



Re-opening Manitoba's Playgrounds, Skate Parks and Day Camps



RECREATION CONNECTIONS
MANITOBA



Summary report
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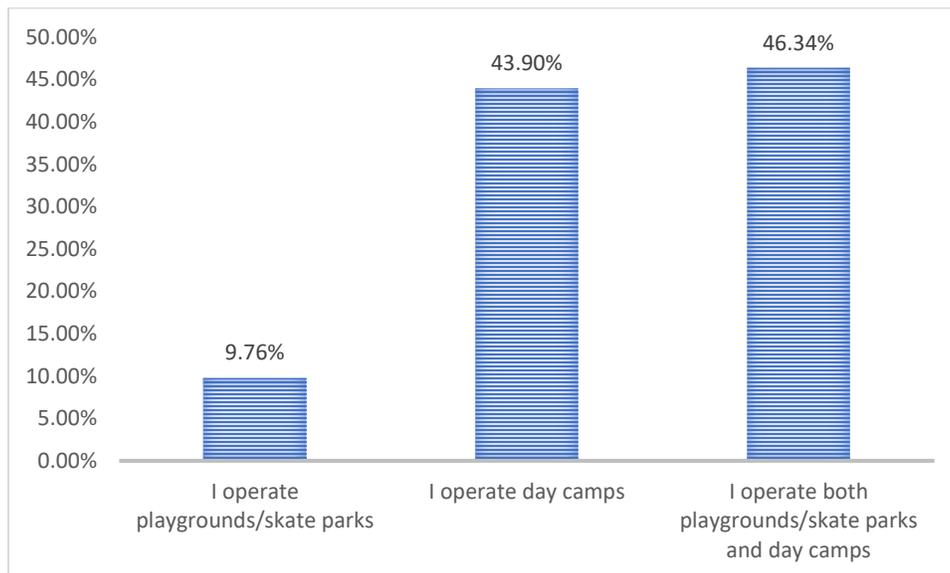
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Background

Recreation Connections Manitoba (RCM) sent out a survey to over 400 members in May on re-opening consideration for playground, skate park and day camp operators. Our members include municipal recreation departments, commissions, recreation directors/programmers/facility managers, and non-profit organizations. We received 49 responses within the specified response time frame.

Participant Demographics

<i>Region</i>	<i>Participant breakdown</i>	
<i>Central Plains</i>	2	4.08%
<i>Eastman</i>	9	18.37%
<i>Interlake</i>	13	26.53%
<i>Northern</i>	5	10.20%
<i>Parkland</i>	2	4.08%
<i>Pembina Valley</i>	7	14.29%
<i>Westman</i>	6	12.24%
<i>Winnipeg Capital Region</i>	5	10.20%
	49	100%



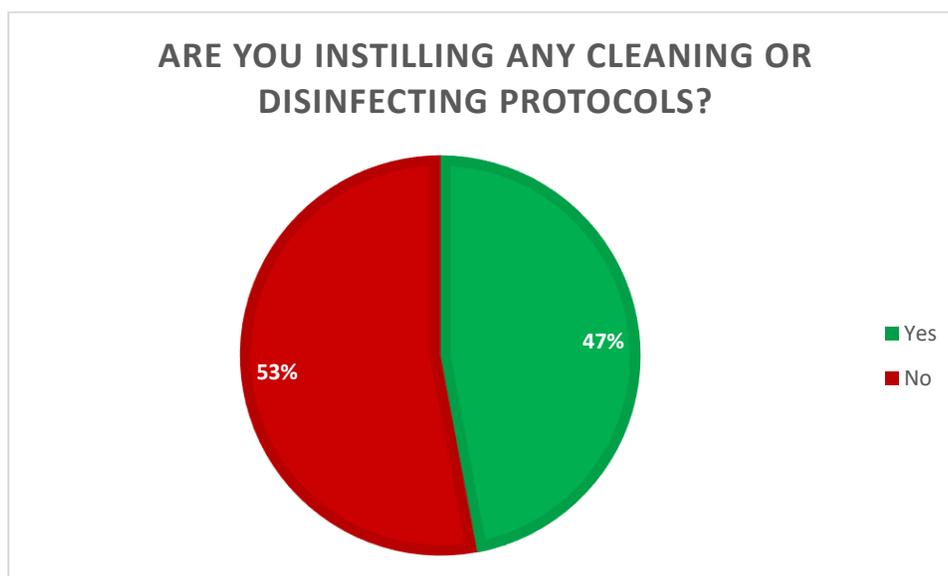
Playgrounds and Skate Parks

Will you be re-opening playgrounds or skate parks?

74% (15) of the participants who operate playgrounds or skate parks stated they will be re-opening the playgrounds in their community on May 4, 2020 in line with Provincial guidelines. One (1) participant noted that their facility was not officially closed however the grounds were inaccessible due to heavy snowfall.

The 32% of playground operators are choosing to leave their facilities closed largely due to capacity constraints as well as the lack of cleaning strategy. The size or location of the playgrounds or skate parks make it almost impossible to implement any form of physical distancing measures.

Cleaning Protocols



Only 47% of the participants confirmed they will be implementing some form of cleaning or disinfecting protocol. These protocols include daily cleaning using disinfectants, provision of hand wash and hand sanitization stations. Signage will also play a big role in ensuring new protocols are enforced by staff and the public.

Majority of the participants who do not currently have a cleaning or disinfecting protocol in place stated that they will not be providing hand sanitizers as it is alcohol based.

Supervision

All participants responded that they will not be providing supervision at their playgrounds or skate parks. Whilst some operators say part-time supervision will be in place, specifically during the sanitization visits, it was emphasized that playgrounds and skate park operators will only re-open if signage encouraging social distancing is allowed. Online and print media will also be used to disseminate information relating to new operational protocols. The public will have to take on the responsibility of ensuring their safety and facilities will be closed if rules are not followed. Enforcement of safety protocols will be referred to the local law enforcement department.

Support required to adhere to provincial or municipal guidelines

To ensure playgrounds and skate parks can follow published guidelines, funding will be required to provide updating existing infrastructure or put new infrastructure in place. Modification will range from separating picnic tables to installing new cleaning facilities in washrooms. More importantly, there is a need for more robust guidelines covering sanitization for playground equipment (how, when and frequency of cleaning). New programming recommendations will need to be in place for both self-directed and supervised activities. This may subsequently result in the need for new programming tools and staff.

Operators would also like access to templates to create signage and protocols for their facilities. Information and resource sharing opportunities are required by playground and skate parks.

Day Camps

Will you be re-opening your day camp?

77% (17) of the participants who operate day camps stated they will be re-opening the playgrounds in their community. Majority of the operators are looking to open in July pending regulatory guidelines and receipt of funding. Operators are looking at the GreenTeam and Summer Federal Employee Program in particular.

The primary factor causing day camp operators to remain closed is facility/space. Some day camps operate within a small building, and as such adequate social distancing cannot be practiced. Others stated the loss of the day camp facility due to school closure.

Day camps operated as summer camps may not reopen due to staffing and space requirements. Many of the summer camp programs are run by students (Grade 12). This proposes several new challenges from programming to physical and mental safety.

Day camps are typically “high touch” environments due to the nature of activities carried out at the camps such as dodge ball, baking, crafts, and swimming. The ability to safely carry out these activities will determine if day camps will reopen.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

71% of day camp operators have some form of PPE protocol in place. This includes the provision of hand sanitizers, disinfectant wipes, masks, and gloves to staff members. Masks and gloves will be enforced during pick-up and drop-off. Others (29%) have not made a decision on the provision of PPE but will be following provincial guidelines on the matter should they reopen the day camps.

Group sizes and supervision

All day camps will operate with a maximum of 16 kids with many stating a desire to operate with at least 8 kids. Below is the breakdown of staff to children ratio for day camp operators. It is important to note that operators would prefer to run on a 1 to 5 ratio, however this will depend on the number of staff approved through the Canada Summer Jobs program.

<i>Staff to Children ratio</i>	<i>% of day camp operators</i>
<i>1: 3</i>	6%
<i>1: 4</i>	11%
<i>1: 5</i>	33%
<i>1: 6</i>	6%
<i>1: 7</i>	17%
<i>1: 8</i>	28%

Operational Considerations

Registration for all but two of the day camp operators will be done online or by phone. Operators will employ the use of online form on their websites, google docs, fillable PDFs form for registration. Payment

will be taken over the phone or via e-transfer. Two (2) operators will continue to use paper or in-person forms and accept cheque or cash payments.

Pick-ups and Drop-offs will be coordinated using a schedule or a staggered approach. Social distancing protocols will be enforced by making families drop off kids one at a time with queues six feet apart as well as having dedicated entry and exits.

Screening will be conducted outdoors in a tent where possible with only campers and staff allowed into the building. Screening includes the completion of questionnaires asking about travel history, general wellbeing and other questions as published by the provincial government/public health. Temperature checks will also be carried out at some camps. Many facilities are still working on the logistics for screening; however, they will be following the guidelines in the COVID-19 Early Learning and Child Care Practice Guidance document¹.

Campers will continue to bring their lunch and some day camp operators will continue to provide pre-packaged snacks provided by local grocery stores or restaurants. Kids will be encouraged to play outdoor as current play stations do not allow for adequate social distancing. Play equipment will be sanitized frequently as stipulated by the early learning and childcare practice guidance documents. Efforts will be made to ensure kids have adequate outdoor time; however, this will only be possible in low traffic areas or times.

Conclusion

Playgrounds, skate parks and day camps play an important role in engaging Manitoba's kids, so it is important for these facilities to reopen as quickly and as safely as possible. Results show that whilst majority of these facilities are making efforts to reopen within the next two months, more guidance is required particularly for playground equipment. Recreation Departments and Commissions are looking for more information and learning resources as they transform their operations to accommodate new recommendations. Funding, capacity, and cleaning restrictions are the main considerations for playgrounds and skate parks whilst staffing and funding is the main consideration for day camps looking to reopen.

¹ Available for download on the COVID-19 resource page. <https://www.reconnections.com/Covid-19-Resources>

We thank everyone who took part in this survey. RCM continues to monitor the situation and will update our resource page with templates, guidelines, and relevant information as they become available.