



VILLAGE OF CHAMPION

CHAMPION, ALBERTA

BYLAW 2026-009

A BYLAW OF THE VILLAGE OF CHAMPION IN THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA TO REGULATE AND AUTHORIZE A CONTROLLED PERMIT PROGRAM FOR GOPHER CONTROL USING AIRSOFT DEVICES WITHIN VILLAGE LIMITS.

WHEREAS pursuant to Section 7 of the *Municipal Government Act*, RSA 2000, c. M-26, as amended, Council may pass bylaws respecting the safety, health and welfare of people and the protection of people and property; nuisances; and wild and domestic animals and activities in relation to them;

AND WHEREAS Council considers Gophers to create nuisance and safety concerns within municipal lands and certain areas of the Village;

AND WHEREAS Gophers are classified as a nuisance throughout Alberta in the *Pest and Nuisance Control Regulation*, Alta Reg 184/2001 as amended from time to time;

AND WHEREAS Council wishes to establish a controlled volunteer registration and permit process for approved residents to participate in Gopher Control using approved Airsoft Devices in designated areas;

NOW THEREFORE the Council of the Village of Champion, duly assembled, enacts as follows:

1.0 CITATION OF BYLAW

1.1 This Bylaw may be cited as the "Gopher Control Airsoft Permit Bylaw."

2.0 DEFINITIONS

2.1 "Airsoft Device" means a device that:

- a. Is designed to discharge a plastic projectile;
- b. Is lawful to possess, transport and use in Canada;
- c. Is not a prohibited device, replica firearm, firearm as defined by the *Criminal Code*, or a firearm otherwise prohibited by law from being possessed or used; and
- d. Complies with all applicable federal and provincial legislation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, located in the bottom right corner of the page. The signature is stylized and appears to be a combination of letters, possibly "R" and "A" or similar.

- 2.2 “Application” means a written request for a Permit, in a form required by the CAO.
- 2.3 “CAO” means the Chief Administrative Officer of the Village of Champion or their designate.
- 2.4 “Council” means the municipal council of the Village of Champion.
- 2.5 “Daylight” means the period beginning one-half hour after sunrise and ending one-half hour after sunset on the same day.
- 2.6 “Designated Area” means:
- a. municipal land designated in writing by the CAO for activities under this Bylaw; or
 - b. privately owned land designated in writing by the CAO and with the prior written consent of the owner.
- 2.7 “Gopher” means *Spermophilus richardsonii*, also known as Richardson’s Ground Squirrel.
- 2.8 “Gopher Control” means the discharge of an Airsoft Device by a Permit Holder for the purpose of killing a Gopher.
- 2.9 “Permit” means a formal document or license in a form determined by the CAO authorizing an individual to operate an Airsoft Device within the Designated Area for the purpose of Gopher Control.
- 2.10 “Permit Holder” means the named individual granted a Permit under this Bylaw.
- 2.11 “Transporting” means the movement of an Airsoft Device directly to or from a Designated Area:
- a. in a case, bag or opaque container, and
 - b. in a manner that the Airsoft Device is not openly displayed.
- 2.12 “Village” means the Village of Champion in the Province of Alberta.

3.0 PURPOSE

- 3.1 The purpose of this Bylaw is to:
- a. establish a permit system authorizing approved Permit Holders to control Gophers in Designated Areas;
 - b. establish minimum safety and conduct requirements for Gopher Control; and
 - c. reduce nuisance and property damage caused by Gophers within the Village.

4.0 PERMIT REQUIRED

- 4.1 No person shall engage in Gopher Control using an Airsoft Device within the Village limits unless they hold a Permit.



4.2 No person shall possess or openly display an Airsoft Device in the Village for the purpose of Gopher Control except while:

- a. lawfully conducting Gopher Control in a Designated Area under a valid Permit; or
- b. Transporting the Airsoft Device directly to or from a Designated Area in accordance with this Bylaw.

4.3 A Permit is not transferable.

5.0 ELIGIBILITY

5.1 An applicant must:

- a. be at least eighteen (18) years of age;
- b. be a resident of the Village unless otherwise approved by the CAO;
- c. provide a criminal record check dated no more than 90 days prior to the date of the Application;
- d. sign an acknowledgment and liability waiver in the form approved by the Village; and
- e. provide any other information required by the CAO to determine whether the Application meets this Bylaw and whether the applicant can safely and lawfully conduct Gopher Control.

5.2 If the applicant does not provide requested information within 30 calendar days after receiving a written request from the CAO, the Application is considered abandoned unless the CAO extends the time to respond in writing.

6.0 APPLICATION AND DECISION

6.1 A person may apply to the CAO for a Permit in the form required by the CAO.

6.2 In deciding whether to issue a permit, the CAO may consider:

- a. whether the Application complies with this Bylaw;
- b. the applicant's history of compliance with this Bylaw and other applicable laws;
- c. whether the applicant has provided false, misleading, or incomplete information;
- d. whether there are public safety concerns relating to the applicant; and
- e. any other factor relevant to safety, lawful compliance, or the administration of this Bylaw.

6.3 The CAO may:

- a. approve an Application;
- b. approve an Application subject to conditions; or
- c. refuse an Application.

6.4 The CAO may suspend or revoke a Permit where it is in the public interest to do so or where the Permit Holder:

- a. is alleged to have violated this Bylaw;
- b. is found guilty of an offence under this Bylaw;
- c. damages Village property during Gopher Control;

- d. damages private property during Gopher Control; or
 - e. injures themselves or another individual during Gopher Control.
- 6.5 Where the CAO refuses an Application or suspends or revokes a Permit, the applicant or Permit Holder shall receive a notice in writing with the reasons.
- 6.6 In the event an Application is denied or a Permit is suspended or revoked, the applicant or Permit Holder may appeal to Council by filing a written notice of appeal within 30 calendar days of receiving the CAO's decision. Council shall consider the appeal and may confirm, vary, or overturn the CAO's decision. Council's decision is final for the purpose of this Bylaw.

7.0 CONDITIONS OF USE

- 7.1 A Permit Holder may only conduct Gopher Control:
 - a. within Designated Areas approved by the Village;
 - b. during Daylight unless otherwise authorized by the Permit or by written authorization of the CAO;
 - c. in accordance with all safety requirements established by the Village; and
 - d. while carrying proof of a Permit.
- 7.2 The CAO may impose any other conditions in a Permit as the CAO deems necessary for public safety.
- 7.3 A Permit Holder shall not:
 - a. discharge an Airsoft Device toward any person, animal other than a Gopher, building, vehicle, roadway, pathway, public gathering, occupied recreational area, or private and municipal property not approved as a Designated Area;
 - b. discharge an Airsoft Device from a vehicle, building, or roadway;
 - c. conduct activities within fifty (50) metres of a playground, school, public gathering, or occupied recreational area;
 - d. consume alcohol, cannabis or other drugs during Gopher Control;
 - e. allow any unapproved person to use their Airsoft Device during Gopher Control;
 - f. use or possess an Airsoft Device under this Bylaw if the device has been modified or is used in a manner that makes it unlawful under federal or provincial law; or
 - g. fail to comply with the direction of a Peace Officer or Bylaw Enforcement Officer acting lawfully in the administration or enforcement of this Bylaw.
- 7.4 All Permit Holders shall wear appropriate eye protection and any additional safety equipment required by the Village or otherwise designated in the conditions of their Permit.

8.0 VILLAGE AUTHORITY

- 8.1 The CAO may at any time:
 - a. establish Application procedures and forms;

- b. approve Designated Areas for Gopher Control;
- c. impose additional safety requirements on Permits and Permit Holders;
- d. establish signage requirements for Designated Areas;
- e. establish reporting and record keeping requirements;
- f. suspend activities due to safety concerns, weather conditions, or public events; and
- g. establish any policies, procedures or guidelines necessary to administer this Bylaw, provided they are consistent with this Bylaw.

9.0 LIABILITY

- 9.1 Participation in Gopher Control by a Permit Holder is voluntary and at the Permit Holder's own risk.
- 9.2 The Village assumes no responsibility for any injury, loss, or damage arising from activities conducted by a Permit Holder under this Bylaw, whether or not such activities are in compliance with this Bylaw or the Permit. The Permit Holder assumes all liability for any harm arising directly or indirectly from their Gopher Control activities.
- 9.3 As a condition of receiving a Permit, a Permit Holder shall execute any acknowledgment, waiver, or indemnity required by the Village in a form approved by the CAO.

10.0 ENFORCEMENT

- 10.1 This Bylaw may be enforced by a Peace Officer or a Bylaw Enforcement Officer duly appointed or authorized by the Village in accordance with the *Municipal Government Act*, the *Provincial Offences Procedure Act*, and any Village enforcement bylaw.
- 10.2 A person who contravenes any provision of this Bylaw is guilty of an offence.
- 10.3 A Permit Holder who contravenes any term or condition of their Permit is guilty of an offence.
- 10.4 A person convicted of an offence under this Bylaw may be liable to a fine of:
 - a. not less than One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00); and
 - b. not more than One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00).
- 10.5 Each day a contravention continues constitutes a separate offence.
- 10.6 If any portion of this Bylaw is declared invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining portions shall remain in force.

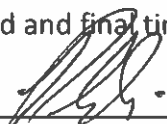
This Bylaw Shall be effective June 9, 2026.

READ a first time this 9th day of June, 2026.

READ a second time this 9th day of June, 2026.



READ a third and final time and passed this 9th day of June, 2026.



Mayor, Dick Ellis



CAO, Stephanie Reshetylo

