

*Skateboarding has exploded into one of the most popular sports in the United States today. An estimated 13 million Americans own and ride skateboards, with more than a million children taking up the sport every year. This increase in the popularity of skateboarding has prompted many cities to develop specialty parks to be used by skateboarders, in-line skaters and BMX bikers. If a skateboard park is already present in the community, or one is being proposed, the design, rules and regulations, inspections and liability exposure should be thoroughly evaluated.*

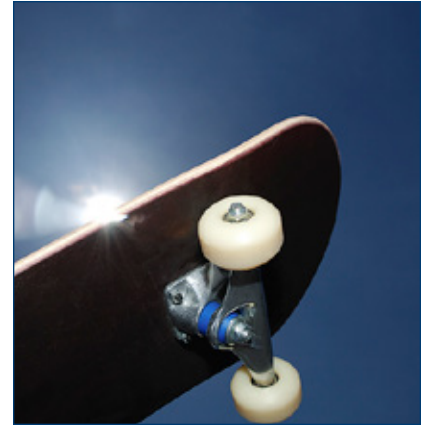
### Park Design Considerations

Communities considering the construction of a skate park should consult with professional skate park designers/builders. Only reputable designers/builders with a portfolio of quality parks to their credit should be contracted. The design team should focus on safety during the design phase, paying particular attention to the following items:

- Ramps and pipes should not be over six feet in height.
- The skate park should be fenced to control access. A fence will help keep out small children and animals and keep skateboards and bikes from hitting bystanders.
- Adequate lighting should be provided. If lights are not bright enough, the course will be difficult to navigate and skaters may resort to makeshift lighting, such as flashlights and lanterns. Thirty-foot light poles are recommended to reduce shadows.
- The skate park should be designed to accommodate skaters of varying ages and skill levels. The degree of difficulty of each area should be posted with colors or numbers (e.g., 1-5 scale, with 1 = beginner and 5 = expert).
- Spectator areas should be located outside the fenced perimeter. A grassy area or benches should be provided. Benches should be secured to the ground, so skaters do not move them inside the skate park. If providing bleachers, consult with your architect or bleacher company to ensure they meet current safety regulations.

Additional considerations during the design phase include:

- If irrigation is used in the area, ensure that water does not hit the skating surface.
- Water fountains should be provided in the vicinity of the skate park.
- Fixed or portable bathrooms should be provided in the vicinity of the skate park.
- Garbage cans should be provided and secured to the ground outside the skating area.
- A pay phone should be available for convenience, as well as for emergencies.



Note: The above recommendations are for skateboard parks only. Additional recommendations may be necessary for BMX parks.

### Rules and Regulations

The first thing skaters should see when entering the skate park is a sign outlining the rules of the park. Rules may vary from one park to another, but should, at a minimum, address the following:

- Skaters under the age of seven should be accompanied by a responsible adult. Supervision is encouraged for all skaters under the age of 18.
- Skate park hours should be stated. The park should be closed at dusk (unless equipped with lighting) or if surfaces are wet or icy.

Continued

- All skaters should be required to wear personal protective equipment, including a strapped helmet, knee and elbow pads, and wrist supports.
- Only one person allowed per ramp at a time.
- Food and drink should not be permitted in the skating area. Drugs, alcohol and smoking should also be prohibited.
- Loose items such as backpacks should not be permitted inside the skating area.
- Reckless conduct, loud music, disorderly behavior, etc. should not be tolerated at any time. Nonskaters should not be allowed inside the fenced area.
- Pets should not be allowed in the skate park.

The sign should also indicate who may use the park. If the park is designed only for use by skateboarders, this should be stated. If the park may be used by skateboarders, in-line skaters and BMX bikers, indicate this as well. If acceptable use is not clearly stated, it is likely that all three of these groups will use the park.

### Skate Park Inspections

Skate parks require routine inspection and maintenance to ensure structural elements and equipment are safe for use. Inspections should be completed at least weekly. All deficiencies and repairs should be documented in writing and signed by the person responsible for the maintenance of the park.

Inspections will differ, depending on the type of construction (e.g., wood, steel, concrete), but should generally cover the following items:

- Skating surfaces: cracks, splits, holes, graffiti, debris, sharp edges, protruding objects, puddles, etc.
- Coping: cracks, burrs, chips, voids, looseness, etc.
- Railings: cracked welds, missing components, damaged, etc.
- Signs: damaged, missing, graffiti, etc.
- Fencing: holes, exposed metal wire ends, loose bracing, damaged gate, etc.
- Benches and bleachers: trash under and around, missing components, loose hardware, etc.

- Supporting facilities: damaged, vandalized or nonfunctioning public telephones, drinking fountains or restrooms.
- Landscaping: damaged vegetation or irrigation, trash/debris, broken lighting, etc.

The skate park designer/builder should also be able to provide a specific checklist that explains inspection and maintenance requirements. Skaters should also be encouraged to inspect the park before use and remove any trash and debris that may be present.

### Waiver of Liability

Each skate park user should be required to sign a waiver of liability prior to using the park. This waiver should inform the participant that skateboarding, in-line skating, and biking are inherently dangerous sports where serious injuries may occur and outline the participant's assumption of risk, a voluntary release of claim from injury and the acceptance of cost for injury or damages. Safety requirements and behavior expectations should also be included in the agreement. The liability waiver should be signed by all participants over the age of 18 or by the parents of those under the age of 18. Your legal counsel should review any waiver form prior to adopting it.

### Park Supervision

Park supervision is recommended for safety reasons. If staffing the park, it should be staffed full time during park hours. Law enforcement, parks and recreation employees, and other employees should drive by the park as often as possible. An effort should be made to develop a relationship with park patrons. Skaters are more likely to understand and respect park safety guidelines if they see an effort to interact with them.

### For Additional Information

**Skate Park Association International:**

[www.spausa.org](http://www.spausa.org)

**Skaters for Public Skateparks:** [www.skatepark.org](http://www.skatepark.org)

**Skatepark Guide** [www.skateparkguide.com](http://www.skateparkguide.com)