

RECREATIONAL HARDSHIP SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Recreation Centre in the New Delhi Chancery compound was built in 1972. The Centre includes a swimming pool, wading pool, playground, tennis court and a multi-purpose Canadian Club which is currently being used for meetings, exercise classes, dances, parties, library and video-viewing. Since the construction of these facilities, the number of Canada-based staff has increased dramatically and the facilities are used to capacity by employees and their families. In order to ease congestion at the Canadian Club, funds have been provided under the recreational hardship support program to modify an existing building at the site for use as a separate gym and fitness room.

The Recreational Hardship Support Program (RHSP) is aimed at enhancing recreational opportunities for employees and their dependents at specified hardship missions where access to the most basic facilities commonly available to all Canadians is non-existent or restricted.

During the first years of the program, recreation centres were constructed or expanded on existing Chancery grounds in Accra, Havana, Kuala Lumpur, Colombo and Islamabad. Recreation Centres of this type address not only the basic fitness and health needs of employees, but also the safety and security concerns of spouses and children whose activities, out of necessity, may revolve around an isolated compound or within a small Western community.

The Department has also provided four-wheel drive vehicles at 16 missions to allow employees and their families to explore outlying areas or nearby attractions.

Recreational cottages have been leased at 13 missions to provide a place of rest and relaxation outside the usual atmosphere of the mission city.

At missions where suitable clubs are available and when no other opportunities for basic recreation are available, the Department subsidizes the cost of membership at private clubs for employees and their families. This measure is currently in place at 17 missions.

The Department has also provided fitness and recreational equipment in response to specific requests from the missions. Items vary from full-scale weight training units to darts and baseball or hockey equipment.

One of the most popular measures of the program is the Department's video program. All hardship missions have been provided with suitable videocassette equipment, and receive feature films on a regular basis.

Employees who make use of the recreational vehicles, cottages or subsidized club memberships, pay a reasonable portion of the operating costs in the form of user shares, which are reviewed on an annual basis.

For more information regarding the Recreational Hardship Support Program, contact ABM (Compensation and Benefits Policy).