
Beach Group Policy

Policy

All groups must obtain the Park Manager's approval before coming to a Washington County beach. Certain guidelines must be followed to create a safe and enjoyable visit for all park visitors. These guidelines were developed to assist groups, organizations and families in the implementation of safety measures for their beach outing.

Guidelines

Park visitors must abide by Washington County Parks Ordinance #174.

1. Group supervisors must be age 16 or older, dressed appropriately in swimwear and they must accompany the children in the water.
 - a. The **minimum** ratio of supervisors to children is:
 - 1:3 for children ages 4 and under
 - 1:6 for children ages 5 to 9
 - 1:10 for children ages 10 and olderThis represents only a minimum requirement. It is the responsibility of the organization and its supervisors to know each child's limitations. Children with special needs shall be required to have a higher supervisor/child ratio.
 - b. You must **check in with the lifeguard** when your group arrives or when the lifeguards start to guard. The lifeguards will determine whether you have adequate staff to provide the supervision your group requires. If the lifeguard determines you do not have adequate supervision, your group will not be allowed to use the swimming area. The lifeguards will distribute wristbands to assist with group identification. All children are **required to wear the wristbands** while at the beach.
 - c. Groups are required to swim in the designated group swim area. If children are swimming in other parts of the swimming area, the entire group will forfeit their swimming privileges for the day.
 - d. Supervisors must notify lifeguards about children who have disabilities or special needs/circumstances that might affect their ability in the water.
2. It is required that all groups and organizations use the "buddy" system. Assign two or three children to always be responsible for one another. Continually test them by entering the water and asking them to identify their "buddies." Do not wait for safety breaks. Set a time that the children should report to a predetermined area.
3. Any inner tube, life raft, or other inflatable or buoyant object or flotation device intended to support a person in the water is prohibited; except a United States Coast Guard approved Type I, II, III, or V personal flotation device. The Coast Guard approved personal flotation device may be used when it is properly secured, of the proper size and undamaged. Use of Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices shall be limited to specific sections of the swimming beach. Any use of Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices outside of the designated section

is prohibited. Handicapped persons who require use of a flotation device in order to participate in swimming may be exempt by special permit from the Parks Manager or designee.

4. Use the child's body as an indicator for a safe depth for water activities:
 - Below the armpits for children who cannot swim
 - At the waistline for children who are not sturdy in the water.
5. No hanging or pulling on the buoys or ropes in the water.
6. No throwing sand, mud, rocks or other objects in the water or on the beach.
7. No running or horseplay in dressing rooms and beach house areas.
8. No glass containers are allowed anywhere in or near the beach area.
9. No smoking allowed on the sand area of the beach or in the water.
10. Alcohol, including 3.2 beer, is not allowed.

Caution: Children must be instructed and supervisors must enforce that ***"no child shall ever leave an assigned area without permission"***. This means that no child should go to the restroom, concession or vending area, play structures, etc., without permission.

When you arrive at the beach, make it a point to advise all children to check in at the First Aid Station if they become separated from the group. They should proceed immediately to that area and inform park staff that they are lost.

Additional Information or Responsibilities

Washington County Parks reserves the right to cancel your beach visit or divide your group into shifts if extreme beach conditions arise which would provide an unsafe swimming environment.

- If weather conditions appear questionable, call **651-430-8370** to find out the possibility of the beach closing due to weather.
- The beach closes for **½ hour from the last time that thunder or lightning is observed**, or if other weather conditions warrant closure.
- Lifeguards enforce rules and regulations and react to emergencies at the beach.
- Lifeguards are not responsible for the supervision of swimmers!
- Groups who do not have proper supervision or do not follow this group beach policy will lose swimming privileges for the day and will have to vacate the swimming facility/beach area.
- **It is the group's responsibility to obtain prior approval at least seven (7) days before your visit to a Washington County Park beach.**
 - Use attachment, **Request for Use of Beach Facilities for making your request.**
 - A separate request form should be used for each date.

Request for Use of Beach Facilities

Send to: Washington County Parks
1515 Keats Ave. N.
Lake Elmo, MN 55042
Phone: 651-430-8370, Fax: 651-430-8369

Washington County Beach Lake Elmo Park Reserve/Square Lake/Pt. Douglas/Big Marine Park Reserve (circle one)

Date/Time of Arrival - Departure _____ / _____

Name of Group/Leader _____ / _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Phone Number _____ Fax Number _____

Number of children aged:

4 and under _____

5 to 9 _____

10 and older _____

Number of supervisors: _____ (16 and older)

Total in group: _____

*I have read the **Beach Group Policy** for Washington County Parks. I agree to follow the guidelines when using the beach area. I understand our group will be denied beach use if the policy is not followed.*

Signature of Group Supervisor

Signature of Parks Manager or designee

Date _____

Date _____

Lifeguard Use only

Did the group arrive and check in with a lifeguard? _____ Lifeguard Initials _____

Children under 16 _____, # Supervisors _____, Total # in Group _____

Wristband design/color: _____ / _____

Comments: _____