

Guidelines for Public Closure or Modified Operating Hours

The City of Madison is committed to providing required services to guests at Parks Lakeside Office, Warner Park Community Recreation Center (WPCRC), Olbrich Botanical Gardens (OBG) and other facilities, regardless of inclement weather conditions or other public emergencies. During extreme weather conditions, it may be appropriate to allow employees to exercise available leave options (or to subsequently make up lost time consistent with City standards) and/or to reassign employees to alternative hours or locations in the interest of the employee and public safety. However, in doing so, the Department/Division head shall assure that required services continue without interruption.

The Parks Management Team will use these guidelines for considering public and program closure, partial area closures, or modified operating hours in cases of extreme cold, hazardous, or inclement weather conditions, or other public emergencies. To help our users and staff plan for closures or modified operating hours, we will make every effort to make a decision by 7am of the anticipated date. Identified staff for each facility include:

- Parks Lakeside Office: Assistant Park Superintendents
- Warner Park Community Recreation Center: Warner Park Facility Manager or Community Services Manager
- Olbrich Botanical Gardens: Garden Director

If a situation for public closure or modified operating hours exists, the identified Parks Management staff for the identified facility or designee will notify the Assistant Parks Superintendent, Public Information Office, and Olbrich Garden Public Relations Manager (for OBG only). If a decision is made to close the facility, modify operating hours, or cancel programs, the Public Information Officer, Olbrich Gardens PR Manager, or designee will notify appropriate media outlets by phone and email within two hours of the decision. They will also post the decision on the Madison Parks and OBG websites and social media pages. Designated staff will notify all scheduled program participants, rental clients, and volunteers. If conditions allow, the Parks Management staff or designee will post closure information on the outdoor marquee and the front entrance door.

When the parks facility is closed, it also means that all activities scheduled in the facility for that day are canceled. However, staff are expected to report to work if they can safely do so or use the appropriate leave balances if they are not reporting to work. Sick leave is not an appropriate leave option unless an employee is actually ill or injured. Teleworking is available for staff with computer and network access and must be approved by the Parks Management lead or Assistant Park Superintendent.

Park Facilities should consider public closure or modified operating hours under one or more of the following conditions. This list is not all-inclusive.

- Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) closure or after school program closure
- Metro Transit closure
- City of Madison snow emergency
- Temperature or wind chill reaches -25 degrees and below
- Closure of facilities offering similar services such as; Packers CLC, Northport CLC, Kennedy Heights, Vera Court, East Madison Community Center, Goodman Community Center, East YMCA, Lakeview Library, Madison School & Community Recreation (MSCR), New Bridge etc.
- Public Health Madison and Dane County emergency or public health crisis
- Natural disaster or public safety threat
- Facility maintenance emergency (gas leak, HVAC failure, water/power outage, fire, etc.)
- Inclement weather for outdoor programs and activities including thunder, lightning, or heat index reaching 95+ degrees

In addition to public closures or modified operating hours, both WPCRC and OBG have annual planned closures or modified hours to accommodate annual maintenance and programming. This includes:

- WPCRC Annual Maintenance – August (1 week)
- OBG Bolz Conservatory Annual Maintenance – Spring Closure (2 weeks)
- OBG Orchid Escape Show Set-up & Take-down – January & March (5-7 days)
- OBG Summer Breeze Set-up – June (early closure)
- OBG GLEAM Set-up, Take-down, & Events – August-October (3-5 days)
- OBG Blooming Butterflies Set-up – July (2-3 days)

At times there are needs for closures for both expected and unexpected facility assessments, maintenance, and repairs. Examples of projects that may require partial or full closures include:

- Bridge repairs
- Tree work/pruning
- Garden maintenance
- Lighting, installation, maintenance, and upgrades
- Irrigation maintenance and repairs
- Bolz Conservatory (glass repairs, cupola repair, steel condition report)

Closure times will be selected to cause the least amount of disruption to community services, public visitation and revenue generation. The Board of Park Commissioners will be kept informed of planned closures and modified hours through the monthly reports provided to them. Due to the nature of the closures, some are planned well in advance and others happen with little advance notice. As a result, the report will include closures or modified hours in the future and past.