



PUBLICATIONS

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TRAILS

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It is that time of year when everyone is anxious to get outdoors to enjoy the sun and warm temperatures. Many find walking, hiking or biking through the local **trail systems** appealing.

Trail development appears to be widespread throughout the provinces for many reasons, including: the public's focus on health and exercise; the interest of many in restoring waterfronts; municipal takeover of unused railway lines; and preservation of wildlife and the ecology.


From a liability and risk management perspective, a municipality should review the following issues with respect to existing trail

systems and their future development:

- Determine the suitability of property for a trail system. Are there environmental concerns? Are immediate repairs or renovations necessary for the safety of the users (e.g. dangerous bridges)?
- Identify the intended use or purpose of the trail (e.g. nature trail for hiking and walking only; multi-use trails).
- Understand the duty that the municipality has as an occupier to provide care to the users with respect to the conditions of their premises and all permitted activities.
- Post signs advising the public of permitted uses and prohibiting

undesirable or dangerous uses.

- Remove or mark obvious hazards with advance warning by posting signs.
- Provide regular inspections and document these along with what action was taken in terms of repairs or maintenance.
- Identify and deal with special and distinct hazards that may exist along the trail (e.g. seasonal flooding along waterfront property).
- Consider the liability implications from winter use of these trails.

Remember, by incorporating sound risk management procedures into your trail systems, everyone will enjoy them more. 

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