


## COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

	Number:	<b>25-470</b>	Meeting:	<b>December 22, 2025</b>
	Agenda Item:	<b>47c</b>	Roll Call:	<input type="text"/>
	Submitted by:	<b>Benjamin R. Page, Parks and Recreation Director</b>		

### AGENDA HEADING:

Approval of updated City of Des Moines Parks and Recreation Rules.

### SYNOPSIS:

Recommend approval of changes to Parks and Recreation Rules, including these substantive changes which incorporate new rules that reflect the advancements of the Parks and Recreation Department since the adoption of this document in 2024 and clarify intent of select, existing rules:

- Sections IV, V and VII: Removes wading pools
- Sections IV, V, VIII and IX: Adds limits of access and availability of water and electricity utilities
- Section VI: Notes ages of an adult for various purposes of this section; adds ability of staff to close the facility during no and low attendance; clarifies minimum heights; removes specific measurements that could vary; strengthens rules language that read like suggestions; modifies rental timeline; eliminates non-rule language covered by our reservation software system.
- Section VIII: Disallows watercraft in buoyed swimming area at the beach; and strengthens language related to driving and vehicle parking including the ability to enforce rules.
- Section XIV: Adds basketball to facilities covered; adds lighting and pickleball court rules
- Section XVI: Disallows amplified sound
- Section XVIII: Expands list of prohibited substances
- Section XIX: Moves rules that apply to just one (1) facility from the general rules to a facility-specific list
- Section XX: Adds ability of staff to close the facility during no and low attendance times; and modifies rental timeline

**FISCAL IMPACT: NONE**

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- The Parks and Recreation Rules is a separate, yet complementary, document to Chapter 74 of the Des Moines Municipal Code, which is dedicated to the organization and management of the City

parcs and recreation facilities and outlines the role of the Parks and Recreation Board, the authority of the Parks and Recreation Director, operation of City parks and recreation facilities and the fees for use of facilities and programs.

- In addition to the Municipal Code, rules are needed for specific City parks and recreation facilities to regulate use. Although rules are not always included in the City's Municipal Code, they are enforceable when approved by the City Council.
- The rules, when combined with the Municipal Code, govern the use of the City's parks and recreation facilities. Wherever possible, rules do not duplicate what is addressed in the Municipal Code.
- On October 22, 2019, the Parks and Recreation Board, via Resolution No. 19-080, approved for the first time the Parks and Recreation Rules assembled into one (1) comprehensive document.
- This is the fifth update to the rules document and incorporates changes that reflect advancements of the Parks and Recreation Department. These are described in succinct detail below. Additional minor changes are proposed to improve formatting, consistency and clarity, but do not modify the meaning of the existing rules language.
- Elected and appointed leaders should use this communication as a guide to the changes but still read in detail the proposed modifications shown with "track changes" on in the copy of the Parks and Recreation Rules provided in their meeting packet. Substantive changes include:
  - *Sections IV. Enclosed Shelter Rules, V. Open Air Shelter Rules and VII. Splash Pools and Sprayground Rules (formerly VII. Wading Pools, Splash Pools and Sprayground Rules):* Proposed changes in these three (3) sections removes wading pools from all rules sections where they were reference as these facilities have now been fully eliminated.
  - *Sections IV. Enclosed Shelter Rules, V. Open Air Shelter Rules, VIII. Gray's Lake Park Rules and IX. John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park and Western Gateway Park Rules:* Proposed changes in these four (4) sections adds the limits of access and availability of utilities to renters to the rules to correspond with what is outlined in the rental agreement and waiver language. Access to exterior water spigots are not included with any rental and it is not possible to guarantee working order of electrical outlets due to exposure to possible vandalism, weather conditions and similar impacts. Additionally, the addition strengthens renters' responsibility to not overload circuits.
  - *Section VI. Swimming Pool and Aquatic Center Rules:* These proposed changes:
    - Note the ages of an adult for various purposes of this section. In regard to fees, so that we can offer greater affordability, adult pricing begins at age 19. In reference to any rule that pertains to adults otherwise, this remains consistent with widely held standards and laws defining that at age 18.
    - Add the ability of staff to close the facility one (1) hour in advance of the standard facility closing time if no patrons are present and to announce a possible closure within an hour if there are 10 or fewer patrons present for greater than one (1) consecutive hour and attendance does not increase within that hour to a number that the pool supervisor deems adequate.

- Clarify minimum heights to eliminate any potential confusion if this measurement is intended as a minimum or maximum.
  - Remove specific measurements that could vary, such as water heights that could change based on weather, facility and similar conditions.
  - Strengthen language of rules that read like suggestions to eliminate confusion as to these rules being a requirement or optional.
  - Reduce the number of days in advance that rentals must be scheduled from 10 to seven (7) days to provide a gap between that and the 10 days in advance that reservations must be canceled or modified.
  - Eliminate non-rule language covered by our reservation software system as this information is not necessary in official rules.
- *Section VIII. Gray's Lake Park Rules:* These proposed changes:
    - Disallow watercraft in buoyed swimming area at the beach to support safety and reduce risk for patrons both in the water and in watercraft.
    - Strengthen language related to limits of where driving and vehicle parking is permitted.
    - Clarify that parking at Gray's Lake Park is only for use of facilities and amenities within this park or City-owned facilities adjacent to the park and that parking for events held at another venue or non-City-owned facility are not permitted, including that violators may be ticketed and/or towed. This addition is supported by existing language in Chapter 114, Article XV and will be further strengthened by an upcoming update to Chapter 114, Article XV.
  - *Section XIV. Tennis, Basketball, Pickleball and Futsal Court Rules (formerly Tennis, Pickleball and Futsal Court Rules).* These proposed changes:
    - Add basketball to the title of the section so that court rules may also apply to basketball court facilities; and
    - Add limits to when court lighting, if provided, may be on and specific pickleball court rules.
  - *Section XVI. Community Recreation Center Rules:* This proposed change modifies the previous rule that limited the way music could be played to now disallowing amplified sound and supporting use of personal headphones or earbuds.
  - *Section XVIII. School Park Rules:* This proposed change expands the list of prohibited substances from just alcohol and tobacco to also include illegal drugs and vape products.
  - *Section XIX. Dog Park Rules:* This proposed change moves rules from the general rules list that applied to just Ewing Dog Park facility to a facility-specific list to align with the approach of other sections, and the language was modified slightly to capture all possible dog weights and places them within either small or large dog areas with no overlap.

- *Section XX. Brenton Skating Plaza Rules:* These proposed changes:
  - Add the ability of staff to close the facility one (1) hour in advance of the standard facility closing time if no patrons are present and to announce a possible closure within an hour if there are 10 or fewer patrons present for greater than one consecutive hour and attendance does not increase within that hour to a number that the supervisor deems adequate.
  - Reduce the number of days in advance that rentals must be scheduled from 10 to seven (7) days to provide a gap between that and the 10 days in advance that reservations must be canceled or modified.

**PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):**

Date: December 9, 2024

Roll Call Number: [24-1687](#)

Action: [Approval](#) of updated City of Des Moines Parks and Recreation Rules. ([Council Communication No. 24-501](#)) Moved by Gatto to adopt. Second by Voss. Motion Carried 7-0.

**BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S):**

Board: Parks and Recreation Board

Date: November 25, 2025

Resolution Number: 25-079

Action: Motion by Davis to approve the rules as presented. Second by Beltrame. Motion carried.

**ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS: NONE**

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