

Township of Derry Park Athletic Turf Guidelines

Field Closure Guidelines

The Township of Derry Department of Parks and Recreation is committed to providing quality park facilities for the benefit of Derry Township residents. Included within this section is turf management and field use policies developed to enable the staff to attempt to provide safe quality facilities for both youth and adult athletes.

It must be understood by all athletic associations that utilization and play under wet conditions is the most limiting factor in providing quality athletic fields. The township will not allow play when field conditions may contribute to unsafe play or when use would damage the fields and significantly lessen their safety and suitability for future play. **A NEW ATTITUDE AND APPROACH OF VIEWING THE LONGEVITY OF OUR ATHLETIC FIELDS MUST BE ADOPTED AND PRACTICED BY ALL ASSOCIATIONS. THIS NEW APPROACH WILL PROVIDE THE FOUNDATION FOR QUALITY ATHLETIC FACILITIES THAT, FIRST AND FOREMOST, PROVIDE A SAFE PLAYING SURFACE, AND SECONDARILY, FACILITIES WE CAN ALL BE PROUD OF TO HOST VISITING TEAMS.**

Our athletic fields are heavily utilized. Overuse and abuse of the fields may result in turf decline and safety hazards that will require the fields to be closed. Therefore, to maintain a quality playing field, it is important to exercise care and common sense in their use. We ask that the responsible officials [coaches, team managers, club officials, etc.] of the organizations using our community athletic fields follow the guidelines listed below. By following these policies, the community and the township together can assure a positive and safe athletic experience for all. **PLEASE REMEMBER, DO NOT ASSUME THAT THE FIELDS ARE PLAYABLE JUST BECAUSE IT STOPPED RAINING PRIOR TO YOUR SCHEDULE PRACTICE OR GAME TIME.**

If any of the following conditions exist, the athletic fields will be closed:

- a) When soil moisture is so high that there is standing water or muddy conditions, which could compromise the safety of the players or negatively impact the future playability of the athletic field. This includes high traffic areas such as goalmouths, home plate and base areas.
- b) Turf that is saturated to such a level that activities on the field would cause thinning of the turf, damage to the soil structure, divots which may dry to an uneven surface, or cause further damage to already worn areas.
- c) The presence of frost or frozen turf conditions (foot traffic in these conditions will kill the grass plant).

General Use Guidelines

ALL FIELDS ARE SUBJECT TO ROTATIONAL REST AND MAINTENANCE PERIODS THAT MAY CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.

Drills and Training Procedures:

Utilize areas immediately adjacent to the prime playing areas whenever possible. Help preserve our fields by moving drills and other training procedures away from the most heavily utilized areas.

Goals and Line Markings:

Goals and line markings on fields are positioned according to field specifications and may not be altered.

Baseball / Softball Exiting Procedures

When a game or practice has ended, the pitchers mound, base areas, home plate and any other heavily worn areas shall be leveled & raked keeping in mind not to push towards grass edge and create lips.

Athletic Equipment

All attendees to athletic events, including spectating children, must be prohibited from abusing equipment including, but not limited to, goals and nets, backstops, bases, landscaping, bleachers or restroom facilities. Any misuse of these or other related amenities are subject to all appropriate actions.

Prohibited or Restricted Activities

Destruction of property, or the removal or tampering with any vegetation is prohibited.

All trash and debris must be removed from the field and surrounding areas.

Grills are strictly prohibited from grass areas.

Motor Vehicles are restricted to blacktop parking areas only, vehicles parking or driving on grass areas will be ticketed or fined.

Player's benches and bleachers shall not be moved or relocated.

Practice goals and equipment will be taken off fields and placed at designated areas when not in use by each organization.

"Field Closed", "Keep Off Grass" or, "No Parking" signs may not be removed or relocated. All signage must be obeyed or that entire organization may forfeit use of township recreational facilities for the remainder of that season.

No fields may be mowed, fertilized or have any type of pesticide applied by anyone other than township maintenance or other authorized personnel.

When questions arise regarding the suitability of playing surfaces, each association is responsible to contact the Parks Superintendent to gain a determination of playability. Prior to calling, these simple evaluations shall be performed on site that will provide a uniform and understood expectation in terms of playability. If any of these conditions exist, the association representative is expected to cancel play. In most instances, this determination should be logically made on site without a phone call to the Parks Superintendent. If any question is present regarding playability, the Parks Superintendent should be called.

(1) Standing Water On The Field Of Play: This condition is the most obvious and under no circumstances shall play take place. Under these conditions the Township mandates that coaches, team managers, club officials, etc. cancel and reschedule practice/ games/ events for that time slot.

(2) Soil Saturation: These simple tests shall be performed:

- Walking on turf causes water to surface.
- Walking on turf on heels causes indentations.
- One (1) inch or more of rain 48 hours prior to scheduled game or practice accompanied by steady rain on the game or practice day.
- Steady downpour of rain on game or practice day, which could cause damage to turf or injury to participant.

(3) Frost: If frost is present, a frost delay must take place, no one shall be allowed on turf areas until the frost condition has completely dissipated.

(4) Extreme Drought Conditions: When 50% of the playing surface has turned dormant, fields may be closed in order to prevent long-term turf damage.

(4) Specifics For Baseball and Softball Infields:

- Under no circumstances shall infields (diamond tex) that have standing water or puddles be brushed off with a broom or squeegee. This practice pushes infield mix into the turf and creates lips.
- When stepping onto a Diamond Tex field, if the infield mix pushes out from under your shoes the field is too wet and not playable.

Athletic Field Wear Chart

# of Events	Wear	Renovation Costs	Average Fee per Event
0 – 40	Light	\$1,200 - \$2,000	\$30.00 - \$50.00
40 – 60	Moderate	\$2,500 - \$5,000	\$62.00 - \$82.00
60+	Heavy	\$7,000 - \$10,000	\$115.00 - \$150.00

The wear chart above illustrates the costs associated with the renovations needed after a specific amount of events. You will notice that as the events per field increases, so do the renovation costs.

OVERVIEW

It must be understood that the intent of this policy is not to punish or make it difficult for associations to meet their demand for “getting games in”. Rather, it is an attempt to provide some very basic and common sense guidelines for league officials, coaches, and referees to follow when confronted with field condition decisions. The goal is to err on the side of caution in order for the field to be in great shape the next sunny day. We all understand the pressure to find adequate practice time to get your team ready for league play. We all understand and can relate to the pressure of schedules and the mandates for regular season league play to be completed. We all understand and relate to the push to keep playoffs on schedule in order to meet the scheduled championship deadline.

What we all must begin to understand is that the playing surfaces that we rely on will be in sustainable shape at the end of the year for those most important games, if, and only if, we begin to make crucial common sense decisions throughout the regular season.