;

4.3 Consequence of Non-Compliance

- 1) Individuals who engage in any unacceptable behavior, as defined in this procedure, may, depending on the severity, be barred immediately from the premises and if necessary, a ban for a period of time. The ban may apply to all programs, facilities and properties, if warranted. Length of suspension will be determined by a Committee and will depend on the severity of the situation;
- 2) All incidents that result in short term or long term bans or barring from programs, facilities and properties will be followed up in writing by Parks & Recreation staff, outlining the details of the suspension. The final decision related to the details of the banning will be made by the General Manager of Community Services or his/her designate;
- 3) Appropriate staff in facility sections and or geographic areas will be notified of individuals who are barred or individuals who received a letter of trespass from City properties and facilities. Appropriate organizations may be notified of the situation if warranted;
- 4) Incidents will be reported to the Sarnia Police Service, and charges may follow;
- 5) In addition to any other measures taken, where vandalism or theft has been perpetrated, the individual(s) responsible will be required to reimburse the City for all costs associated with any repairs as well as any lost revenues or where appropriate be asked to repair the damage.

4.4 Violation of the R-Zone

- 1) Where a finding has been made of violations of the R-Zone Policy, possible penalties may include the following:
 - Warning letter;
 - Short term ban;
 - Long term ban;
 - Written trespass notice – charges may be laid under the *Trespass to Property Act*.

4.5 Appeal Process

- 1) The City's appeal process shall not be used to attempt to overturn a sanction

imposed by a sports organization;

- 2) Individual(s) wishing to appeal any disciplinary measure may present their case in writing within 14 days of the decision;
- 3) Appeals Committee consist of the General Manager of Community Services, General Manager of Corporate Services or designate in consultation with appropriate staff or organization, will review the appeal and any decision made is final.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

City Recreation Staff

- Recreation staff are the key personnel responsible for the implementation of this Policy and procedures.
- Staff are responsible for ensuring that preventative measures are in place so that incidents of violence, vandalism and inappropriate behavior do not occur in its programs, properties or facilities.
- The City shall work in partnership with community organization and groups to ensure that their members have the opportunity to participate in a safe and positive environment and ensure commitment to the R-Zone.

Visitors

- Visitors to the City of Sarnia's recreational programs, facilities or properties are responsible for behaving and acting in a manner that respects the rights of others in order for the services to be used and enjoyed by all.

Organizations, Users or Permit Holders

- Organizations, users or permit holders of Recreation & Culture programs, facilities and properties are primarily responsible for the behavior of everyone associated with them including participants, officials, spectators, patrons, parents, guests, etc.
- Organizations and user groups by virtue of their signed permits and or agreements for use of City facilities, programs and properties, are expected to promote, support and endorse the City operating procedures identified in this document and within their organizations. In addition, it is the responsibility of the permit holder to ensure all those involved with the group (including out of City groups) are aware of the City's R-Zone.

- Casual users (non-permitted) are expected to abide by, support and endorse the City's R-zone.

3.0 Related Polices

None