



# Risk Management Considerations for Gravity/Terrain Parks

**A** gravity park is a terrain “course” with natural elevations that allow the user to gain natural speed through gravity. Gravity parks are used by non-motorized bikes in the summer and snowboards in the winter.

## Risk Management Considerations

### Design of the Park

- Work with an experienced park designer to outline a sensible and safe course for participants.
- Experienced designers should have a good working knowledge of current safety standards and know how to incorporate them into the design.
- Enter into a contract with the designer. The contract should include a hold harmless/indemnification clause as well as a requirement for a Commercial General Liability Policy and Errors & Omissions Insurance. This allows for a contractual transfer of the risks involved in design.
- If a third party is building the park, enter into a formalized agreement that includes a hold harmless/indemnification clause and a requirement for Commercial General Liability Insurance and Environmental Coverage. This allows for a contractual transfer of the risks involved in the construction of the park.

- Consider making the location of the park easily accessible, but away from residential areas to avoid conflict with the community.
- The design should avoid crisscrossing paths.
- Continue to work with the designer until the park is complete and refer back to them for any questions or expansion projects.
- Ensure that barriers are set up to prevent cars, trucks or other motorized vehicles such as ATVs from having access to the park.
- When creating barriers, make sure they can be easily moved or opened so that emergency vehicles can access the park if necessary.

### Collaboration of Bikers and Snowboarders

- In order for the park to be successful, there has to be collaboration with the user groups throughout its design and execution.
- Consult the user groups regarding the design. Allow for their input and give them valid reasons if something cannot be incorporated. This will help them understand the design and prevent them from trying to redesign the park on their own after it's finished.
- Work with the user groups to create a mutual respect that will help to ensure good upkeep of the park and that rules are followed.

## Rules of the Park

- Establish rules that users should follow and post them at the park.
- For example:
  - This is an unsupervised facility.
  - Parents, when you bring your kids, stay and watch them ride or board.
  - Remember, the park is unsupervised.
  - Biking and boarding carries risks. In case of emergency call 911. The nearest phone is located at: \_\_\_\_\_

## Inspection of the Park

- Inspect the park and all of its components daily.
- All inspections should be documented on municipal forms and filed with the municipality.

## Maintenance of the Park

- Maintenance should be carried out as soon as the hazard is reported.
- The park or a section of the park should be closed until the maintenance is complete. Signs should advise why the park is closed and give an approximate time for re-opening.
- Users should fix jumps as they go, but overall maintenance is the responsibility of the City.
- Proper maintenance procedures are essential in minimizing risk of injury and the City's exposure to liability.

## Appropriate Signage

- Appropriate signage serves two purposes: prevention of accidents through warnings signs and avoiding liability through disclaimer signs.
- Signs should be posted throughout the facility in highly visible locations.
- Signs should be written in simple language for participants to understand. Use pictures and symbols to be effective.

- Avoid using words such as “must” and “mandatory” in unsupervised parks, as this requires enforcement.
- Include biking/snowboarding language in your signs. An example of this would be to use the phrase “wear the gear” rather than “protective equipment is mandatory”.
- Include notice of any equipment that is not allowed in the park, specifically motorized bikes and other vehicles.
- Signs must be maintained and should give information such as:
  - a. Hours of operation.
  - b. Notice that the park is unsupervised, or if supervised, hours of supervision.
  - c. Warning of any danger.
  - d. Recommended use of protective equipment.
  - e. Rider etiquette.
  - f. Level of course difficulty.
  - g. Height of the jumps.
  - h. Location of the nearest telephone.
  - i. Who maintains the facility and contact information.
  - j. No unauthorized motor vehicles allowed. If you see them, call \_\_\_\_\_

## Other Considerations

- Environmental: Ensure that the gravity park does not excessively damage the existing environment and make sure to protect environmentally sensitive areas within the park.
- Litter: Provide garbage cans and recycling bins around the perimeter of the park.
- Parking: Make sure there is enough space for parking near the site.
- Washrooms: Locations with public washrooms are desirable. If washrooms aren't nearby, provide a port-a-potty.
- Vandalism: Vandalism can be a problem. Regular inspections can help catch vandalism and remove/repair it quickly.
- 911 markings: If someone is injured at the park, you want to have appropriate markings so emergency vehicles know where to go.