

**FIELD CLOSURE & INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**

Approved By:   
Parks, Recreation & Community Services Director

Date: 3/8/2021

Approved: 8/24/18

**BACKGROUND**

There is a high demand for a limited number of sports fields owned and operated by the Town of Sahuarita. Therefore it is necessary to protect this resource when continued use during inclement weather has the potential to damage the fields or poses a safety concern.

**AUTHORITY**

The Parks, Recreation & Community Services Director (Director) is authorized to establish rules and regulations for park property and activities. Any part of a park may be declared closed to the public by the Director. (Town Code 12.10.010)

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to prevent injuries and minimize damage to the playing surface of sports fields. Individuals and groups who use athletic facilities are expected to protect their participants and safeguard the sports fields during inclement weather by adhering to this policy.

**POLICY & PROCEDURES**

Most sports field damage occurs with field overuse or use during inclement weather, such as rain. The weather and field conditions are monitored regularly to ensure that scheduled practices and games do not:

- Compromise the safety of players or general public
- Cause damage to the field surface
- Jeopardize subsequent scheduled use of fields

Sports field permits for games, practices and other activities may be canceled or suspended when field conditions could result in injury to players or when use has a high potential for damage to the fields. Permits may also be cancelled when there is a health and safety threat due to impending conditions, including, but not limited to, heavy rain, flooding and lightning.

**Establishing Field Playability - Criteria**

Turf and skinned/clay areas will be determined to be unsafe/unplayable when any of the following conditions/criteria are present:

1. Standing water visible on the surface of the turf or clay, or
2. Water sponges up around feet when turf or clay is walked upon, or

3. Grass can be easily dislodged during sports play, or
4. Clay is saturated; noticeable sinking when walked upon, or
5. Lightning is detected within a 10 mile radius of the field
6. Inclement weather forecast for later in the day with potential to impact a saturated field is also a factor. A saturated field means the soil cannot absorb additional moisture; water runs off the surface or pools on the field.

### **Situational Considerations**

There are situations that Parks, Recreation & Community Services staff will weigh when determining whether or not to close a sports field, such as.

- Championship game of a tournament, playoff or season
- Game involves team from out-of-town that has already arrived
- High profile event

### **Field Closure Procedure**

During inclement weather, Parks, Recreation & Community Services Department staff assess the playability of Town owned and jointly-used sports fields (i.e., Sahuarita Unified School District fields licensed to Town) to determine if use can proceed.

User groups are responsible for monitoring potential notices regarding inclement weather:

Field Status Hotline: Field closure status will be updated through the hotline (520) 445-7840.

And: Monitor the Sahuarita Parks and Recreation Facebook page for recent field closure notices.

### **Field Rental Refunds/Credits**

In the event that fields are deemed unplayable and are closed by the Parks, Recreation & Community Services Department, permit holder will not be charged the relevant field use fee. Permit holder will receive either a transfer of date or a refund.

### **User Group Responsibility**

The user group is responsible for adherence to the playability criteria and to NOT play on a closed or impacted field.

- User groups are responsible for informing their affiliated coaches and players of field closures.
- User groups are responsible for ensuring compliance by affiliated coaches, players and parents.
- Individuals or groups witnessing misuse of fields by other scheduled or unscheduled users are advised to contact Sahuarita Parks, Recreation & Community Services at (520) 445-7850 and report.

In the event that a Parks, Recreation & Community Services Department representative is not present to provide an update on field playability, the user group may need to declare the field as unplayable by applying the field playability criteria, and close the field. The user group shall report the closure to the Department via email within 24 hours, identifying the field location and time of cancellation due to inclement weather. Staff will adjust the permit holder's field rental account when timely notice is provided.

### **COMPLIANCE**

If a user group plays on a sports field that has been closed or deemed unplayable, the following penalties will be enacted:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Offense:** User group will receive written notice of violation, be financially responsible for any damage to the sports field and will be held liable for injuries incurred because of unsafe conditions.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense:** User group will receive written notice of violation, be financially responsible for any damage to the sports field, will be held liable for injuries incurred because of unsafe conditions and receive an immediate suspension of field use permits (no refunds) for seven (7) consecutive days during the current season.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense:** User group will receive written notice of violation, be financially responsible for any damage to the sports field, will be held liable for injuries incurred because of unsafe conditions and receive an immediate suspension of field use permits and allocations for the remainder of the current season or for 30 days, whichever is longer. A user group with three offenses will also be placed in the lowest field allocation priority category for the next field allocation season.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Offense:** User group is ineligible for field allocations and rentals for one year (two allocation seasons).

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

A representative from the user group is required to acknowledge this policy in writing.

I have read, understand and will comply with the Town of Sahuarita Field Closure & Inclement Weather Policy.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Organization

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Position

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

**CONTACTS**

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