

ICE RINKS

An ice rink can be a valuable community asset with proper funding and management, providing years of enjoyment and promoting a sense of togetherness. However, like any municipal facility, they require careful oversight and maintenance, both to function as intended and to reduce liability risks to your municipality.

Scheduled maintenance is essential for identifying potential issues early, preventing them from developing into major problems that could require significant resources to fix. This proactive approach not only ensures the safety of users but also helps extend the facility's lifespan.

To provide users with a safe and enjoyable experience at your ice rink, it is important to monitor the following areas closely:

Daily Inspections

Documented daily inspections must be conducted before use. Records should indicate when the inspection was completed, who performed it, any areas of concern, and corrective actions taken.

At a minimum, daily inspections should include:

- Inspect the entire rink surface to identify any cracks, bumps, or other irregularities.
- Check the boards, glass, nets over spectator areas and surrounding areas for damage.
- Confirm maintenance of proper temperature and humidity levels to ensure the ice remains solid.
- Regularly measure and monitor the thickness of the ice.
- If applicable, promptly remove excess snow from the rink surface to prevent uneven ice buildup.
- Clear snow from the boards and surrounding areas to avoid interference with skaters.

Equipment Inspection and Maintenance

Regular and proactive maintenance of equipment is crucial for preventing breakdowns, ensuring energy efficiency, and extending equipment lifespan. Always adhere to manufacturers' guidelines and recommendations for maintenance tasks specific to the refrigeration system installed in your rink.

The following are the maintenance areas to focus on:

- Regularly inspect and maintain ice resurfacing machine(s). Follow the manufacturer's maintenance schedule. To prevent loss of ice time, have spares on hand for parts that are regularly needed.
- Regularly inspect and maintain the refrigeration system. Check for any leaks and promptly address them. Follow a preventative maintenance schedule recommended by the system manufacturer.
- If the facility has a dehumidification system, ensure it is functioning properly.
- Maintain the heating and ventilation systems to ensure proper temperature control.

- Provide adequate mechanical ventilation to exhaust contaminated air from combustion sources to the outdoors, away from occupants, and to provide fresh outdoor air to occupied areas.
- Install detection systems for other site-specific products, such as flammable gas, ammonia, carbon monoxide, and nitrogen dioxide, if they are present.
- Regularly inspect and maintain pumps used for circulating refrigerant or resurfacing water.
- Inspect and maintain the electrical system, including control panels, wiring, and lighting.
- If the facility has an emergency generator, perform regular tests to ensure it is operational in case of power outages. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for regular maintenance.
- Inspect and maintain the sound system, scoreboards, and electronic displays regularly.
- Ensure the system for monitoring ice thickness is accurate and well-maintained.
- Regularly test and maintain safety sensors and alarms, including those for emergencies or equipment malfunctions.
- Maintain detailed logs of refrigeration system performance, including temperature and pressure readings, maintenance activities, and any issues encountered.
- Schedule regular professional inspections by qualified HVAC/refrigeration technicians to perform more in-depth system evaluations.

Safety Measures

Safety must always be a top priority for facility employees and users. Employees should be trained in basic safety techniques and informed about approved incident response procedures. Below are recommendations for the minimum safety steps that should be implemented.

- Post and communicate rules to participants.
- Post the disclaimer "Use at your own risk" prominently with the written rules.
- Post rules regarding off-ice stick handling and use of pucks.
- Require participants use safety equipment, such as helmets, for appropriate activities.
- Assign an employee to monitor participant compliance with rules.
- Prohibit persons or pucks from being on the ice while resurfacing equipment is on the ice.
- Signs that read "Beware of Flying Pucks" could be posted in spectator areas. Similar warnings could be printed on tickets and announced periodically over the arena's public address system.
- Verify that all fire and life safety equipment is inspected and working properly. This would include alarms, egress doors, emergency lighting, and fire extinguishers. These reports should be documented and kept on file.
- Train employees in first aid and emergency response.
- Assure that first aid supplies are present at readily accessible locations.
- Develop and review emergency procedures for refrigeration system failures with all employees.

Hold Harmless / Indemnity Agreements

- Hold harmless/indemnity agreements, or waivers, are written agreements whereby one party agrees to hold the other party harmless should a loss or injury occur. It is highly recommended that ice rink users be required to sign a waiver before they are allowed to use the facility. Your legal counsel should review your hold harmless/ indemnity agreement before its use.

Handling Money

Ice rinks should implement revenue-handling policies and procedures based on established business practices. These practices have proven to minimize the risk of losses and establish accountability for transactions. For additional information, please refer to the MML Risk Control Solution titled "Handling Revenue."

***Contact MML Risk Management Services Staff/
or your Loss Control Consultant for more information.***



Important Phone Numbers

MML Risk Management Services	734.662.3246 or 800.653.2483
Loss Control Services	800.482.0626

Note:

***This document is not intended to be legal advice.
It only identifies some of the issues surrounding this topic.
Public agencies are encouraged to review their procedures with an expert
or a competent attorney who is knowledgeable about the subject.***