

Park Rules, Regulations, & Signs

Park rules, regulations and signs are tools that define the rights of and provide helpful information to the park user. They also help us protect the city or county's capital investment in land and facilities. Rules can also help define issues of liability.

In some cases it may not be enough to simply place a sign at the park entrance with these rules enumerated. Arkansas law provides that local government may pass ordinances and adopt rules governing park user conduct. In some cases such as littering, the use of alcoholic beverages, and traffic regulations, Arkansas State laws may apply. In other cases, it may be necessary for the city or the county to formally adopt specific use rules. By officially adopting these rules, it can help resolve legal issues when rule enforcement and adjudication is necessary.

Numerous examples of city, county, and state park rules and regulations are available by completing an informational search on the internet. To complete a park rules search, enter "park rules" on an internet search engine such as www.google.com and follow the various links provided. Specialized parks or park facilities such as those for skateboards, pets, or model airplanes often require specialized rules. Posting basic or specialized rules is appropriate however, nothing is more obnoxious than visiting a park with an endless row of signs saying don't do this and don't do that, no this, no that, () is prohibited etc. It is not necessary to post every rule and law to make people aware of what is right and wrong. If some type of behavior becomes a problem, then posting additional rules may be necessary.

Signs defining park rules, regulations or special features will more likely be afforded proper respect and will have a longer life expectancy if they are professionally created. Vandalism in parks and to park signage is a common occurrence. Budget for it.

The following are park rules, regulations and signs which may apply to your situation:

- ◆ Directional signs: Persons wishing to visit your park(s) for activities such as ball tournaments, festivals, special events may not know how to get to your park(s). Directional road signs near the city limits or along access corridors can be very helpful.
- ◆ Park Entrance Signs: Provide the name of the park and may be an excellent place to post opening and closing times and dates. They also can provide an esthetic enhancement or set the theme for the park experience.
- ◆ Opening and Closing Hours: Hours of park operation should be posted if the park closes during a 24 hour period. Operating hours may change from season to season. Changing signs to accommodate these changes may be necessary.
- ◆ Facility Operating Hours: Certain facilities may be open or closed on a seasonal basis. Certain ball park restrooms may be closed when not in use. a sign may be necessary defining opening and closing dates or where users may obtain a key (such as the mayor or park directors office).

- ◆ **General Park Rules and Regulations:** Signs listing general rules of conduct and behavior should be posted in a spot that is easily visible to park users. It is not necessary for this sign to be the largest or the brightest sign in the park.
- ◆ **Bulletin Boards / Special Event Sign:** These signs can provide a less intrusive location for park rules hours of operation, or information about special events and scheduled activities
- ◆ **Traffic Flow & Speed Limit:** Signs defining the use of vehicular traffic may be required. Stop signs, speed limits, directional signing and parking and no parking signs help park users of park roadways.
- ◆ **Playground Use And Supervision Signs:** Playground injuries and liability concerns are more common for parks and park operators. Signs defining rules for proper use and child supervision are available from recreational equipment suppliers.
- ◆ **Interpretive Signs:** Special attractions or items of historic, environmental, or geological may benefit from interpretive signs.

Listed below are two examples of city park rules that were located on the internet:

BASIC PARK RULES

EXAMPLE #1

- Parks are open to the public every day of the year from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m., unless otherwise posted.
- Vehicles in the parks are restricted to roads. The speed limit is 25 mph, unless otherwise posted.
- Ride bicycles on roads only.
- Swimming, bathing and wading may take place only in places provided for these activities.
- Dogs and other pets must be on a leash and under the control of the owner. No pets are allowed on playgrounds or courts at any time.
- Place trash in trash receptacles only. If trash receptacles are not provided, take your refuse with you. Never dump or deposit trash on any park lands or in park waters.
- Cooperate in keeping the rest rooms and washrooms in a neat and sanitary condition.
- Do not set fires except in designated cooking areas. Picnickers must completely extinguish all fires before leaving the park. Never throw lighted matches, burning cigarettes or other flammable material in any park area.
- Alcoholic beverages are prohibited in the parks.
- Never damage, pollute, disfigure or remove any natural resource, structures or equipment in the parks. Do not hunt, kill, molest, frighten or tease any animals, reptiles or birds in the park.
- Bottles, containers or other items made of glass are prohibited from the park.
- Motorized model airplanes are not allowed in the parks.
- No solicitation, vending, advertising or sign posting is allowed in the parks, except by special permission of the Director.

MORE SOPHISTICATED PARK RULES

EXAMPLE # 2

Purpose: These rules are established as written guidelines for the use of City of Austin parks, wildlife preserves and recreational facilities. (City Code, Chapter 11-1). These rules are intended to secure and preserve the fullest enjoyment of parks and recreational facilities to a wide range of park patrons. Failure to abide by these rules shall be cause for removal. The commission of offenses under local ordinances or state law shall be cause for arrest.

Applicability: These rules apply to and in all parks, wildlife preserves and recreational facilities or areas belonging to the City or managed by or under the authority of the City. Wildlife preserved may be restricted access facilities, open only for limited recreational uses. These rules shall not apply to City, State or Federal agents or officials in the performance of official duties.

1.01 USE OF PARK FACILITIES

Park facilities generally are available for public use on a first-come, first-served basis except for areas that require entrance or other fees, or that have previously been reserved.

A. Entrance or Use Fees - Patrons shall not enter or use any park area, wildlife preserve or facility for which an entrance or use fee has been established, unless each person has first paid the fee or is otherwise authorized to enter. Entrance permits or passes shall be displayed to gate or entrance attendants on request. (City Code, Sections 11-1-6, 10-1-17)

B. Reservations Fees - Patrons shall not use or occupy a facility or area for which a reservation fee has been paid, when such use conflicts with the use by persons holding the reservation. Reservations shall be made in accordance with the Department's reservation policies. Confirmation of the reservation shall be displayed on request to City employees charged with supervision or patrolling of parks.

1.02 OCCUPANCY LIMIT

The Parks and Recreation Department may establish and post maximum occupancies for any park area, wildlife preserve or facility.

A. Patrons shall not enter into or remain in an area or facility for which an occupancy limit has been established when such action will have the effect of exceeding the established occupancy limits.

1.03 ASSEMBLY

Organizers intending to conduct assemblies or public demonstrations on parkland must provide 24 hours notice to the Parks and Recreation Department by calling the Director's office, 477-6717, if the expected crowd will exceed 60. Assemblies or public demonstrations are permissible expect where such an activity will disrupt or interfere with scheduled events, or prevent or be inconsistent with the intended use of park facilities at the proposed site of assembly.

1.04 CLOSED AREA(S)

A. The City Manager or his designee may close park areas, wildlife preserves or facilities to the public entry or otherwise restrict use until such time as the area or facility can be made available for public use.

B. Except in emergency circumstances, notice of closure shall be posted and patrons shall not enter closed or restricted areas.

C. Patrons shall not enter areas closed due to flooding or which are areas that are the subject of a flood ban. (City Code, Section 14-2-23)

1.05 DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR AND EJECTION FROM PARK AND WILDLIFE PRESERVE FACILITIES

A. Patrons engaged in disruptive, destructive or hazardous conduct may be warned and asked to stop such conduct immediately by any park attendant. Under circumstances where a patron's conduct is unlawful, or poses an imminent threat of injury or prevents the public enjoyment of the park or wildlife preserve, or facility, park attendants may eject such patrons by any reasonable means, including arrest. (City Code, Section 11-1-1)

1.06 VENDING

A. Persons shall not conduct the commercial sale or offer to sell any goods, wares, drinks, food or items nor render or offer to render any service for hire, at any park, wildlife preserve or facility except as authorized by contract, or permit properly issued by the Parks and Recreation Department.

B. Persons conducting charitable solicitations shall have complied with the requirements of Chapter 8-5 of the City Code.

1.07 METAL DETECTORS

The use of metal detectors in City parks and wildlife preserves without a permit is prohibited.

1.08 ABANDONED OR UNATTENDED PROPERTY

A. No person shall abandon a vehicle or other personal property at any park facility or wildlife preserve. Abandoned property shall be removed, impounded, and sold in conformance to City ordinances or state laws or as may be determined by the City.

B. No person shall leave a vehicle, boat, barge, or other property unattended at any park facility or wildlife preserve in such a manner as to create a hazardous or unsafe condition, or to be in violation of a park curfew. Such property may be removed to a safe place or impounded.

1.09 PEACE AND QUIET

A. Patrons shall preserve the peace and quiet enjoyment of the parks and/or wildlife preserved by observing all ordinances and state laws governing noise

and amplified sound.

1. Patrons shall not use offensive language, make unreasonable noise, discharge weapons or fireworks, or engage in offensive gestures or conduct constituting disorderly conduct under state law (Texas Penal Code 42.01).

2. Patrons shall not operate noise-making devices in violation of local ordinances prohibiting unreasonable noise or requiring a sound amplification permit. (City Code Chapter 10-5).

B. Patrons shall observe and comply with noise restrictions posted at individual facilities.

(Reference: Texas Penal Code, Section 42.01)

1.10 WEAPONS AND FIREARMS

A. Patrons shall not carry or possess weapons or firearms while in park facilities or wildlife preserves except;

1. in those facilities where usage is appropriate,
2. as allowed by state and federal gun laws; and,
3. when otherwise authorized by the Parks and Recreation Department.

B. The use of firearms, air guns, pellet or B.B. guns, bows and arrows or projectile devices capable of inflicting personal injury is prohibited unless conducted under permit or in an authorized park facility. (City Code Sections 10-1-4, 10-1-5, 14-1-6).

C. No patron may display a firearm or other weapon at any park facility or wildlife preserve in a manner calculated to alarm or threaten anyone. (Texas Penal Code 42.02)

1.11 WILDLIFE

All wildlife within the boundaries of any Austin Parks and Recreation Department park facility and wildlife preserve is protected. No person may harm, harass, hunt, trap or remove any animal, including mammals, fish insects, birds, reptiles, or other living creature from any park facility or wildlife preserve except upon written approval of the Parks and Recreation Department. (City Code 10-1-6)

This section shall not apply where fishing is permitted, by an individual in possession of a valid Texas fishing license.

1.12 PLANT LIFE

All plant life within the boundaries of any Austin Parks and Recreation Department park facility and wildlife preserve is protected. Patrons shall not willfully mutilate,

injure, destroy, thrash, or remove any live tree, shrub, vine, wildflower, grass, sedge, fern, moss lichen, fungus or any other member of the plant kingdom or portion thereof, except upon approval by the Parks and Recreation Department. No person shall collect or harvest dead wood or plants, or portions thereof, except upon written approval. The collecting of pecan nuts on the ground is allowed; the thrashing of pecan trees is prohibited. (Texas Rev. Civ. Statutes 6143.1)

1.13 NATURAL RESOURCES

All sites, objects, buildings, artifacts, implements, and locations of historical, archaeological, geologic, scientific or educational interest of every character located in, on, or under the surface of any park facility and wildlife preserve are protected.

No person may remove, excavate, take, dig into, or destroy any site, object, building, artifact, implement or location of archaeological, geological, scientific or historical interest without having permits as required by the State of Texas Natural Resources Codes, and without having permission of the Parks and Recreation Department.

1.14 ANIMALS

A. Persons bringing pets or other animals into outdoor park areas shall keep them under confinement or direct control. Leads on leashes used to control animals shall not be more than six feet long. Dogs may be allowed to be without a leash in designated areas, provided that each dog remains under immediate personal supervision and command.

B. Patrons shall not permit a pet or other animal to remain unattended or create a disturbance or a hazard.

C. No person shall permit a pet animal in the water of a swimming pool or designated swim area, and no person shall permit a pet animal, except for an animal trained in assisting handicapped or disabled persons, within the land area or beach area adjacent to the water of a swimming pool or designated swim area.

D. Patrons shall not bring into, or permit to range at any park facility or wildlife preserve, domestic fowl, horse, swine, sheep, goat, or other livestock except upon approval by the Parks and Recreation Department.

E. Patrons shall not ride, drive, lead or keep a horse at any park facility or wildlife preserve, excepted on a horseback riding trail, so designated and posted by the Parks and Recreation Department and except as authorized under contract, approved reservation or permit.

F. No person may ride a horse in a manner that is dangerous to any person or animal at any park facility or wildlife preserved.

G. Patrons shall not hitch a saddle horse to a tree, shrub, or structure in any manner that causes damage.

H. Except for an animal trained to assist the disabled, pets and animals shall not be brought into designated wildlife preserves. Trained animals utilized by employees and agents of the City of Austin in reasonable discharge of their duties are permitted.

(References: City of Austin Code, Section 3-1-3.)

1.15 FIRES, SMOKING, FIREWOOD OR FIREWORKS

A. No person may light, build, or maintain a fire on any of the Austin Parks and Recreation Department park facilities or wildlife preserves, except in a facility or device provided, maintained or designated for such purposes, or as authorized by the Parks and Recreation Department

B. Portable camp stoves or portable barbecue grills of metal construction may be used in designated campsites or picnic areas.

C. Campfires shall be allowed only in approved locations and under such conditions as may be prescribed by the Director or park supervisor. Campfires shall be attended at all times by an adult until fully extinguished.

D. During periods of extreme fire hazard, the Director may prohibit or restrict fires and smoking in designated areas.

E. No person may cut, gather, or collect wood or other combustible material at any Austin Parks and Recreation Department park facility or wildlife preserve, for use as firewood or fuel, except for material designated for this purpose by the Parks and Recreation Department.

F. The possession or use of any kind of firework, except by permit, is prohibited in all parks and wildlife preserves.

1.16 CAMPING AND OVERNIGHT USE

A. No person may camp at any Austin Park and Recreation Department park facility or wildlife preserve, except as authorized by permit and only in areas designated or marked for that purpose. Camping is defined as:

1. Occupying a designated camping facility
2. Erecting a tent or arranging bedding, or both, for the purpose of, or in such a manner as will permit remaining overnight.
3. Use of a trailer, camper, or other vehicle for the purpose of sleeping overnight.

B. Camping Time limit

1. To afford all the public a wider use of the Austin Parks and Recreation Department's camping facilities, continuous occupancy of

camping facilities by the same person or persons in a park is limited to 14 consecutive calendar days.

2. The Department may establish an alternate time limit for continuous occupancy of a facility or facilities by the same person or persons in a park, or in a designated portion of a park, when necessary to achieve maximum utilization of the park, or designated portion, by all the public.

3. When a person has used the camping facilities in a park for a period of time greater than seven consecutive days and voluntarily vacates or is required to vacate the facilities, he may not again use the overnight camping facilities in the same park until a time period has elapsed between his date of departure and date of re-entry, which time period includes a minimum time from 2 p.m. Friday until 2 p.m. Sunday. This provision shall not prevent the camp staff from re-admitting the camper if adequate camping spaces are available.

C. Persons under the age of 18 years authorized to be in a park facility between the hours of 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. shall be accompanied or supervised by an adult. The ratio of adults to minors shall not be less than one adult for every eight minors.

1.17 MOTOR VEHICLES

No person may operate a motor vehicle at any park facility or wildlife preserve, except upon roads, driveways, parking areas, and areas designated open to motor vehicles except as authorized by the Department. (City Code Section 16-1-15)

1.18 PARKING

A. No person shall park a motor vehicle on parkland or wildlife preserve except in designated areas, or within twelve feet of a public park road, if not otherwise prohibited.

B. No person may park store or leave a vehicle or trailer in areas posted "restricted" or with "no parking" signs.

C. A vehicle or trailer parked in such a manner as to create a hazardous or unsafe condition may be impounded, consistent with City Ordinance and State Law.

1.19 TRAIL USE

A. No person may operate or use a motor vehicle, including a motorcycle, motorbike, mini-bike, or a bicycle on a trail or path not designated for the use with such vehicles.

B. On the Hike and Bike trails, bicyclist shall yield to joggers, joggers to walkers.

C. Trail users on the Hike and Bike trails should not be more than two abreast when this action will impede other traffic on the trail. Trail users should leave ample room on the trail for other users to pass safely.

D. Bicyclists should maintain bicycles in good condition and should operate them in a safe, manner at a prudent speed. All bicycles shall be equipped with a properly functioning brakes.

E. Unless otherwise posted, all portions of the Hike and Bike trails are designated as Bicycle Speed Zones and shall be identified by signage. Bicyclists shall not travel faster than 10 Miles Per Hour in areas designated as Bicycle Speed Zones.

1.20 ADHERENCE TO PARK SIGNS

All persons shall comply with the signs and markers installed by the Department.

1.21 INSTALLATION OF WATER SKI COURSES ON CITY LAKES

The installation of a water ski slalom course, water ski jump, or similar course(s) or device(s) on or in the waters of Lake Austin, Town Lake, or Lake Walter E. Long (Decker Lake), or the tributaries thereof, shall be only approved by the Department.

1.22 ALCOHOL

Unless authorized by the director, the sale, possession with intent to sell or the consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited in the following areas:

1. Within enclosed areas of swimming or wading pools
2. In recreation centers and adjacent grounds
3. Within the playing boundaries of athletic fields
4. In school parks
5. In those areas designated by the Director

- [Complete list of Alcohol prohibited parks](#)

(City Code Section 11-1-4)

1.23 GLASS CONTAINERS

Except as allowed below, glass containers are prohibited

1. Within enclosed areas at swimming or wading pools
2. In recreation centers and adjacent grounds
3. In school parks

4. In athletic fields
5. In those areas designated and marked by the Director
6. On any lake, river, stream, shoreline or beach

The following glass containers are allowed:

1. Glass-lined vacuum bottles and glass-lined picnic beverage coolers;
2. Baby bottles or baby food jars containing products for consumption by a baby;
3. Drug glass containers containing over the counter or prescribed drugs; and
4. Glass containers which require a deposit.

(Reference: City of Austin Code, Section 11-1-9.)

1.24 PERFORMING ARTISTS IN PARKS

Individuals may perform as artists or entertainers in any City park within the following guidelines:

- A. May not block sidewalks or in any way impede pedestrian or vehicular traffic circulation.
- B. May not be within 100 feet of existing park concessions.
- C. May set up at special events only with written permission of event organizer.
- D. Amplified sound is prohibited.
- E. Juggling of potentially hazardous materials or items such as knives or fire is prohibited.
- F. Any money exchanged should be on a "tips" or donation basis only.
- G. Entertainers should carry a copy of the letter of approval from the Parks and Recreation Department permitting their performance art. The letter is to be available on request by any park attendant or employee charged with patrolling or supervising park use.

1.25 CREMATION REMAINS

No cremation remains shall be disposed of on parkland without the expressed written consent of the Parks and Recreation Director.

1.26 SPECIAL RULES FOR SPECIFIC PARKS FACILITIES

Each park facility and wildlife preserve me develop rules and regulations that address

problems specific to that facility, which shall be in writing and approved by the Director of Parks and Recreation. Patrons shall comply with all rules and regulations posted at individual facilities or for special events.