

Beach Fee

Beach Fee: Neither the City nor the Chicago Park District currently impose a fee on the use of beaches in the city limits.

Background

Beaches within the City of Chicago are operated by the Chicago Park District. There are 26 beaches on 26 miles of shoreline and an 18 mile lakefront path. Beaches are currently free, open spaces for both residents and visitors. The beaches are open for over three months each summer – in 2015, from Friday, May 22, to Monday, September 7. Swimming is permitted when lifeguards are on duty from 11AM to 7PM.

Revenue Impact

Because the beaches are operated by the Park District, revenue from a beach entry fee would flow to the Park District. If 1 million (2.5%) of the approximately 38 million leisure and international travelers to Chicago each year went to one of the Park District beaches during their stay, a \$10/person entry fee could generate approximately \$10 million in revenue. This revenue would be offset by the cost of the infrastructure and personnel necessary to enforce a non-resident entry fee at all 26 beaches – fences or other barriers would need to be erected along much of the 18 mile path, and control points would need to be constructed and staffed, likely both during and after beach opening hours and season.

Legal Authority

Because the beaches are operated by the Park District, revenue from a beach entry fee would flow to the Park District. This revenue could not be used by the City for general corporate purposes. It should also be noted that it may be difficult for all residents to prove residency, to ensure their ability to freely access Chicago's beaches.

Other Cities

New York City Parks maintains 14 miles of beaches within the city limits. There is no entry for these beaches. However, nearby beaches outside the city, such as Long Beach and Jones Beach, do require fees for entry. Beaches within the city limits of Los Angeles are maintained by the City, County, or State. There is no entry fee for these publically operated beaches.

A number of Illinois municipalities north of Chicago charge entry fees for municipal beaches. Following are a few examples:

	Daily Pass	Season Pass
Evanston, IL	Adult: \$8 Child: \$6 (same for residents and non-residents)	Resident: \$17-\$34 Non-Resident: \$29-\$58 (rate depends on purchase period)
Wilmette, IL	Residents: \$4.50 Non-Residents: \$9	Resident: Individual - \$41, 4 person - \$101 Non-Resident: Individual - \$103, 4 person - \$242
Winnetka, IL	Residents: \$5 Non-Residents: \$10	Resident: Individual - \$55, 4 person - \$70 Non-Resident: Individual - \$90, 4 person - \$112.50

Lake Forest, IL	Residents: Free, with ID Non-Residents: \$10 on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays	N/A
Lake Bluff, IL	Residents: Free, with ID Non-Residents: \$10	Resident: N/A Non-Resident: Individual - \$77, 4 person - \$304
Glencoe, IL	Residents: Child - \$4, Adult - \$6 Non-Residents: Child - \$7, Adult - \$10	Resident: \$99, plus \$15/additional person Non-Resident: \$124, plus \$15/additional person
Waukegan, IL	Free	N/A