

**Halifax Regional Municipality  
Administrative Order 2019-010-ADM  
Respecting Recreation User Charges**

**WHEREAS** section 102 of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* permits the Council of the Municipality to prescribe charges for the provision of services for persons who use or benefit from the service;

**AND WHEREAS** the Council wishes to establish guiding principles for establishing recreations user charges for recreation facilities owned and operated directly by the Halifax Regional Municipality;

**BE IT RESOLVED AS AN ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER** of the Council of the Halifax Regional Municipality under the authority of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*, as follows:

**Short Title**

1. This Administrative Order may be known as Administrative Order No. 2019-010-ADM, the *Recreation User Charges Administrative Order*.

**Purpose**

2. The purposes of this Administrative Order are to:

(a) outline the guiding principles upon which the Halifax Regional Municipality establishes user charges for its recreation rentals and recreation services, including programming, memberships, drop-ins;

(b) provide guidance to Department staff when developing user charges for Council's consideration and approval;

(c) establish a five-year cycle for Council to review and adopt changes to user charges; and

(d) establish a program that permits the full or partial waiver of user charges for individuals demonstrating financial need.

**Interpretation**

3. In this Administrative Order,

(a) "Access Discount" means a discount that applies to individuals who meet the qualifications for the Recreation Access Program;

(b) "Access Program" means the Recreation Access Program established in Part III of this Administrative Order to which an individual may apply for a full or partial waiver of recreation programming user charges based on financial need;

(c) “cost per utilized hour” means the cost incurred by the Municipality every hour that the facility rental is rented by the user;

(d) “cost per unit” means the cost incurred by the Municipality for every registration in a program, divided by the total hours or total visits for that program;

(e) “Council” means the Regional Council of the Municipality;

(f) “Department” means the department assigned responsibility for recreation by the Chief Administrative Officer;

(g) “drop in” means a single visit to a recreation facility for which registration is not required;

(h) “Executive Director” means the position determined by the CAO to be the head of a department of the Municipality, and who is accountable to the CAO under section 36 of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*;

(i) “household” means one adult or two adults who are cohabitating, and any children under 19 years of age residing in the same residence;

(j) “membership” means access to an HRM recreation facility purchased by an individual or group of individuals in advance that is valid for a specified time period;

(k) “Municipality” means the Halifax Regional Municipality;

(l) “HRM recreation facilities” means

(i) any arenas, all-weather fields, sport courts, outdoor pads, ball diamonds, sport fields, Recreation Facility rental rooms, Recreation Facility gymnasias, pools, parks and tracks operated directly by the Halifax Regional Municipality, or

(ii) arena rentals at a facility owned by the Halifax Regional Municipality and operated on behalf of the Municipality under a third-party agreement

and for greater certainty, subclause (ii) does not apply to an HRM recreation facility operated under a Partnership facility agreement;

(m) “recreation user charge” includes facility rentals and recreation services user charges as established in Schedules 3 and 4 of By-law U-100;

(n) “voucher” means a package containing multiple single visits to an HRM recreation facility for which registration is not required.

## **Application**

4. This Administrative Order applies to HRM recreation facilities.

5. For greater certainty, nothing in this Administrative Order applies to rooms and gymnasias owned and operated by the Halifax Regional Centre for Education and booked by the Municipality and for which the Halifax Regional Centre for Education sets the rental rates.

### **Approval**

6. All user charges developed in accordance with this Administrative Order shall be submitted to Council for approval under By-law U-100, the User Charges By-law.

## **PART I – Recreation Facility Rentals**

### **Overarching Principles**

7. For greater certainty, the definitions set out in Schedule 4 of By-law U-100 are applicable to Part I of this Administrative Order.

8. The following are the principles that Council may consider in establishing facility rental user charges:

(a) facility rentals are to be based on cost recovery, including assessment of operating and full life cycle costs;

(b) facility rentals will consider industry best practices;

(c) subsidization of facility rental user charges will only be considered for:

(i) youth users, and

(ii) community users;

(d) corporate users shall pay full cost recovery;

(e) facility rental user charges should be consistent and standardized across all rates, hours and categorization of assets to the extent possible.

9. Where Council is establishing facility rental user charges:

(a) facility rental user charges may reflect prime and non-prime time charges; and

(b) categorization of assets will be based on size, service standard classification and resulting applicable use.

10. (1) Facility rental user charges apply to the following asset classes:

(a) arenas (Ice),

(b) arenas (Dry-floor),

(c) all-weather Fields,

- (d) sport courts,
- (e) outdoor pads,
- (f) ball diamonds,
- (g) sport fields,
- (h) Recreation Facility Rental Rooms,
- (i) Recreation Facility Gymnasiums,
- (j) Pools,
- (k) Tracks, and
- (l) Parks.

(2) Subject to sections 19 and 20, classification within the asset classes is based on the size of the asset and the maintenance service standard as it impacts the usage of the asset.

11. Facility rental user charges are determined by taking the following into account:

- (a) cost per utilized hour;
- (b) asset class;
- (c) user group;
- (d) time type;
- (e) rental use; and
- (f) percentage cost recovery.

### **User Groups**

12. User group categories shall be applied consistently across asset classes.

13. User groups are as set out in Schedule 4 of By-law U-100.

### **Development of Recreation Facility Rental User Charges**

14. (1) Department staff shall develop proposed user charges based on the cost per utilized hour.

(2) Proposed user charges developed by Department staff shall be presented to Council for consideration under By-Law U-100, the User Charges By-law.

(3) Department staff shall review the user charges every five (5) years in accordance with this Administrative Order to ensure the user charges are appropriate to services and relative costs and submit any proposed amendments to Council for approval.

(4) Notwithstanding subsection (1), except where a corporate rate is developed, cost per utilized hour shall not be used to develop user charges for ball diamonds and natural turf fields.

**Cost Per Utilized Hour**

15. (1) Cost per utilized hour is calculated by dividing the annual costs by the total booked hours for the asset class.

(2) Department staff shall calculate the cost per utilized hour.

(3) The annual costs include the life cycle, corporate overhead and operating expenditures.

16. Where the cost per utilized hour is significantly higher than the current user charge, Department staff may adjust the user charge for Council’s consideration to maintain an affordable pricing model by considering:

- (a) the rate of comparators in the jurisdictional scan;
- (b) the Municipality’s current user charge; and
- (c) impact to the user.

**Asset Class Cost Recovery Percentages**

17. The percentage of cost recovery shall be determined based on impact analysis and jurisdictional scans of similar municipalities.

18. Facility rental user charges for each asset class developed by Department staff for Council’s consideration shall be based on the applicable percentage of the cost per utilized hour, as adjusted in accordance with section 16, as outlined in the following table:

Asset Class	Cost Recovery				
	Community	Adult Prime	Adult Non-Prime	Youth Prime	Youth Non-Prime
Arenas (Ice)	N/A	100%	60%	80%	40%
Arenas (Dry-floor)	N/A	100%	100%	80%	80%
All-weather Fields	N/A	100%	60%	60%	40%
Sport Courts	N/A	100%	100%	80%	80%
Sport Fields and Ball Diamonds	N/A	100%	100%	50%	50%
REC Facility Rental Rooms	50%	100%	100%	50%	50%

REC Facility Gymnasiums (A & B)	N/A	100%	100%	80%	80%
REC Facility Gymnasiums (C & D)	N/A	100%	100%	55%	55%
Aquatics Rentals	N/A	90%	75%	75%	60%
Tracks	N/A	100%	100%	80%	80%

### Sub-Classifications

19. (1) Department staff shall sub-classify Ball Diamonds and Sport Fields, taking into account the following criteria:

- (a) dimensions;
- (b) bleachers;
- (c) players' benches and dug outs;
- (d) washrooms;
- (e) lighting;
- (f) fencing; and
- (g) presence of dedicated staff on site.

(2) The sub-classifications for Ball Diamonds and Sport Fields shall include:

- (a) Premier;
- (b) All Weather;
- (c) Class A;
- (d) Class B; and
- (e) Greenspace.

20. (1) Department staff shall sub-classify REC Facility Rental Rooms and Gymnasia based on the size of the space and any other factors that impact the applicable use of the space.

(2) The sub-classifications shall range from A (largest) to D (smallest).

(3) Sub-classifications for REC Facility Rental Rooms and Gymnasia shall be based on the following square metres:

#### *Rental Rooms*

Classification	Square Metres
A	139.4 +
B	46.5 – 139.3
C	18.7 – 46.4
D	<18.6

*Gymnasia*

Classification	Square Metres
A	743.1 +
B	557.4 – 743.1
C	278.8 – 557.4
D	Multipurpose Room Gym

**General Rental Conditions**

21. Standard Municipal contracts will be used for rentals of all asset classes.
22. All refunds for any facility rental user charges will adhere to the terms and conditions outlined in the standard Municipal contract.
23. No application fees, lighting fees, or electrical fees will be applied to any rental contract.

**PART II –Recreation Services User Charges**

**Overarching Principles**

24. For greater certainty, the definitions set out in Schedule 3 of By-law U-100 are applicable to Part II of this Administrative Order.
25. The following are the principles that Council may consider in establishing recreation services user charges:
  - (a) recreation services user charges are to be based on cost recovery, including assessment of operating and full life cycle costs;
  - (b) recreation services user charges will consider industry best practices;
  - (c) different user charges may only be considered for the following user types:
    - (i) child & youth,
    - (ii) adult, and
    - (iii) senior; and

(d) recreation services user charges should be consistent and standardized across all rates, hours and categorization of services to the extent possible.

### **Development of Recreation Service User Charges**

26. (1) Department staff shall develop proposed user charges based on the cost per unit.

(2) Proposed user charges developed by Department staff shall be presented to Council for consideration under By-Law U-100, the User Charges By-law.

(3) Department staff shall review the user charges every five (5) years in accordance with this Administrative Order to ensure the user charges are appropriate to services and relative costs and submit any proposed amendments to Council for approval.

### **Cost per Unit**

27. The cost per unit is calculated by dividing the cost incurred by the Municipality for registration in a program by the total hours or total visits for that program as follows:

(a) for registered programs, the cost per unit shall be the cost per hour as calculated by the cost incurred by the Municipality for every registration in the program for every hour that the program is delivered, assuming that the minimum enrollment is achieved;

(b) for drop ins and vouchers, the cost per unit shall be the cost per visit as calculated by the cost incurred by the Municipality for every visit per user, based on the previous year's total drop ins or vouchers;

(c) for memberships, the cost per unit shall be the cost per month as calculated by the cost incurred by the Municipality for every month worth of visits allotted to a user, based on the previous year's total annual membership.

28. Department staff shall calculate the cost per unit.

29. Where the cost per unit is significantly higher than the current user charge, Department staff may determine an adjusted user charge for Council's consideration after considering:

(a) the rate of comparators in the jurisdictional scan;

(b) the Municipality's current user charge; and

(c) impact to the user.

30. The adjusted cost per unit may differ between user types.

### **Discounts**

31. Discounts shall be applied in accordance with Schedule 3 of By-law U-100, the User Charges By-law.

### **General Recreation Services Conditions**



32. Where applicable, standard Municipal contracts will be used for recreation services.
33. All refunds shall adhere to the terms and conditions outlined in the standard Municipal contract.

### **PART III – Recreation Access Program**

#### **Application**

34. The Access Program applies to recreation services user charges at recreation facilities.
35. For greater certainty, the Access Program does not apply to:
  - (a) private swim lessons;
  - (b) birthday parties;
  - (c) programs offer by a third-party service provider;
  - (d) drop-in programs;
  - (e) vouchers;
  - (f) facility rentals; and
  - (g) personal training.
36. Applications to the Access Program must be approved prior to registration for recreation services for the Access Discount to apply.

#### **Eligible Participants**

37. To be eligible to receive an Access Discount, an applicant must:
  - (a) be a resident of the Municipality; and
  - (b) demonstrate financial need as set out in section 43 or be a “Welcomed in Halifax” program pass holder.
38. An applicant may apply for an Access Discount on their own behalf or on behalf of a minor child in their household.

#### **Application Requirements**

39. An application must include:
  - (a) an Affordable Access Application form; and
  - (b) proof of financial need or proof of “Welcomed in Halifax” participation.

40. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. Applicants may apply at any time during the year.

41. Applications may be submitted to HRM recreation facilities as listed on the Recreation Funding Access Program website.

42. The Access Discount applies for one full year beginning in the month the applicant receives approval for the Program and continuing for the subsequent eleven months. Applicants must reapply on an annual basis if they continue to meet the requirements of the program.

### **Proof of Financial Need**

43. Proof of financial need shall consist of one of the following:

- (a) the applicant's most recent Notice of Assessment from Canada Revenue Agency;
- (b) a letter or stamp from the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services; or
- (c) a referral from a community professional who is qualified to assess financial need and is associated with a recognized community-based agency.

44. Repealed.

45. Proof of financial need shall be based on the number of individuals per household, and therefore an application must include the number of parents and number of children in the household.

45A. Access Program participants shall have access to an annual individual pool of funds, subject to yearly budget availability and approval, which may be increased as the year continues, to be used to apply the Access Discount as set out in section 46.

### **Discounts Available**

46. The Access Discount may be either:

(a) a waiver of fifty per cent (50%) of the recreation services user charge as authorized in Schedule 3 of By-Law U-100 where the combined gross household income is less than two (2) times the most recent Statistics Canada Low Income Cut-off, based on the number of people in the household and community size;

(b) a waiver of one hundred per cent (100%) of the recreation services user charge as authorized in Schedule 3 of By-Law U-100 where the combined gross household income is less than the most recent Statistics Canada Low Income Cut-off, based on the number of people in the household and community size;

(c) a waiver of twenty-five (25%) of the recreation services user charge as authorized in Schedule 3 of By-Law U-100 where the combined gross household income is less than two and a half (2.5) times the most recent Statistics Canada Low Income Cut-off, based on the number of people in the household and community size.

47. (1) Under the Recreation Access Program, the Executive Director or designate may limit:
- (a) the number of Access Discount available; or
  - (b) the amount of recreation services allowed for each program participant.
- (2) The Executive Director or designate may remove a person from a recreation service if:
- (a) the person does not attend a recreation service after registering; or
  - (b) the person is registered in a recreation service without having the required prerequisite.

#### **PART IV – General**

48. Recreation user charges shall be adopted by Council by by-law, and posted by staff on the [www.halifax.ca](http://www.halifax.ca) website.
49. Recreation user charges shall increase two percent (2%) to the nearest cent each fiscal year to address inflationary pressures, or to achieve a cost recovery rate at the end of five years.
50. When considering adoption of proposed user charges developed in accordance with this Administrative Order, Council may consider further adjustments to recreation user charges as a method to mitigate significant increases or decreases from current user charges in the following circumstances:
- (a) Adjusted user rate is higher than all comparators from jurisdictional scan; or
  - (b) Current user charges are substantially lower than the adjusted user rate.
51. This Administrative Order shall be in force upon its adoption by Council, but shall only apply to recreation user charges implemented under Schedules 3 and 4 of By-law U-100, the User Charges By-law.

Done and passed in Council this 17<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2021.

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Mayor Mike Savage

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Iain MacLean, Municipal Clerk

I, Iain MacLean, Municipal Clerk of the Halifax Regional Municipality, hereby certify that the above noted Administrative Order was passed at a meeting of the Halifax Regional Council held on August 17, 2021.

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Iain MacLean, Municipal Clerk

Notice of Motion: June 29, 2021  
Approval: August 17, 2021  
Effective Date: April 1, 2022

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Amendment #1

*Amending sections 14, 19, 35, 37, 39, 46, Repealing section 44, Adding section 45A*

Notice of Motion: August 6, 2024  
Approval: September 10, 2024  
Effective Date: April 1, 2025

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