

Skatepark Design and Management

Line of Business: Property, General Liability

Risk Control Strategy/Key Issues: To establish procedures and guidelines for the safe design, construction, and operation of skateboarding parks.

Suggested Program Elements:

1. Construction & Design:
2. Operation
3. Maintenance
4. Signage
5. Security

1. Construction & Design:

- A licensed and insured contractor specializing in planning, design, and construction of skateboard parks should be used. Good contractor policies and procedures should be established. Contractors should have their own project specific insurance policy that meets specified limits of liability. Certificates of insurance coverage should be obtained and verified.
- Fire Planning - Even an all-concrete indoor park should need fire detection systems and fire protection/a sprinkler system. Check with local authorities to determine what precautions are necessary.
- Emergency Egress - Emergency access to all areas, even the bottoms of concrete bowls, should be provided to facilitate extrication of injured participants.
- Handicapped Access - In keeping with the Americans with Disabilities Act, access to the facility, parking, restrooms, and viewing areas should be fully accessible.
- General Access - The site should be fenced. There should be a minimum of six (6) feet to control access and the facility should be locked after hours. Ample parking should be provided. Provide safe areas for spectators to assemble, so that they are screened from activity.
- If the facility is to be operated at night, the facility should be well lit.
- Building – There should be high ceilings, no poles, and a smooth but “sticky” surface. Concrete surface should not be “brushed”.
- Segregation - Set up separate areas for beginner, intermediate, and advanced skaters. The majority of skaters are beginner and intermediate. Apparatus for these skaters should be smaller, generate less speed, and be more easily approached and ridden.
- Guards for Flyaway Boards - Skates should stay on a skater’s feet, but bikes and skateboards should get away from fallen riders. Precautions should be taken to keep runaway equipment in isolated areas.
- No Cross Patterns - While cross patterns might maximize available space, they are an invitation to disaster. Skate paths should run in parallel lines to keep skaters from running into one another.
- Ramps/Transitions - Obstacle heights should be appropriate for the experience level of the skaters. Transitions, slopes, and bank angles should be appropriate to the height of equipment as well as the intended use. Construction of ramps and other events should be structurally sound and should meet applicable codes. Pros and Cons of Various Ramp Materials:

- ✓ Wood - Relatively low initial cost but requires high maintenance. Marine plywood is best but expensive; masonite or hardboard is in most cases more than adequate. Wood is good for indoors and dry climates. Splinters and gouging are drawbacks.
- ✓ Steel - Low maintenance, but gets hot and could have dangerously sharp edges.
- ✓ Concrete - Low maintenance, less likelihood of dilapidation or injury.
- ✓ Fasteners - Long screws are good. Staples and nails are bad because they tend to come up and snag unwary skaters.
- Design Ideas - Work with kids and hardcore skaters - If you build it, they should come—once. But if it's dull, they won't come back. Work with the skaters in your community to design a course that should be challenging yet safe. In Santa Clara, kids were given clay to play with and shape into a skatepark model. The final design incorporated many of their suggestions; today the park enjoys a steady flow of skaters.
- In general, build it right the first time with materials that require less maintenance; these are safer and pay for themselves in the long run.

2. Operation

- Consider incorporating the skatepark in order to protect the entity.
- A written operation procedure should be established. Participants or their parents, if they are minors, should be required to sign a waiver/hold harmless agreement. Participants' equipment should be inspected prior to entrance into the facility. Access to the facility should be controlled during and after hours of operation.
- If the park is designed to be supervised, ensure that employees are trained in the appropriate first aid, are sufficiently mature and assertive enough to enforce rules, and that phones are available for emergency calls. Basic first aid supplies should be made available.
- Participants should be required to wear personal protective equipment; i.e. helmets, elbow pads, knee pads, wrist guards, appropriate footwear and long pants. Headgear should fit snugly and should not restrict hearing or obstruct vision. (The CPSC and National Center for Injury Prevention and Control have reported that wrist guards and elbow pads help to reduce the risk of injuries to these areas by more than 80% and knee pads reduce injuries by one-third.)
- Skateboards should be permitted only during daytime. No night-time skateboarding should be permitted unless appropriate lighting is provided.

3. Maintenance

- A written maintenance and inspection procedure should be established. Document routine inspections and maintenance. Maintain defective equipment immediately. Close off ramps when they are in need of repair. Document your efforts. Sweep the surface daily. The skateboarding surface should be smooth, free of obstacles and debris. Site should be away from traffic and pedestrians. Close the park when wet, and allow it to dry completely before allowing skating.

4. Signage

- Post signs at the entrance and/or throughout the park warning of the inherent risks of skateboarding and inline skating. Signs should also recommend that skaters wear safety equipment, knee pads, helmets, elbow pads and wrist guards. Rules / regulations signage should be posted in easily visible places. Signage should also document the hours the course is open, that no more than one person should be allowed on a skateboard at a time, that there should be

no glass or bottles inside of fenced track area, that adult supervision should be provided, as well as other applicable rules

- Skaters should get lessons from a qualified instructor. Master the basics: striding, stopping, and turning. Keep your equipment in proper working order. Skate under control at all times. Watch out for road hazards. Avoid water, oil, and sand. Avoid traffic. Skate courteously. Skate to the right of the person on your left. Announce your intentions by saying, "Passing on your left." Always yield to pedestrians.

5. Security

- Security on premises should be provided as this type of structure can be an attractive nuisance. The facility should be fenced and locked when not supervised. The site should be accessible only when supervised. The local police should be requested to include the area in their patrols and to park their frequently.

Program Activities Calendar:

- Daily routine inspections of facility and surfaces.
- Monthly facility audits for building safety and maintenance.
- Annual first aid retraining of appropriate personnel.

Web Site Links:

- Skate Park Association International
<http://www.spausa.org/>
- Skaters for Public SkateParks
<http://www.skatepark.org>
- Inline Skating Resource Center
<http://www.iisa.org/>

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Sample Policy Statement

Skateboard Park Operational Procedures

Governance

XYZ Skatepark, Inc. is registered in the state of ____ as a non-profit organization. Its primary purpose is to act as a governing board made up of parents and youth who are active in skateboarding and inline skating. This group is responsible for establishing operational, safety, and financial policies for XYZ Skatepark, Inc with assistance and guidance provided by the (name of entity).

Operations

- The park should be in operation from May – September. During the summer months, the park should open at 9 a.m. and close at 9 p.m. When school is in session, the park should not open until 3 p.m.
- Access to the facility should be controlled during and after hours of operation.
- Entrants (or, if a minor, their parents) should be required to sign a waiver of liability / hold harmless agreement in favor of the Park and the (*name of entity*). As well, they should be required to receive a copy of the park rules and regulations, and sign an acknowledgement of receipt. These should be maintained in our files. A membership card should be issued only when required paperwork is completed and in the file. Entrance is only permitted with membership card.
- Participants should be required to wear appropriate safety equipment such as helmets, gloves, elbow, and knee pads, and appropriate footwear.
- Participants' equipment should be inspected prior to entrance into the facility.
- Signs should be posted to address park rules and regulations.
- First aid training should be provided on an annual basis for skatepark attendant employees.
- A first aid kit should be kept maintained on premises.

Maintenance and Inspections

- Written maintenance and inspection procedure should be followed.
- Routine inspections and maintenance should be documented.
- Defective equipment should be maintained immediately.
- Close off ramps when they are in need of repair.
- Sweep the surface daily. The skateboarding surface should be smooth, free of obstacles and debris.
- Close the park when wet, and allow it to dry completely before allowing skating.

XYZ Skatepark, Inc.

Sample Rules and Regulations

- "Waiver And Release Of Liability Assumption Of Risks And Consent To Use Of Likeness Membership Registration Form" should be signed by parent (or legal guardian) in person or notarized if participant is under 18 years of age.
- Skatepark membership cards should be presented in order to skate.
- Membership cards are good for one year from date of purchase.
- Participants should be required to wear appropriate safety equipment such as helmets, gloves, elbow, and knee pads, and appropriate footwear.
- Participants' equipment should be inspected prior to entrance into the facility.
- Skating is at your own risk.
- No skating outside of marked boundaries within the skatepark.
- No more than one person should be allowed on a skateboard at a time.
- Exercise caution when using the skatepark and respect the right of way of skaters.
- Skaters should get lessons from a qualified instructor. Master the basics: striding, stopping, and turning. Keep your equipment in proper working order. Skate under control at times. Watch out for road hazards. Avoid water, oil, and sand. Avoid traffic. Skate courteously. Skate to the right of the person on your left. Announce your intentions by saying, "Passing on your left." Always yield to pedestrians.
- No smoking, alcoholic beverages or drugs inside the park.
- Eating and drinking allowed in designated areas only.
- There should be no glass or bottles inside of fenced track area.
- Please dispose of trash properly.
- In the case of the surface being wet due to rain or other reasons, the park should be closed at the discretion of the staff and a credit list should be created for those who paid to skate for the day.
- The XYZ Skatepark, Inc. is built to serve the needs of the community.
- Exercise respect.

Please remember that these rules are designed with skaters' safety in mind. Adherence to the rules should ensure their enjoyment and continued operation of the XYZ Skatepark, Inc.

I agree with the following terms and promise to follow the rules. I understand that breaking any of these rules may revoke my membership for that year.

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____

**WAIVER AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY
ASSUMPTION OF RISKS
AND CONSENT TO USE OF LIKENESS**

**(IF OVER 18 YEARS OF AGE)
READ BEFORE SIGNING**

By signing below, I agree that:

1. I have voluntarily decided to participate in activities and events at, and use the facilities of, XYZ Skatepark, Inc., which is owned and operated by XYZ Skatepark, Inc. I am voluntarily participating with the knowledge of the numerous risks and dangers involved, including but not limited to: physical exertion for which I may not be prepared; consumption of alcoholic beverages; breakdown of equipment, whether rented or owned; accident or illness; the risk of negligence by myself or others, including XYZ Skatepark, Inc.; and the potential for serious injury, including permanent paralysis or death.
2. I should follow all written and verbal rules of safety presented to me by XYZ Skatepark, Inc.
3. The enjoyment and excitement of skating is derived in part from the inherent risks associated with an activity that is beyond the generally accepted margins of safety, and that these inherent risks contribute to such enjoyment and excitement, and are one the significant reasons for my participation.
4. I am responsible for my own welfare and accept any and all risks of unanticipated or anticipated events, illness, injury, emotional or physical trauma or death.
5. One of the conditions to entering XYZ Skatepark, Inc. and using its facilities is my execution of this Waiver; therefore, as lawful consideration for being permitted to enter XYZ Skatepark, Inc. and use its facilities, I hereby RELEASE AND DISCHARGE FOREVER KONA, ITS SHAREHOLDERS, DIRECTORS, OFFICERS, AGENTS, EMPLOYEES, SPONSORING AGENCIES, SPONSORS, ADVERTISERS, AND THE OWNERS AND LESSORS OF PREMISES USED TO CONDUCT A XYZ RELATED EVENT ("RELEASEES"), FROM AND AGAINST ANY AND ALL LIABILITY ARISING FROM MY USE OF XYZ SKATEPARK, INC. OR PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES OR EVENTS AT XYZ SKATEPARK.
6. This release should be legally binding upon me personally, all members of my family and all minors accompanying me, my heirs, successors, assigns and legal representatives, it being my intention to fully assume all of the risks associated with my use of XYZ Skatepark, Inc. facilities and to release RELEASEES from any and all liabilities associated with my use of XYZ Skatepark, Inc. facilities to the maximum extent permitted by law.
7. I understand that XYZ reserves the right to refuse admittance to any person who refuses to sign this Waiver or who it judges to be incapable of meeting the rigors and requirements of participation in the activities.
8. XYZ Skatepark, Inc., its agents, successors and/or assigns, reserve the right to take photographic, film, audio or digital records of me using XYZ Skatepark, Inc. facilities or participating in events or activities sponsored by XYZ Skatepark, Inc.
9. I further agree that XYZ Skatepark, Inc. may use any such XYZ Skatepark, Inc. media for promotional and/or commercial purposes, as well as approve such use by third parties with whom XYZ Skatepark, Inc. may engage in joint marketing, without any remuneration to me. I hereby assign XYZ Skatepark, Inc. all right, title and interest I may have in or to XYZ Skatepark, Inc. and grant XYZ Skatepark, Inc. a royalty-free, exclusive, perpetual and irrevocable license to the XYZ Skatepark, Inc. media.
10. I agree that any dispute or claim concerning this Agreement, should be resolved exclusively by binding arbitration according to the then existing rules of the American Arbitration Association in (this state). (This state's) law should govern this Agreement, excluding any application or consideration of any conflict of laws provisions.

BY SIGNING BELOW, I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I HAVE READ, UNDERSTOOD AND AGREE TO THE WAIVER AND OTHER PROVISIONS SET OUT ABOVE.

Participant's Signature _____

Print Name: _____

Drivers License or ID # _____

Date Signed _____



**WAIVER AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY
ASSUMPTION OF ALL RISKS
AND CONSENT TO USE OF LIKENESS**

**FOR PARTICIPANTS OF MINORITY AGE
(UNDER 18 AT TIME OF SIGNING)
THIS FORM SHOULD BE NOTARIZED IF COMPLETED**

AWAY FROM XYZ SKATEPARK

This is to certify that I, as parent/guardian with legal responsibility for this participant, do consent and agree to his/her release as provided herein, for myself, my heirs, assigns, and next of kin and any other parent and/or guardian who has placed custody of the above-named minor participant in my care. I further release and agree to indemnify and hold harmless the RELEASEES from any and all liabilities incident to the minor participant's use of the XYZ Skatepark, Inc. facilities and/or participation in events or activities at XYZ Skatepark, to the fullest extent permitted by law.

BY SIGNING BELOW, I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I HAVE READ, UNDERSTOOD AND AGREE TO THE WAIVER AND OTHER PROVISIONS SET OUT ABOVE.

Signature of Skater: _____

Print Name: _____ Date Signed _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date Signed: _____

Driver's License or ID # _____

Home Phone #: _____ Work Phone # _____

Home Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

WITNESS my hand and official seal.

NOTARY PUBLIC

[SEAL]

Glossary for Common Skatepark Design Features

'Street' is a style of skating that developed in the lean years of skateparks. In lieu of legitimate skate terrain, skaters adapted to their urban surroundings in order to develop their skills. Typical street skating features mimic common concrete structures found on any street, anywhere.

Funbox - An elevated block, with banked or transitioned sides, and a flat top. Skaters ride from, or jump, side to side over it.

Rail - A steel railing that skaters grind or slide their board or skates down. Rails can be close to the ground or elevated, parallel to the ground or angled, or positioned over stairs.

Stairs - Just like in the real world...skaters jump over and down set of stairs as a display of skill and precision.

Ledge - Used to jump over, down from, or up to. Skaters also slide or grind their board or skates along the sharp corners.

Bank - A banked wall, used as a surface for performing tricks, for turning, or to generate speed. Typically found around the perimeter of some skateparks.

Gap - A void between two surfaces or transitions, meant to jump over.

Spine - A ridge between two opposed (back-to-back) transitions. Skaters manipulate their board or skates over or across it.

Curb - Small ledge (4" - 6" tall), just like you would find on your street; used to grind or slide.

'Vert' skating refers to vertical surfaces above transitional surfaces. Originally practiced in empty swimming pools, modern vert skaters have adapted to ramps and bowls of all types.

Bowl - Resembles a pool with transitions leading up to vertical. The variety of sizes and shapes are almost limitless.

Quarter Pipe - A singular transition, typically found at the perimeter of a skatepark.

Half Pipe - Facing transitions. Skaters work a half pipe back and forth, generating speed by pumping through the transitions, and performing tricks at or above the lip.

Combi-Bowl - Any combination of connected bowls. Skaters ride one bowl and 'transfer' to another without speed loss, either across the bottom or over the coping.

Hip - A protruding pair of transitioned walls typically set at an angle. Skaters 'transfer' from one wall to the other, over the corner of the hip.

Tranny - Short for 'transition', which allows skaters to perform tricks and generate speed.

Lip - The corner, edge, or ledge of a skate feature. Many tricks are performed while on/at the lip, or moving along the lip.

Coping - Hollow steel tubing (1" - 2" diameter) embedded in the lip of a skate feature. The steel (a consistent surface) allows skateboards and skates to slide and grind across the lip smoothly.

Flat - Any area absent of skate features. Important to be incorporated into the design of a park properly, to allow an un-crowded layout, and so skaters can 'push' to create more speed.