

Applicant Information Guide

Authorization to Use a Recreation Site, Recreation Trail, or
Interpretive Forest Site



Recreation Sites
and Trails BC

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1. OVERVIEW

Recreation sites, recreation trails, and interpretive forest sites (collectively referred to in this document as ‘recreation sites and trails’) are highly valued public recreation amenities on Crown land. Provincial recreation sites and trails are used for camping and various day use activities, such as hiking, nature appreciation, horseback riding, mountain bike riding, and more. They are managed and maintained on behalf of the Province of British Columbia by Recreation Sites and Trails BC (RSTBC), a branch of the BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development.

Recreation sites and trails are established by ministerial order in accordance with Section 56 of the *Forest and Range Practices Act*. Established sites and trails are regulated under the Forest Recreation Regulation (FRR). Section 16 of the FRR requires a person using a recreation site or trail for a competitive sporting event, a business use, or an industrial activity to acquire authorization from a Recreation Officer. Use of a recreation site for a gathering of 15 or more persons, or as a place of temporary residence while engaged in a business or industrial activity on site, also require authorization.

Authorization is not required to use a recreation site or trail for small public gatherings of less than 15 people, or for basic recreational day use such as hiking, or overnight camping.

The application review process for Section 16 authorizations is an important tool for managing the intensity and scope of activities, events, and other uses of recreation sites and trails. In popular recreation areas, the application review process is important for scheduling, managing demand, and for ensuring appropriate and balanced use of recreation sites and trails.

Section 16 authorization on its own gives a person the right to occupy the land that is a recreation site, recreation trail, or interpretive forest site for a predetermined term for a specified use or purpose. In some cases, depending on the nature of the use or activity that is contemplated, additional authorizations may be required if the use or activity proposes to use areas surrounding the recreation site or trail. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to obtain any other permits or tenures that are required under other enactments (refer to section 7 below for more information on other authorization and tenure processes).

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Guide is to help prospective applicants prepare an application for authorization to use a recreation site or trail. Specific instructions for completing an application form as well as information about the application review process are provided. A glossary of key terms is included at the end of this Guide.

If you require additional information to answer any of the questions included in the application form you may be required to contact a Recreation Officer. Recreation Officers are responsible for particular recreation districts. Contact information can be found on the [BC Government Directory](#).

3. ACTIVITY TYPES

Authorization by the Recreation Officer, or other Statutory Decision Maker, is required to use a recreation site or trail for the uses or activities specified in **Table 1**, below. Your application must specify the activity type for which authorization is being sought and include the necessary information requirements as specified in the application form (refer to section 4.2 below for more information on application contents).

Table 1: Uses / Activities Requiring Authorization (Section 16, FRR)

USE/ACTIVITY TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Competitive Sporting Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A competitive sporting event is a sporting event that takes place on a recreation site, recreation trail, or interpretative forest site. Competitive sporting events are events where participants compete against others towards a common objective (e.g. the fastest time, longest distance, largest catch, etc.). Participants may be required to pay an entrance fee and may be awarded a prize as a result of participation. ▪ Examples may include: cross-country ski races, running races, mountain bike competitions, white water kayak competitions, fishing derbies, etc.
Business Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A business use is described as a one time or limited use of a recreation site, recreation trail or interpretive forest site for a business purpose. ▪ Examples may include: filming a movie or commercial at a recreation site or trail, kayak and canoe rentals, firewood sales, demo days, the overlapping use of a cat skiing tenure with a designated snowmobile area, etc.
Industrial Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An industrial activity refers to an activity that is industrial in nature that overlaps a portion of, or the entirety of an established recreation site, recreation trail or interpretative forest site. ▪ Examples may include: resource road construction, primary forest activities, unloading or material storage, utility installation and maintenance works, etc.
Gatherings of 15 people or more (recreation sites only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A gathering of 15 people or more people at a recreation site is described as a one time or limited recreational use of a recreation site for a non-commercial purpose, for a group of 15 or more persons. ▪ Examples may include: weddings, family reunions, school field trips, fundraising or charity events (i.e. events by donation, fishing derbies, etc.).
Temporary Residence (recreation sites only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ With authorization, an applicant may use a recreation site for overnight camping on a time-limited basis (i.e. as a temporary residence) while engaged in a business or industrial activity outside of the recreation site. ▪ For example, a guide outfitter may use a recreation site as a base camp while guiding hunting parties.

4. APPLICATION INFORMATION

4.1. Eligible Applicants

Individuals; corporations registered in British Columbia; forest licensees; a registered partnership, cooperative or non-profit society; educational institutions; Indigenous band corporations, Indian Bands or Tribal Councils; municipalities, regional districts, or other government entities and associations are eligible to apply.

All applicants must be 19 years of age or older to hold an authorization.

4.2. Contents

To apply for authorization to use a recreation site or trail, applicants must complete the application form provided by RSTBC. The application form can be accessed on the [RSTBC Website](#) and submitted electronically to the email address indicated on the form.

Additional attachments may also be required with your application, as detailed in subsequent sections of this Guide and specified in the application form.

Please ensure your application includes the following prior to submission:

- i. Application Form.
- ii. Proof of Insurance (if available at the time of application¹)
- iii. Mapping (as applicable), and
- iv. Any additional requirements specified in the Application Form or by the Recreation Officer.

i. Application Forms

Application forms include activity-specific questions and information requirements. There is one application form for each activity type (as listed in Table 1). It is important that the applicant completes the correct application form for the activity type for which authorization is being sought.

- [S16 Application Form 16.1 Competitive Sporting Event](#)
- [S16 Application Form 16.2 Business Use](#)
- [S16 Application Form 16.3 Industrial Activities](#)
- [S16 Application Form 16.4 Gathering 15 or more](#)
- [S16 Application Form 16.5 Temporary Residence](#)

¹ As a condition of authorization, Applicants will be required to show proof of Commercial General Liability Insurance prior to the start date of the event or activity. If insurance is available at the time of application, proof of insurance may be included in the application package.

ii. Insurance Requirements

As a condition of authorization, you must purchase and maintain throughout the term of the activity, event, or use Commercial General Liability Insurance in an amount not less than \$2,000,000.00 inclusive per occurrence against personal injury, property damage and liability assumed under this term. The Province is to be added as an insured under the insurance policy and the policy must include a cross liability clause.

Proof of insurance should be provided on a Province of British Columbia Certificate of Insurance that has been completed by an insurance broker. RSTBC staff will complete Part 1 of the Certificate of Insurance prior to forwarding to the Applicant for their insurance broker to complete.

iii. Mapping Requirements

Mapping is required for applications involving **industrial activities**, **competitive sporting events**, and **business uses** that propose to operate throughout a large area. Where maps are required, they must be created using the following mapping standards:

- Clearly indicate: a north arrow, a scale bar (as described below) and a legend.
- General Location Map: A map of the recreation site or trail identified within the application, drawn to 1:50 000 to 1:250 000 scale (or larger if required to encompass boundaries of activity area), that illustrates at a landscape level scale the general location of the area under application, including boundaries of the proposed activity area, major landmarks, travel/access routes, etc.
- Detailed Map: If there is a specific area of the recreation site or trail that will be used more intensively, a more detailed map(s) will be required in addition to a general location map. The detailed map must clearly identify the location of travel/access routes and specific activity site(s). If applicable, the location and construction description of any structures or facilities (permanent or temporary) within the activity area must also be included.
- Digital maps (e.g. PDF and/or Google Earth KML/KMZ files) are preferred.

Maps may be prepared using [iMapBC](#), [Google Earth](#), or other programs. The [Recreation Polygon](#) and [Recreation Line](#) datasets² provide spatial representation of recreation sites, trails, and interpretive forest sites. These layers may be accessed directly on iMapBC or downloaded for use with other mapping programs.

iv. Additional Requirements

Additional information may be required to be submitted with your application package (e.g. letter of support from the Partnership Agreement holder for the recreation site or trail, schedule of operations, etc.). Consultation with the Recreation Officer is recommended prior to submitting an application if you are unsure if additional information will be required with your application.

² Note that the datasets include multiple layers. The 'Active' layer should be selected.

5. THE APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

5.1 Receiving the Application

Your application will be reviewed to ensure that it is complete. If necessary, you will be contacted for more information. To improve application turnaround time, applicants should provide missing information or respond to RSTBC employee requests as soon as possible.

An application cannot be processed until all required information has been received.

5.2 Adjudication

Applications will be reviewed by the Recreation Officer responsible for the recreation district where the event, use or activity is proposed, or by another Statutory Decision Maker.

The target time for making a decision on your application is **45 days** after a complete application is received. Target times may be affected by other required processes such as requests to you for additional information, or requirements for consultation with First Nations, Partnership Agreement holders, and the public.

Applications will be reviewed in the order that they are received and processed. The 45-day time frame will not be changed to accommodate 'rush' applications. Early applications are encouraged to ensure a smooth authorization process.

The Recreation Officer will review the application and determine whether additional assessment and consultation is required, such as ecological or archaeological assessments, or First Nation consultation. Some assessments will be completed by RSTBC, but other assessments may be the responsibility of the applicant to complete at their own cost.

RSTBC staff may be in contact throughout the application process to discuss your application or to request additional information as required.

5.3 Issuance of Authorization

If a decision to authorize the proposed use or activity is made, the Recreation Officer will prepare an authorization letter. Conditions and other measures to manage or mitigate impacts to the recreation site or trail and associated recreational values will be included in the authorization letter. Authorization letters will be sent to you via email or hard copy if no email address was provided.

Following a review of the application, the Recreation Officer may decide not to authorize the proposed use or activity. You will be informed in writing if the proposed use or activity cannot be authorized.

Why would my application be denied?

RSTBC considers the impacts of a proposed use, event, or activity and the particular values of the recreation site, recreation trail or interpretive forest site in question when evaluating an application. Decisions to authorize a use, event, or activity are guided by considerations of impacts to recreation facilities, traditional user groups, the environment, and public safety.

If your application is denied you will be provided a letter indicating the reason(s) for denial. Letters will be sent to you via email or hard copy if no email address was provided. Please be aware of the following common reasons why an application for authorization may be denied – these are provided for your information and are examples only.

- The proposed use or activity does not support recreation objectives proposed in higher level plans or established under Section 56(3) of the *Forest and Range Practices Act* or is inconsistent with any ministerial orders in place for special management.
- The proposed use or activity is deemed likely to result in unacceptable impacts, including cumulative impacts, to recreation facilities, the environment, public safety, or continued public access and use of the recreation site or trail.
- The Applicant has failed to abide by the conditions of authorization of previously granted Section 16 authorizations (only applicable to returning applicants).

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

Once authorization has been granted, it is your responsibility as the Authorization Holder to:

- Abide by the terms and conditions of authorization as outlined in the authorization letter.
- Ensure all other applicable licenses, tenures, permits or other such authorizations are in place prior to the specified start date of the use, activity or event for which authorization is being sought.

7. MORE INFORMATION

RSTBC's authority is drawn from the *Forest and Range Practices Act* and its associated regulations, policies, and agreements. Some of the notable sections under which RSTBC operates are sections 56, 57, 58 and 118 of the *Forest and Range Practices Act*, and almost all of the sections of the Forest Recreation Regulation:

- [Forest and Range Practices Act](#). (SBC 2002)
- [Forest Recreation Regulation](#), *Forest and Range Practices Act*. BC Reg. 16/2004.

For more information about **authorizations** made by RSTBC, including authorization for the construction, rehabilitation or maintenance of a trail or recreation facility on Crown land, visit the [RSTBC website](#).

Recreation sites and trails are located on Crown land and are managed within an integrated resource management framework, co-existing with timber harvesting, and other industrial activities and commercial enterprises, including mineral extraction, oil and gas development, range tenures, adventure tourism, etc.

- To learn more about different Crown land uses and related application processes, outside of recreation sites and trails, click [here](#).
- To learn about recreation activities and adventure guiding on Crown land (outside of recreation sites and trails), and the *Land Act* tenure process, click [here](#).

8. GLOSSARY

Applicant – refers to the individual, group, organization or entity who makes the formal application per section 16 of the Forest Recreation Regulation for the use of a recreation site or trail.

Crown Land – means land, whether or not it is covered by water, or an interest in land, vested in the government.

Developed portion of a recreation site – refers to the portion of a recreation site, recreation trail or interpretive forest site that is comprised of any structure necessary to support a day use area, camping area, staging area, or other similar area. The developed portion includes a buffer zone that extends 100 metres in all directions from the structure, except where limited by the boundary of the recreation site, trail or interpretive forest site (FRR).

Established Recreation Site, Recreation Trail, or Interpretive Forest Site – means a recreation site, trail or interpretive forest site established in accordance with Section 56 of the *Forest and Range Practices Act* by an Order of the Minister.

Recreation Officer – refers to an individual who has designated statutory and delegated decision-making authority for the purpose of managing public recreation on Crown lands. Statutory authority to manage the use or occupancy of a recreation site or trail is found in both the *Forest and Range Practices Act* and the Forest Recreation Regulation.

Primary Forest Activities – include one or more of the following: road construction, maintenance and deactivation; timber harvesting including falling, skidding, storage, hauling, piling and burning brush and debris, and; silviculture treatments and wildlife habitat enhancement.