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## *Answers to Frequently Asked Questions About Allard Rink*

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### Who Runs the Rink?

The rink is run by the Blackmud Creek Community League Facilities Director. It is a volunteer position. They generally have a full-time job on top of running the rink. Please be appreciative of their service to the community and understanding of the challenges they face.

### Who are the Rink Attendants and What do They Do?

Usually the rink attendants are high school students. They clear the snow on the ice and rubber mats between the rink skate shack and the rink. They also sell memberships and concessions, and collect drop-in fees.

### Who Floods the Rink?

We hire a contractor to flood the rink, since we don't have volunteers with rink flooding experience in our area yet like many inner city community leagues. There are a lot of families (and busy parents) with young children in our area, and not a lot of retired folks with spare time on their hands either.

### How Is the Rink Flooded?

Water is taken from the fire hydrant by the rink parking lot. A permit to use the hydrant and equipment to connect up to the hydrant are obtained from EPCOR.

### How Often is the Rink Flooded?

The rink is flooded 2 or 3 times a week by the contractor, weather permitting. We can't flood if it's snowing, warmer than around -5 degrees Celsius, or colder than about -20 degrees Celsius. If it's too warm then water takes too long to freeze. If it's too cold out the water will turn into brittle ice.

### Other Rinks are Open. Why Isn't Allard Rink Open? It Seems Like Nobody is Maintaining the Rink. Why Does it Take so Long to Build up the Ice and Open the Rink?

It may appear like we're "late" each year or that nobody is in charge of the rink, but the rink in Allard is not ever "late". That's a common misconception. It is open as soon as possible each year. We are planning and doing everything that we can behind the scenes to get the rink open. That includes dealing with EPCOR, buying concessions materials, interviewing rink attendants, hiring a flooding contractor, and having equipment serviced. None of those things are visible to the public.

Other leagues have grass-bottom rinks that they can start flooding in October. The ground absorbs water for a while before a proper rink base is formed. Luckily we don't have to waste money on water like that. Some other leagues have an asphalt floor in their rink which can be flooded sooner as well but takes more of a beating from the sun. The North end of an outdoor rink takes the worst of the sun. Unfortunately though the rink in Allard has a very expensive treated concrete surface that can't be flooded without risking damaging the material unless it has been around -10 degrees Celsius for about 48 hours (ideally). We end up getting frustrated and calling the weather over a day or two "close enough".

Mother Nature likes to toy with the league, and that's an understatement. For example, it was cold enough to start flooding the rink in 2017 for two days in November right before a warm stretch. So it would have been a complete waste of time and money to flood then. The rink would have melted and been closed. Then it got barely cold enough to flood, so we did, but then it got way too cold to flood. Meanwhile residents grew impatient thinking that nobody was taking care of the rink. As soon as the weather stabilized we flooded the rink as much as possible to get the rink open.

### [It's the Christmas Holidays. Why are There No Rink Attendants at the Rink?](#)

From our experience the rink attendants (usually high school students) are quite likely to be away for the holiday season in British Columbia, Mexico, Phoenix, Palm Springs, or elsewhere, with their families. This is more often the case than not. It's unfortunate but the community league does what it can to operate the rink in the meantime.

### [My Family Wanted to Skate During the Day but They Were Flooding. Why Can't They Flood Later in the Day?](#)

The contractor's employees only work regular business hours, so they go out during the day to flood. They also flood other rinks around the city, so we have no control over their schedule. For example, if it was too cold to flood the day before, and it will be too warm to flood the next day, then the contractor will absolutely have to flood the day that you showed up to skate.

### [Why is the Ice in Rough Shape?](#)

If it's too warm to flood, or too cold to flood, or constantly snowing out, we can't flood. And people tend to flock to the rink when it's warm out, so the rink gets torn up pretty bad sometimes. Please remember that it's not an indoor rink and we don't have \$40,000 Zamboni. We also can't flood in the middle of the night. The rink floodlights can only be on until 11:00 pm according to City of Edmonton bylaws or we will get complaints from residents that have homes that back onto the rink. We cannot flood in the dark.

### [Can We Skate Anywhere Else?](#)

Yes, residents with a membership to the Blackmud Creek Community League can skate at any community league run skating rink in the city for free. For example, Twin Brooks has a rink. Chappelle's rink on the other hand is run by their Home Owners Association. You cannot access a rink like that.

## How Much Money Does the League Spend Running the Rink?

We spend about \$25,000-\$26,000 running the rink each winter. That goes towards the flooding contractor, rink attendant salaries, concessions materials, fuel, equipment maintenance, power, water for flooding, propane for heating the trailer, port-a-potty rental, etc.

## Why Isn't There a Small Rink in Blackmud Creek Park Anymore? Why Isn't There a Small Rink in Allard in 2018?

The rink in Blackmud Creek Park was there for only one winter when Allard Rink opened. The ice was well-maintained because the City used to take care of it and there was also a city employee (and league board member) whose house backed onto the rink, and they helped take care of it in their spare time. They have since moved away. The City of Edmonton also increased the cost of maintaining a snow bank rink for a community league to about \$12,000 for a winter after that. That's cost prohibitive. We paid extra the second year the Allard Rink was open to create a snow bank rink in Allard for economies of scale. In other words, for only a slight increase in flooding costs we could have two rinks in one place maintained by the same contractor and the same rink attendants.

Another important thing to note about having a snow bank rink in Blackmud Creek Park is that it would be unattended. There's no way to offset the costs of having a rink there by selling more memberships, since nobody would be there to sell memberships and check for skate tags.

Last winter was the fourth year of the snow bank rink in Allard and many people complained about the snow bank rink. It was too small, too bumpy, too dark, too close to the fire pit, and they wanted to use the big rink but there were adults playing hockey. So the community league Board decided to only do the big rink in Allard this winter and try out no-hockey times each day. The hockey nets will be locked up during the times posted inside the skate shack, and signage will be posted to remind people that these are also times that no sticks or pucks are allowed. The times will change based on feedback from residents. Other times are a free-for-all. They are not hockey-only times. A small rink will be built for next winter, and we will have family skate times as well to cover all the bases.

## Can People Skate on Storm Water Ponds?

No. This is not safe at all. These ponds are not stationary bodies of water. Water continuously flows in and out of them. The thickness of the ice is not consistent or predictable. Snow can hide dangerous thin spots or holes. Water in the ponds may also include road salt and other contaminants that can impact the ice quality. If you see people walking or skating on a pond, please warn them to get off the ice immediately!