

Village of New Maryland Outdoor Rink Information



The Village of New Maryland outdoor rink(s) are located in Athletic Park (located down the hill to the left of New Maryland Elementary School) and are established on existing playing surfaces – our main rink is built on the basketball court, and when we have a second rink, the tennis courts are used (located behind and to the right of the basketball court).

In a typical year, the outdoor rink preparation begins in January, once we have a base of snow and some consistently cold weather conditions, both of which are required for flooding and ice-making. The rink preparation is handled by our Recreation Foreman Kirk Billings, who has been our resident outdoor rink expert for more than 15 years.

Because the rinks are established on a paved surface, a snow cover of approximately 5-6 inches is the first step to setting up the outdoor rink. Sufficient snowfall to cover the pavement, as well as enough snow to create a snowbank perimeter around the rink surface must be in place, as it serves as a barrier to prevent the water from spilling out of the rink area during flooding.

Once enough snow has been moved to create the barrier and the rink base, the first step is to spray light coats of water to make a first layer of ice. Because of the large surface of the ice rink



(approximately 100 x 100 feet in size) several lengths of fire hose are connected to the onsite water box and the hose is hoisted on an 8-foot step ladder to create an overhead spray. The ladder and hose are then moved regularly to ensure coverage of the entire rink surface area. For comparison, a typical “backyard” rink is approximately 10 x 20 feet. So, one of our outdoor rinks is essentially 10 times the size of an individual backyard rink, with a very specific set of weather conditions required for a successful ice surface.

Consistent cold temperatures are key in these early stages especially because if temperatures rise, the ice will quickly dissipate and the water-soaked snow can completely melt away, exposing holes in the banks for the water to flow away. In addition, if the paved surface is not fully covered in snow, the intense winter sun can easily melt holes through the ice (the “white” snow base serves as a reflector over the black pavement, thus saving a lot of time and future repairs).



If you use too much water at a time, it will overwhelm the snow surface/banks and won't freeze properly. Ideal rink-making conditions are a consistent temperature of -10 degrees Celsius or colder with cloud cover or darkness. Therefore, early morning and evenings are often the best times for the initial rink building.

Once your initial layer of ice is established, several additional layers are added (in ideal conditions, anywhere from 4-5 layers of ice per day is optimal) eventually creating between 5-6 inches of thickness on the entire rink surface. In the best weather conditions, the water spray freezes and lands on the surface as hail – that looks like marbles – that helps build layers of ice quickly.

In ideal conditions, with no weather interruptions (such as snowstorms or unseasonably mild temperatures) it takes approximately 5 full days (working between 6-8 hours per day) to establish a thick enough ice surface that it can handle heavy use and also sustain some daytime sun (melting). Once the rink is open, flooding is typically done once per day to give a fresh layer of ice, especially after heavy use.

The rink has dusk to dawn lighting, so nighttime skating/pick-up hockey is permitted and encouraged. Access to the rink is from Athletic Park Drive with some parking adjacent to the rink as well as the parking lot at NMES which is a short walk to the rink. A set of bleachers for changing into your skates is also available.

And now you know a little bit of what goes into our outdoor rink making in the Village of New Maryland. Many thanks to our Recreation Foreman for the many hours he spends on our rinks each winter!

For more information, please feel free to contact Michelle in the Village Office – email is michelle.sawler@vonm.ca phone 506-458-6094. Once the rink is open, staff post regular updates on our social media (Facebook.com/VillageofNewMaryland and on Twitter - @VLGNewMaryland) as well as our Recreation Hotline – 506-451-4732.