

Ramsey County Parks & Recreation Ordinance

Purpose

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners is authorized by Minnesota Statutes Section 383A.07, subd. 12, to enact these ordinances, which authorizes the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners to enact ordinances to govern the conduct of members of the public during their use and enjoyment of the Ramsey County Parks & Recreation System, including waters and public lakeshore within the System and not more than 300 feet of the waterfront immediately abutting such public lakeshore. This ordinance is enacted to promote the health, safety, welfare, and enjoyment of all persons, and to protect park property and resources for future generations.

Ramsey County Parks & Recreation facilities are open to all persons regardless of race, gender, gender identity, age, creed, national origin, sexual or affectional orientation, color, ancestry, disability, marital status, religion, familial status, or status with regard to public assistance.

Definitions

For purposes of this ordinance, the following definitions apply, unless the context clearly indicates a different meaning. Any term that is not defined will be interpreted as the commonly understood meaning.

ALCOHOL. Any beverage containing more than one-half of one percent (0.5%) alcohol by volume, including intoxicating liquor, wine, beer or malt liquor, and 3.2% malt liquor.

BOARD. The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners.

DANGEROUS WEAPON. Any firearm, whether loaded or unloaded, or any device designed as a weapon and capable of producing death or great bodily harm, including bows and arrows, sling shots, bowie knives, razors, and switchblades. Dangerous Weapon also includes any combustible or flammable liquid or other device or instrumentality that, in the manner it is used or intended to be used, is calculated or likely to produce death or great bodily harm, or any fire that is used to produce death or great bodily harm.

DEPARTMENT. The Ramsey County Parks & Recreation department.

DIRECTOR. Parks and recreation department director or designee to whom specific duties have been assigned by the director or the county manager.

FIREWORKS. Any composition or device for the purpose of producing a visible or an audible effect by combustion, deflagration, or detonation, including firecrackers, bottle rockets, roman candles, sparklers, snakes, and smoke devices.

MOTOR VEHICLE. Any self-propelled vehicle or vehicle propelled or drawn by a self-propelled vehicle which is operated on a highway, on the ground, or in the air.

PARK OR PARKS. Any park, open space, arena, golf course, special-use area, trail corridor, or any other area owned, improved, maintained, operated or otherwise controlled by Ramsey County. **PARK OR PARKS** also includes any lake, pond, river, stream, or other body of water located wholly within the boundaries of a Ramsey County park or any public shoreline owned by or under the authority of the Board, including those waters lying within 300 feet of the waterfront immediately abutting park lakeshore.

PERMIT. Written permission that must be obtained from the department to carry out certain activities or to obtain exclusive use of all or portions of specific areas, building, and other facilities for conducting special events. Fees may apply.

Regulations

1. Park Hours

- a. Parks are open 5:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. This time limitation does not apply to people who, without delay, are traveling on Regional Trails.
- b. The Department may close Parks or areas within Parks to the public as necessary to protect public safety or property.
- c. Entering or remaining in any locked building, or any park area that is closed to the public, is not allowed.

2. Permits

- a. Permits are required for exclusive use of all or a portion of a Park or park facility for special events, and for conducting private lessons or classes for commercial gain or conducting any business enterprise within a Park.
- b. Some activities that are prohibited in this ordinance may be permitted with written approval from the Department.
- c. Permit holders must follow all rules outlined in the permit.
- d. Permit holders cannot transfer their permits to another person or entity.
- e. Permit holders are responsible for any damage or injury that occurs as a result of the event or activity for which a permit was granted.
- f. The Department may revoke a permit at any time.
- g. Harassing or interfering with a permit holder, their event, property, or equipment is not allowed.

3. Protecting Park Property

- a. Damaging, vandalizing, altering, or removing any park property is not allowed. Park property includes the park buildings, grounds, signs, and equipment.
- b. Dumping or littering trash, yard waste, liquids, furniture, or construction materials is not allowed in any Park.
- c. The use of or encroachment on park property for personal or private use, such as storing equipment, erecting structures, installing objects, posting signs, or placing utilities, is not allowed.
- d. All Park signs, barriers, and posted rules and regulations must be followed at all times.

- e. Lost and found items may be held by the Department or may be turned over to the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office to be disposed of according to Minnesota Statutes, Section 345.15.
4. Protecting Natural Resources
- a. Removing, altering, or damaging any plant or animal is not allowed. Fruits, nuts, and mushrooms on park property may be foraged and harvested for personal use.
 - b. Planting any plants or releasing an animal into any Park is not allowed.
 - c. Digging or excavating land in any Park is not allowed.
 - d. Feeding, hunting, trapping, or disturbing any animal in a Park is not allowed.
 - e. Fishing is allowed, consistent with the Rules of the State of Minnesota.
5. Conduct
- a. Threats, fighting, harassment, or bullying others in the Park is not allowed.
 - b. Small amounts of trash created within the Park, such as food containers for a picnic or decorations for a party, must be deposited in trash or recycling containers provided in the Park, or may be carried out for disposal off-site.
 - c. Wine and beer are allowed in Parks if local city ordinance allow. All other types of alcohol are not allowed. Kegs, barrels, or taps of beer require a permit. Selling wine or beer requires a permit, and sales must comply with liquor licensing regulations for the city in which the Park is located.
 - d. Charitable gambling must be duly authorized by the Minnesota Gambling Control Board and is allowed only upon permit approved by the County Board.
 - e. Soliciting donations or money, or selling anything in Parks is not allowed, except with a permit.
 - f. Posting, displaying, pasting, fastening, painting, or affixing any bill, notice, or sign upon any structure, tree, stone, fence, or enclosure in Parks is not allowed.
 - g. Commercial photography that requires a crew of more than one photographer and one photographer's assistant requires a permit.
 - h. Fires are allowed only in approved fire rings and must be completely extinguished when unattended. Cooking fires are allowed only in grills provided by the Department or small private grills. Ashes or hot coals must be disposed of in Park containers marked specifically for ashes and coals. Smokers or oversized grills require a permit.
 - i. Audio devices, such as speakers, radios, and musical instruments may be played, but must be heard no more than 25 feet away. Groups or picnic shelter users must apply for a permit for amplified sound, and the amplified sound must be heard no more than 50 feet away.
 - j. Any large amusement equipment, including a bounce house, dunk tank, or portable climbing wall requires a permit.
 - k. Obstructing or interfering with a county employee or agent of the county in the performance of their duties is not allowed.
 - l. Smoking, vaping and commercial tobacco use is governed by a separate Ramsey County ordinance.
6. Firearms and Dangerous Weapons
- a. Firearms and other dangerous weapons are not allowed in Parks, except as permitted by Minnesota law and local ordinances.

- b. Bows and arrows are allowed only in archery ranges. Crossbows are allowed at archery ranges only for adaptive needs.
 - c. Firing any weapon in or into a Park is not allowed.
- 7. Fireworks
 - a. Possessing or setting off fireworks, rockets, smoke bombs, or other pyrotechnics is not allowed.
- 8. Pets
 - a. Pets must be on a leash no more than 6 feet long at all times, except within designated dog park areas.
 - b. Pets are not allowed in any park buildings, picnic areas, beach areas, playgrounds, golf courses, or on the Tamarack Nature Center grounds. This prohibition does not include or apply to service animals as defined by Americans with Disabilities Act.
 - c. Leaving pets unattended or allowing them to disturb others is not allowed.
 - d. Pet feces must be picked up and properly disposed of.
- 9. Picnicking
 - a. All Park shelters and pavilions require a permit to use.
 - b. 10'x10' canopies may be used among picnic tables. Canopies used for this purpose must be weighted down and cannot be staked into the ground or tied to trees or other Park property.
- 10. Swimming
 - a. Swimming is allowed only in designated swimming areas.
 - b. Glass containers and bottles are not allowed in beach or designated swimming areas.
 - c. Fires and grills are not allowed in beach areas.
 - d. U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets are allowed and encouraged. Inflatable toys, such as inner tubes, rafts, or loungers are not allowed.
 - e. All lifeguard or staff directions and instructions must be followed at all times.
- 11. Fishing
 - a. All Minnesota State Statutes and Rules must be followed at all times.
 - b. Fishing is not allowed in prohibited areas.
 - c. Spearing, netting, and trapping any aquatic animals is prohibited.
 - d. Ice-fishing houses must use boat launches to access the water and cannot be kept on park property.
- 12. Boating
 - a. Boats must be launched only in designated areas, such as boat launches.
 - b. Boats cannot be left unattended.
 - c. Boats, including boats towing people (water skiers, towable tubes), must be operated at least 100 feet away from swimming areas.
 - d. Operators of boats are not allowed to create a wake that will damage, injure, or disturb people or park property.
 - e. All watercraft must be inspected for and removal of any aquatic plants or animals according to guidelines at ramseycounty.us/ais. Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 84D, Invasive Species also applies.
- 13. Bicycles

- a. Bicyclists must operate bicycles in a safe manner at all times, staying as close to the right-hand side of the trail as safe conditions allow.
 - b. Bicyclists and off-road cyclists must yield to pedestrians and pass with care.
 - c. Bicycles must be operated only on paved trails, except for designated off-road biking trails.
 - d. Bicyclists must follow all Minnesota State Statutes regarding bicycles.
 - e. Electric bicycles are allowed on paved trails, and must be operated safely at speeds below 20 mph.
14. Skating: Roller-Skating, In-Line Skating, Skateboarding, Scootering
- a. Skaters must skate only on paved trails and in a safe manner, staying as close to the right-hand side as safe conditions allow.
 - b. Skating is not allowed in any park building or shelter.
 - c. Electric scooters and similar electric skate equipment are allowed only on paved trails and must be operated safely at speeds below 20 mph.
15. Winter Activities
- a. Cross-country skiing is allowed only on designated trails and with a Ramsey County approved ski trail pass.
 - b. Groomed cross-country ski trails are for skiers only. Pedestrians and snowshoers are not allowed on groomed ski trails.
 - c. Snowshoeing and cross-country skiing is allowed in Park areas open to the public. Snowshoers and skiers must not damage trees or plants.
 - d. Snowmobiles are only allowed in Parks in winter at boat launch parking lots as a way to get slowly and safely from a trailer directly to the lake.
 - e. Other winter activities, such as skating, sledding, and fat tire biking, are allowed only in designated park areas.
16. Golf
- a. Golfing is allowed only on golf courses.
 - b. Only approved tournaments are allowed.
 - c. Entering or exiting a golf course is allowed only through a designated entrance or exit area.
17. Horseback Riding
- a. Horseback riding is not allowed in Parks.
18. Camping
- a. Setting up a tent or other temporary shelter or maintaining a campsite or temporary lodging or sleeping place is not allowed in any Park.
19. Geocaching
- a. Placement of geocaches is allowed only by permit.
 - b. Caches must be more than 1/10th of a mile apart.
 - c. Dangerous or illegal material may not be placed in a cache.
20. Aviation
- a. Aviation takeoffs or landings, including toy planes, drones, hot air balloons, and rockets are not allowed in any Park.
 - b. Drones may be operated only in designated areas.

Motorized Vehicles

21. Motorized Recreation Vehicles

- a. Motorized recreation vehicles, such as ATVs or UTVs are not allowed in any Park, except for snowmobiles, as stated in Section 15.d of this Ordinance. Power-driven mobility devices used by people with disabilities are allowed in Parks.

22. Vehicle Operation

- a. Vehicles must be operated only on roadways and in parking areas.
- b. Vehicles must be operated at less than 15 miles per hour, or at the posted speed limit.
- c. Drivers must follow all Minnesota State Statutes and operate vehicles in a safe manner.
- d. Vehicles must not be used to access private property through park property.
- e. Vehicles must not emit excessive noise, fumes, or other pollutants.
- f. Drivers must yield to pedestrians and bicycles.
- g. Except for emergencies: Washing, greasing, changing oil, servicing, or repairing any vehicle is not allowed in any Park.
- h. Drinking alcohol in a vehicle is not allowed in any Park.

23. Vehicle Parking

- a. Vehicles may be parked only in designated areas.
- b. Parking in any spot with yellow-painted curbs or no parking signs is not allowed.
- c. Handicapped-accessible parking is reserved only for persons with a handicapped vehicle license or permit.
- d. Boat trailers must be parked only in parking spots and lots designated for boat trailers.
- e. Equipment or materials cannot be parked or staged on park property.

Enforcement

Where appropriate, the preferred method of enforcement will be a request for voluntary compliance. Failure to comply may result in the issuance of an administrative citation according to the Ramsey County administrative ordinance section 6.02.B, and the schedule of civil penalties adopted by the Board, available at ramseycounty.us/parkrules. Failure to comply may also result in the loss of park or recreation facility use privileges and ejection from the park for at least 24 hours. Responding Park staff or law enforcement will exercise appropriate enforcement discretion as circumstances warrant, including enforcement pursuant to applicable state statutes.

For violations associated with a permit fee, such as picnic shelter use or cross-country ski passes, the fee may be added to the civil penalty.

Payment of administrative citations is due within 20 business days of the issuance of the citation, or within 20 business days following a finding of a violation by a Hearing Office as set forth in Ramsey County administrative ordinance, section 6.02.

Appeal process for administrative citations issued pursuant to this Ordinance is outlined in Ramsey County administrative ordinance, section 6.02.B.6.

Failure to respond to an administrative citation may result in the issuance of a misdemeanor citation.

Violations of Section 6, Firearms and Dangerous Weapons, will be enforced consistent with applicable State statutes.

Violations of Section 7, Fireworks, will be enforced consistent with applicable State statutes.

Repeat or ongoing offenses may result in a civil penalty per day, as well as trespass from park property.

Severability

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this Ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portion of the Ordinance. The Board hereby declares that it would have adopted this Ordinance and each section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, sentences, clauses or phrases be declared invalid.

Conflict

The existing Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Ordinance, adopted on February 11, 1992, and amended on April 27, 2007, and any rules and regulations in conflict with this Ordinance, or any parts of this Ordinance, are repealed.

Enactment

This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and upon publication after it is approved by the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners.

Captions and Headings

The captions and headings used in this Ordinance are for convenience of reference only and do not define or limit the contents of each paragraph.

Amendments

This Ordinance may be amended from time to time by the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners according to the provisions of the Ramsey County Charter.