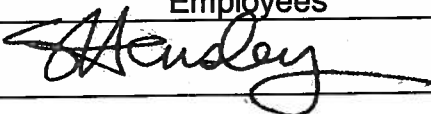




PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE



Subject	Slacklining	Reference Number PR-O-16
Section	Operations	Effective Date 12/05/2014
Applicability	All Parks and Recreation Department Employees	Supersedes Policy Dated N/A
Director Approval		Signature Date 12/15/2014

Purpose: To provide for the safety of parks and park patrons with regards to the use of slacklines and to mitigate and prevent damage to public trees.

Authority: City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department Section 14. Park Use Rules

Austin City Code, Chapter 6-3-5 Comprehensive Urban Forest Plan and 6-3-6 Standards of Care for a Tree or Plant on Public Property.

Austin City Code 25-8-602 Definitions Heritage Tree

In accordance with City of Austin Personnel Policies, the Parks and Recreation Department Director has the authority and responsibility of maintaining efficiency within the operation and determining methods of operation to accomplish the department mission and objectives.

Policy: It is the policy of the Parks and Recreation Department policy to allow the activity of slacklining to occur within the Austin parks system under safe conditions for the participant, non-participatory patrons and the environment including trees and surrounding landscaping.

Definitions:

Slacklining- An activity in which the participant walks on a span of nylon webbing, positioned horizontally with the ground below and securely anchored at two fixed points.

Special Event Zone- An outdoor space designated by the City of Austin in connection with specific events on parkland.

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Heritage Tree- A tree that has a diameter of 24 inches or more, measured four and one-half feet above natural grade, and is one of the following species: Texas Ash, Bald Cypress, American Elm, Cedar Elm, Texas Madrone, Bigtooth Maple, all Oaks, Pecan, Arizona Walnut or Eastern Black Walnut. This list of eligible heritage tree species may be supplemented, but not reduced, as prescribed by rule.

Dusk- Thirty (30) minutes prior to sunset

Dawn- Thirty (30) minutes after to sunrise

Procedures:

Slacklining is the sport of walking a small, flat nylon rope between two anchor points. The most common anchor points for slackline ropes are between two trees. Because there is potential for patron injury and damage to tree bark, surrounding turf and landscaped areas through repeated and overuse for slacklining, the Parks and Recreation Department desires to regulate slacklining activities.

- 1) The Office of Special Events shall formally issue a permit for slacklining in City of Austin parks. Employees shall enforce the regulations regarding slacklining whether the activity is informal or part of a Department sanctioned special event. The Nature Based Programs Division Manager is responsible for the distribution of any updated procedures to appropriate staff.
- 2) All slacklines on City of Austin parkland shall be required to have a valid slacklining permit holder in attendance at all times. Permits shall be issued to persons age 18 and older. All persons under the age of 18 participating in slacklining on City of Austin parkland shall be accompanied by an adult with a valid slacklining permit. All permit holders and their guests shall receive a copy of the most current Guidelines for Slacklining in City of Austin Parks and shall be required to adhere to these guidelines. (See attachment A)
- 3) Slacklining permits issued by the Department are for individual or small group (15 or less) informal slacklining activities. Slacklining permits are not intended to grant permission for slacklining tournaments, leagues, competitions, fundraising or public events.
- 4) Slacklining shall be restricted to Department approved locations. (See attachment B)

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- 5) Employees shall ensure
 - No tree is penetrated, such as the use of an anchor or post, to ensure prevention of disease and damage to the tree.
 - Slacklining is not allowed with the use of heritage trees.
 - Slacklines are not set up within a special event zone without written permission or as a named special event zone activity.
 - Permit holders are not interrupting existing use of an area by the general public.
 - The public has access to park entrances at all times and slacklining does not block public access.

- 6) Employees may direct the discontinuation of slacklining activities if the performance of the activity is done in a manner deemed to be unsafe to the participant or other park patrons or is in violation of the established Park Rules associated with slacklining. Employees, in cooperation with the Office of Special Events, may revoke a slacklining permit if behavior is deemed unsafe for patrons or the environment.

Attachments:

- Slacklining Guidelines/ Attachment A- 1 of 5
- List of Approved Parks for Slacklining/ Attachment B- 1 of 2

Supersession History

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

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GUIDELINES FOR SLACKLINING IN CITY OF AUSTIN PARKS



Purpose:

1. Slacklining is the sport of walking a small, flat nylon rope between two anchor points. The most common anchor points for slackline ropes are between two trees. There is potential for damage to tree bark and surrounding turf and landscaped areas through repeated and overuse for slacklining. The purpose of these guidelines on slacklining is to mitigate and prevent damage to City of Austin's Parks and the people that use them. Participants and spectators take full responsibility for following these guidelines and best safety practices. Participants and spectators assume any and all risk associated with this activity. For participants, the risks include, but are not limited to, serious injury, paralysis and death. Spotters are strongly recommended.

Guidelines:

1. All slacklining must comply with these guidelines regardless of whether it takes place during an event or as an informal activity. Slacklining that does not involve a competition, fundraising or more than 15 people need not be scheduled as an event, but must still comply with this policy. Slacklining is permitted between dawn and dusk.
 - (A) Slacklines on City of Austin parkland shall be required to have a valid slacklining permit holder in attendance at all times. Permits will not be issued to persons under the age of 18. All persons under the age of 18 participating in slacklining on City of Austin parkland shall be accompanied by an adult with a valid slacklining permit. The Office of Special Events shall formally issue a permit for slacklining in City of Austin parks.
 - (B) Impact on public use and priority of the permit: Permit holders shall not interrupt existing use of an area by the general public and the public must always have access to park entrances. Blocking of public access is prohibited.
 - (C) Slacklining shall be restricted to approved locations only.
 - (D) All equipment associated with the practice of slacklining should be maintained in an operable and safe condition per manufacturer specifications. This is the sole responsibility of the participant. A park employee may direct the removal of equipment that appears to be unsafe or improperly set up.



GUIDELINES FOR SLACKLINING IN CITY OF AUSTIN PARKS



- (E) All slacklines may be affixed on a temporary basis while in use by a participant. Slacklining equipment may not be left unattended at any time. The owner of the slacklining equipment is responsible for setting up and taking down the equipment by dusk. Unattended slacklining equipment may be removed and stored without notice to the permittee.
- (F) Slacklines may only be affixed to appropriately sized trees in the following manner:
 - (1) Trees greater than one foot in diameter may be used as anchor posts.
 - (2) Trees must not be altered. This includes, but is not limited to, trimming limbs, installing bolts or removing bark.
 - (3) To protect the bark on the trees the use of some type of fabric (e.g. burlap, carpet squares, towels or similar material) must be placed between the tree and the slackline tied to the tree. A clear and flat landing surface must be present under the full length of the slackline.
 - (4) Trees and/or landscaped areas showing damage from slacklining activities may be restricted from future use at the discretion of the Manager of Grounds, Facilities Management or their designee.
- (G) The slackline may not be elevated to a height of more than six feet at the center of the span.
- (H) Slacklines may not exceed a length of 100 feet.
- (I) Heritage trees or other trees posted by sign may not be used as anchors for this activity.
- (J) Slacklines may not be set up within a special event zone without written permission.



GUIDELINES FOR SLACKLINING IN CITY OF AUSTIN PARKS



- (K) The center of a slackline may not be within 25 feet of sidewalks, buildings, roads, streets, bikeways, hiking trails, bridges, water features, sport courts, bike racks, handrails, art objects, fences or light poles.
- (L) Slacklines may only be attached to approved City trees as noted above, and may not be affixed to any other City fixtures, including, but not limited to, buildings, bike racks, handrails, art objects, bridges, fences or light poles.
- (M) Slacklining activities shall comply with adopted Park Rules
- (N) For the safety of the community, Department employees will enforce rules and regulations associated with slacklining.
- (O) Youth participation is allowed with a permitted adult. Slacklining programming for youth will be considered with completion of a class/program proposal for programming through a PARD recreational facility that presents a need and interest in the proposed services.
- (P) Permit holders may NOT provide and/or facilitate organized or sanctioned activities such as slacklining tournaments, leagues, or public events.

PARD may revoke a permit if a permittee fails to properly fulfill the permittee's obligations under a slacklining permit. Three violations of rules will result in a person's permit being revoked for the remainder of the year. A permittee whose permit has been revoked may apply for a new permit. However, an applicant's previous non-compliance with permit may be considered by the Director in reviewing an application.

Compliance with City of Austin Rules and Regulations: In addition to the specific rules and regulations established for this permit and use program, the permit applicant acknowledges that each park and permit is subject to general park rules and regulations as currently exist and as may be adopted administratively or by ordinance by the City of Austin and agrees to abide by these rules and regulations.



GUIDELINES FOR SLACKLINING IN CITY OF AUSTIN PARKS



Definitions:

- (A) In this section, unless otherwise provided, the definition of terms is consistent with that of City Code.

- (B) In this section:
 - (1) "Director" means the Director of PARD and includes the Director's designee.

 - (2) "PARD" means the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department.

 - (3) "Park" or "Park Facility," unless otherwise expressly stated, includes all parks, wildlife preserves, recreational facilities and other areas belonging to the City, or under the authority of, PARD.

 - (4) "Permit" means a permit issued under this section or under the authority of PARD.

 - (5) "Permittee" means a person holding a permit from PARD.

 - (6) "Slacklining" means an activity in which the participant walks on a span of nylon webbing, positioned horizontally with the ground below and securely anchored at two fixed points.

 - (7) "Outdoor Space" means all City of Austin Parks and Recreation property, including, but not limited to, sidewalks, kiosks, railings, walls, light poles, trees, fences, benches, bridges, bodies of water, underpasses, streets, plazas, fields, parking lots, patios or terraces.

 - (8) "Event" means the use of a facility or outdoor space for a specified period. This includes, but is not limited to, demonstrations, parades, marches or other gatherings.

 - (9) "Special Event Zone" means an outdoor space designated by the City of Austin in connection with specific events on parkland.



GUIDELINES FOR SLACKLINING IN CITY OF AUSTIN PARKS



- (10) "Heritage Tree" means a tree that has a diameter of 24 inches or more, measured four and one-half feet above natural grade and is one of the following species:
- (a) Ash, Texas
 - (b) Cypress, Bald
 - (c) Elm, American
 - (d) Elm, Cedar
 - (e) Madrone, Texas
 - (f) Maple, Bigtooth
 - (g) All Oaks
 - (h) Pecan
 - (i) Walnut, Arizona
 - (j) Walnut, Eastern Black

This list of eligible heritage tree species may be supplemented, but not reduced, as prescribed by rule.

- (11) "Dusk" means 30 minutes prior to sunset.
- (12) "Dawn" means 30 minutes after sunrise.

City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department
Approved Locations for Slacklining

Slacklining is permitted at the parks listed below, excluding off-leash areas, public walkways, and pre-defined use areas*:

1. Auditorium Shores at Town Lake Metropolitan Park**
2. Balcones District Park
3. Battle Bend Park
4. Beverly S. Sheffield Northwest District Park
5. Bull Creek District Park
6. Butler Park***
7. Circle C. Ranch Metropolitan Park on Slaughter Creek
8. Davis-White Northeast District Park
9. Dick Nichols District Park
10. Dove Springs District Park
11. Eilers (Deep Eddy) Park
12. Garrison District Park
13. Givens District Park
14. Little Stacy Park
15. Long Center****
16. Longview Park
17. Mable Davis District Park
18. Mary Moore Searight Metropolitan Park
19. Onion Creek Metropolitan Park
20. Palmer Event Center
21. Ramsey Park
22. Reed Park
23. Riata Park
24. Tarrytown Park
25. Town Lake Metropolitan Park – E.R. Senior at Festival Beach
26. Town Lake Metropolitan Park – Lakeshore
27. Town Lake Metropolitan Park – Longhorn Shores
28. Trailhead Park
29. Walnut Creek Metropolitan Park
30. West Enfield Park
31. Woolridge Park
32. Zilker Metropolitan Park (specific approval required)

Excluded Areas:

*A pre-defined use area includes an area that has an obvious intended use. For example, slacklining in an area dedicated as a children's play area, public work out station, picnic pavilion, basketball court or dedicated parking lot is not appropriate.

Shared parkland with Austin Independent School District (AISD) will not be an approved location for slacklining activity at this time.

****Off-leash area at Auditorium Shores.**

*****Due to safety concerns, the hill, fountain and dock area at Butler Park is excluded from slacklining activity.**

******The circular driveway and temporary parking area at The Long Center is excluded from slacklining activity.**