

# Hampden Township Parks & Recreation

## Athletic Field Guidelines

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### INTRODUCTION

Hampden Township is committed to providing quality park facilities for the benefit of all its residents. The Recreation Department has put into policy the following guidelines. These guidelines were adopted to make it easier for field users to access and determine whether a field is playable or if the event needs to be canceled due to unfavorable turf or infield conditions. We ask that the information will be utilized by your program.

### RESERVING A FIELD

An Athletic Field Reservation Request must be filled out and approved before using a field. All athletic fields will be closed from Nov.1 – March 31. If the conditions are favorable and field maintenance is not an obstacle, field usage may be granted by the Township prior to the March 31 date.

### FIELD CLOSURE GUIDELINES

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. Play will not be permitted 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.

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 when using them. We ask that the responsible officials (coaches, managers, presidents, 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.

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

**a)** We receive  $\frac{3}{4}$ " of rain in a 24 hr period. Depending on ground conditions (how wet or dry the field was prior to precipitation), that amount could vary. (i.e. When soil moisture is so high that the conditions of the field could compromise the safety of the player or negatively impact the future playability of the athletic field.)

**Examples of conditions to look for:**

- Standing water or muddy conditions (especially in high traffic areas such as goal mouths, home plate, and base areas)
- Turf saturated to a level that activity on the field would cause thinning of turf, damage to soil structure, divots which may dry to an uneven surface.
- Stepping onto an infield anytime after 1 p.m. and you sink more than  $\frac{1}{4}$ ", the field will be unplayable that evening.
- If you step on turf and water pushes to the surface, the field is too wet to be used.

**b)** The presence of frost or frozen turf conditions (foot traffic in these conditions will kill the grass).

**c)** Extreme drought conditions. When 50% of the playing surface has turned dormant, fields may be closed in order to prevent long term damage.

## **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. For example, do not practice shooting drills in goal mouth on soccer fields. Move goal off to the side, so middle of field and goal mouth (typically high traffic areas during games) are not excessively worn.

### **Soccer Goals:**

To prevent rutting on the field, soccer goals need to be removed from field when not in use.

### **Baseball/ Softball Exiting Procedures:**

When game or practice has ended, the pitcher's mound, base areas, home plate and any other heavily worn areas shall be leveled and raked, keeping in mind not to push towards grass edge to avoid creating lips. Divots and other holes should be filled.

### **Line Markings:**

When lining fields, you must use water based spray liner. Do not use chalk to line the fields.

### **Lights:**

Lighting is available on select fields. Cost of field lights is \$20/ hour. If your organization forgets to schedule lights and you require a call-out from a township maintenance employee, you will be billed a minimum of \$125 and \$40 per hour for each hour over 2.

## **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 and placed in the appropriate trash/ recyclable receptacles.
- Motor vehicles are restricted to blacktop parking areas only; vehicles parking or driving on grass will be ticketed or fined.
- Players' benches and bleachers shall not be moved or relocated.
- Practice equipment (cones, flags, bases, etc.) will be taken off fields and placed in 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 the entire organization may forfeit use of Township recreation 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.
- Adding sand or other foreign material to a field is prohibited.
- On baseball/ softball fields- Under no circumstance shall excess or standing water on an infield be brushed off with a broom or squeegee. This practice pushes infield mix into the turf and creates lips. Additionally, the infield should not be altered by the participant to assist with the draining processes.
- Pets are prohibited in all Township park facilities.

- Selling any goods or services on Township property without prior approval is prohibited. Vendors need to be preapproved and obtain a vendor permit from the Recreation Department.

### **OVERVIEW**

It must be understood that the intent of this policy is not to punish or make it difficult for associations to meet their demands 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, and to get league play in before playoffs, and to get playoffs in before championships. What we must 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.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF FIELD GUIDELINES

Every sports organization president, coach, and volunteer is required to read the Recreation Department Athletic Field Guidelines in order to become acquainted, as soon as possible, with its contents.

Before the first day of field use, this sheet must be signed and returned to the Recreation Department, in order for it to be placed in the appropriate organizations file.

I understand the guidelines set forth in the Recreation Department Athletic Field Guidelines are not intended to be all-inclusive and are subject to change.

I understand that failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in loss of field privileges for my team and/or organization.

I understand that if fields are damaged due neglecting these guidelines, my team/sports organization will be responsible for paying the appropriate damages to repair the field.

I have received, read and understand all the information contained in these Guidelines and I am aware of my responsibility for compliance with the enclosed rules, policies and procedures.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Position

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Date