
15. Facilities



Introduction

Many community organizations have and are responsible for sport, culture and recreational facilities. It may be an office building, a hockey or curling rink or a community hall. It might be a rental or owned by the group. Either way there is an implied and accepted responsibility. When you own or manage a facility, it is both good and bad news. The good news is you have it as a resource and a community asset, meaning that it is there and you can use it. The bad news is that they need to be insured, managed, maintained and often this is with limited budgets that do not cover upkeep or updating. A general rule of thumb is that building the facility is about 20% of the cost – the other 80% is in maintaining it, staffing and insurance over the years.

Equipment is often thought of in this category as it is an asset that requires good management, regular care, rules and policies as well as replacement or updating. If the equipment is expensive or difficult to replace, it is also important to have systems to keep track of who is using it and where it is going if it leaves the building in which it is stored. Most groups have an inventory of their equipment (including office equipment and other items used as part of their programming) and make a point of looking at everything at least once a year to make sure it is in good shape, safe, and usable.

Policies and Insurance

Policies should be in place for both facilities use and equipment so that everyone is clear about what is expected of them when they use the facilities, vehicles, equipment, or tools. Loss by damage, carelessness or theft are just things we don't think about until they happen and it becomes an issue or problem. This is when a policy comes in very handy to let people know what the conditions or terms of use and care are and what will happen if it is damaged or lost, or if there is an accident or difficulty.

Insurance for the facility and liability coverage are normally required in public facilities. It can cover loss and damage as well as accidents causing personal injury. This type of insurance can be expensive but should be put into the budget as a part of the cost of doing community business. If there is a special situation, a liability waiver may need to be in place or special arrangements made for short-term coverage. The best advice is to make sure someone in the organization understands the liability risks and that there is adequate coverage in place. Get advice and information from several sources before deciding how much and what type is best.

Facility Management

Facilities require management, often on a daily basis, to ensure that the facilities are well used, well cared for and promoted. Some of the management is caretaking and some may involve the use and care of special equipment such as that used for making ice or cutting grass. Facility managers are often the janitors, handy people and holders of the keys. It is important to support them with appropriate resources, training and policies to help them do their jobs.

The more a facility is used, the more it becomes part of the community, not just a place that needs to be heated in the winter and painted every five years. Managers are often on duty or on call for long periods of time during the season that the facilities are in high use. They should be appreciated and helped in any way possible. By explaining the basics to the community (what it takes to operate and keep facilities and equipment in good shape and available), the more they may be willing to help – always aiming for everyone feeling that they are part of the facilities management and taking personal responsibility for its care and upkeep.



The Northern Context

Facilities are at the heart and soul of northern life. Almost every community has either an arena, community hall or some other sport, culture or recreational facility. Often they are the pride of the community and are well cared for and well used. In other instances they have been vandalized and are in poor shape or not kept clean enough. Northerners say that the way their facilities are looked after is a direct reflection on the community and how much self-esteem it has.

The better the facilities are cared for – the higher the self-esteem of the community. Community facilities are well used and often creatively used in the north. Because it costs so much to heat the buildings, it is important to use them as much as possible. Therefore, they are the “gathering places” for community events and are filled with many memories.

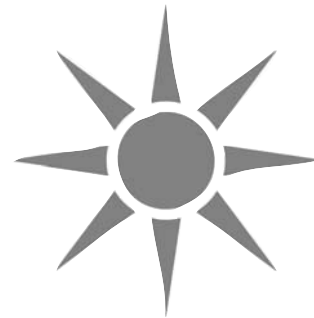
“One of the biggest things to happen in our community was the building of the outdoor rink. It’s great to see our kids having a chance to play and develop new skills. Now all we need is a big arena.” – Daniel Bear, Mayor, Sandy Bay

What's Important to Know?

- ★ Facilities are both an asset and liability in that they are valuable but they need ongoing care and maintenance.
- ★ Sometimes you have to invest in the facility in order for it to be more useful or accessible – budget ahead for large improvements.
- ★ The more that people use the facilities, the more they will feel ownership and pride.
- ★ Consider vandalism in facility planning and invite potential troublemakers to help with the plan.
- ★ Having a large meeting area is a good idea for revenue generation and they are often a ideal place to showcase local talent and art.
- ★ Demonstrate and encourage good habits like cleaning up after events and functions.
- ★ There are arena and facility management courses that should be taken.

Tips and Advice

1. Develop an inventory of equipment, tools and facilities and update it each year.
2. Work with all community groups to find new ways to use facilities. Be creative!
3. If the facilities are not being used well, ask why and try to remove barriers.
4. Always have insurance – yes, always.
5. Facility policies should be clear and understood by everyone involved.
6. Watch for infrastructure grants to make capital improvements.
7. Know the costs for operating facilities each year so there are no surprises.



Story

After a couple of years discussion and negotiations by the Buffalo Narrows Friendship Centre Board of Directors and the Mayor and Council of the Northern Village of Buffalo Narrows, the vision of locating the Friendship Centre in the Lakeview Complex became a reality. A permanent youth centre is located in the upper foyer of the curling rink and the main foyer of the curling rink is the social drop-in centre. The gymnasium and arena are busy and the Lakeview Complex houses 10 of the 19 Friendship Centre staff.

“The La Ronge Area communities have great facilities and make good use of them. The track at Senator Myles Venne School, developed when Lac la Ronge Indian Band hosted the 2001 First Nations Summer Games, is excellent. The curling rink at the Mel Hegland Uniplex in La Ronge was used as a skateboard park for many summers. Now we will be getting an outdoor skateboard park for the youth.” – Thomas Sierzycki, Town of La Ronge Mayor

“What about the kids who don't play hockey or even skate? Our community asked the residents what they want to do and therefore, what type of facilities they need to do it in. We followed through and applied for a track through the Building Communities North grant program.” – Phyllis Smith, Pinehouse

Toolbox Connection

In the toolbox you will find the following tools related to this section:

- Facilities Planning Process
- Facility and Equipment Review
- Facility Inventory Sheet
- General Safety Check List
- Vandalism Report
- Equipment and Facility Records
- Sample Arena Policy (Canoe Lake)
- Sports and Recreation Risk Management