

**STATEMENT OF POLICIES AND GUIDELINES FOR SLACKLINING IN PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS WITHIN THE MADISON PARK SYSTEM**

**AUTHORIZATION**

The Madison Board of Park Commissioners is the approving authority for determining the appropriateness and acceptance of the activity of slacklining in park and recreation areas within the Madison parks system. This policy is intended to provide guidelines and procedures that will ensure the activity of slacklining is done in a manner that prevents and mitigates damage to City of Madison trees and park users. Slacklining is the sport of walking a narrow, flat nylon webbing suspended horizontally between two anchor points.

**SLACKLINING GUIDELINES**

1. Slacklining is allowed from sunrise to 30 minutes prior to sunset. Sunrise and sunset times are as determined by the National Weather Service (NWS) of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The NWS website is located at [www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov). Equipment cannot be installed prior to sunrise and must be removed before sunset.
2. All slackline installations shall be temporary and may not be left unattended. The owner of the equipment is responsible for setting up and taking down the equipment. Unattended slacklining equipment will be removed.
3. All equipment associated with the practice of slacklining shall be maintained in an operable and safe condition. This is the sole responsibility of the participants. The City may direct equipment that appears to be unsafe or improperly set up to be removed.
4. Lines may only be affixed to appropriately sized trees and select tree species in the following manner:
  - a. Only trees greater than one foot (1') in diameter measured at 4.5 ft. above ground level may be used as anchor points.
  - b. Trees must not be altered. No branches shall be cut, pruned, thinned, braced, broken, or screws or nails used in the tree. Such damage is unlawful under Madison General Ordinance Section 23.24 *Breaking or Injuring Trees, Shrubs*.
  - c. Tree species that cannot be used as anchor points include:
    - i. All Oak trees. Oak trees are susceptible to Oak Wilt, a deadly fungus that is spread by insects that introduce the pathogen through openings in tree's outer bark.
    - ii. All Hickory trees. Native Hickory trees have scaly, raised bark that is easily damaged by abrasion.
  - d. Tree protection is required for all slackline anchoring equipment:
    - i. Minimum tree protection shall consist of fabric padding placed between the tree and anchoring lines. The fabric padding must completely encircle

the trunk of the tree and be a minimum of ¼” thick and 10” wide. Appropriate padding material may include carpet squares or similar material.

- ii. Slackline anchoring straps must be a minimum of 2” wide. Anchoring straps shall lay flat against the fabric padding and shall not be twisted or folded reducing the overall width of the strap. Anchoring straps and their associated hardware shall at no point directly contact the tree.
- e. Trees and/or landscape areas showing damage from slacklining activities may be restricted from future use at the discretion of Madison Parks.
5. Slacklines may only be attached to City trees as described above, and may not be affixed to any other city fixture including but not limited to buildings, light poles, handrails, art objects, park equipment, bike racks or fences.
6. Slacklines shall not be higher than four feet (4’) off the ground at the center of the span.
7. Slacklines shall not be longer than fifty feet (50’) measured from trunk surface to trunk surface.
8. The area beneath the slackline must be a clear and flat landing surface under the full length of the slackline, and must have a minimum 8 feet clearance on both sides of the apparatus.
9. At no time shall slackline installations impede the access and activities of other park users.
10. Slacklines shall not be installed within fifty feet (50’) of events or activities occurring at reserved park shelters and park spaces.
11. Slacklining is not permitted in parks designated as conservation areas. Conservation parks are listed at <http://www.cityofmadison.com/parks/parks/conservation>.
12. Slacklining participants may not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

**ASSUMPTION OF RISK**

Slacklining participants and spectators assume any and all risks associated with this activity including, but not limited to, death, paralysis and serious injury.