

Newport News Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Department Geocaching / Letterboxing Policy

It is the policy of the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism to accept applications to conduct geocaching /letterboxing activities in city parks and public squares. Request to conduct geocaching/letterboxing activities shall be submitted on this application for consideration by the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism.

Registration of Geocaches/Letterboxes

Placement of a cache/letterbox on Newport News city parks property must be secured with a free permit. This can be obtained at Newport News Park Headquarters (886-7912) Mon-Fri, 9am –5pm or the Discovery Center (886-7916) Sat & Sun, 10am – 5pm.

All caches must be registered with <http://www.geocaching.com/>. The City of Newport News Parks Division requires all the rules and regulations of www.geocaching.com to be honored and obeyed.

The person applying for a permit must provide a valid address, telephone number, email address, and Geocaching.com waypoint on the registration form along with, type of cache/letterbox, exact location of cache/letterbox, and a physical description of the cache/letterbox.

All permits are good from date of issue until DECEMBER 31 of the year of issue. After that date, the cache/ letterbox must be removed or renewed by phone or in person by January 31 of the new year. NOTE: It is the responsibility of the applicant to notify the Newport News Parks Division of changes of the location, archived, or removal of a cache/letterbox.

The exact location of the cache/letterbox must be pre-approved by the City of Newport News Parks Division with concern for public safety and the prevention of undesirable impacts to natural and historical resources.

If the permit holder fails to remove or register the cache/letterbox, it will be removed by park staff and held for (15) days, after which staff will dispose of the cache/letterbox and all of its contents. Confiscation and disposal by park staff will be recorded on the issued permit. **Park Staff has the right to remove a cache/letterbox for any reason.**

Geocache/Letterbox Containers, Contents, and Locations

Cache/letterbox containers must be non-breakable and have some form of latch or other closing mechanism to prohibit content exposure to wildlife, but may not be locked.

Cache/letterbox may not contain inappropriate or dangerous items. Such items include, but are not limited to, food, medications, alcohol, personal/hygiene products, pornography, weapons of any type, etc. Logbooks are required in all caches/letterboxes in Newport News city parks.

All Caches/letterboxes are subject to random inspections by park staff. Park staff has the authority to immediately remove any item held in a cache /letterbox deemed unacceptable.

Each cache/letterbox must have information posted on the outside of the container as an "Official Geocache" identifying it as a cache/letterbox and must also have the owner contact information posted on it or in it and a City of Newport News Registration Permit sticker. In the event that the

container is too small to attach a permit sticker, the permit number must be included in the cache along with the other required information.

Physical Caches/letterboxes are prohibited in any facility, structure, or historical earthworks located in a Newport News city park or placed in a location that would require other geocachers to travel over or through historical earthworks without staying on a clearly marked established path. Any cache/letterbox placed near a historical earthwork or building must reflect a note on the cache page that the cache is not located on an earthwork or building.

Caches/letterboxes are prohibited in the Campground area. Parking in the campground area is prohibited unless you are a registered camper. Vehicles are not allowed on bikeways or any other trail.

Any pre-existing cache registered with geocaching.com as of January 1, 2009 will be given priority. All pre-existing caches need to be registered with The City of Newport News Parks Division by March 15, 2009.

Caches/letterboxes may not be placed in hazardous, unsuitable areas, habitats, underground, underwater, or in trees that require climbing. Caches/letterboxes must be placed between ground or surface level and no higher than 6 feet above ground/surface level.

No Alteration of park property is allowed for cache/letterbox placement. (example: drilling a hole)

Metal detectors may not be used in cache / letterbox searches.

Caches/letterboxes must be maintained and kept in good condition. Any cache found to be in poor condition, missing, or disabled for any reason other than park operations will have 30 days from the first date of report to correct the condition.

All Newport News city parks are open sunrise to sunset.

Failure to comply with park guidelines will result in the revocation of effective geocaching/letterboxing permits. Continued failure to comply with these guidelines will prevent the issuances of any further geocaching/letterboxing permits to the non-compliant group or individual. If geocaching/letterboxing activities as a whole are found to have a negative impact on the park resources, or if safety becomes an issue in geocaching/letterboxing searches, then the Park Superintendent may ban geocaching/letterboxing from certain areas or from the entire park.