



City of Woodstock

Standard Operating Procedure

Outdoor Sports Field Rain and Extreme Weather Closure

Purpose

For the City of Woodstock to effectively communicate to users when sport fields are deemed unplayable due to inclement weather in the City of Woodstock.

Objectives

1. To protect and maintain field turf and diamond infields.
2. To reduce the risk of injury to the user.
3. To ensure that users are able to play on high quality sports fields.

Definitions

Permit Holder: An organization that has been granted a permit to use a City of Woodstock Parks and Recreation Facility. The responsibilities of the permit holder extend to the organizations staff, volunteers, and vendors.

City of Woodstock Staff Responsibilities

The temporary cancellation of any rental program on any field and/or diamond owned and/or scheduled by the City of Woodstock as a result of a current and/or prolonged period of inclement weather is at the sole discretion of the staff of the City of Woodstock. Officials residing over the activity may not scrutinize the decision of staff under any circumstances. In the event of cancellation due to inclement weather, the assigned Parks and Recreation Clerk will make the required fee adjustments after emailing the permit holder.

Consideration for Cancellation

Field restrictions will remain in effect for as long as the inclement weather conditions continues, or field conditions are poor. When City of Woodstock staff are confident that play on the particular field or diamond can commence without significant field damage or inclement weather has passed, restrictions will cease.

Field Conditions

Field Cancellations are assessed by any of the following criteria:

- 1) Visual ponding, sponging of water on turf/ diamond surface.
- 2) Drainage characteristics of the field.
- 3) Existing condition and maintenance requirements.

- 4) Amount of precipitation that has occurred and the amount expected to fall in the future.
- 5) The time of year and the cumulative amount of stress on the field.
- 6) What kind of damage could occur to the field if the field were to remain open.

Inclement Weather Conditions

30-30 Rule

- 30 seconds: Count the seconds between seeing the lightning flash and hearing the thunderclap. Each second represents approximately 300 meters.
- If the time counted is 30 seconds or less, the lightning storm is less than 10km away. There is an 80% chance that the next strike will happen within that 10kms.
- 30 Minutes: After seeing the last lightning flash or hearing the thunderclap, wait 30 minutes before leaving shelter.

Watch – Storms (hurricane, tornado, heavy rain, or thunder and lightning) are possible. Remain alert, watch for changing weather conditions, and stay tuned for weather information (radio, television, or internet). Be prepared to cease play and take cover should a storm approach.

Look for approaching storms and danger signs:

- Dark, often greenish sky.
- Large hail or heavy rain.
- High winds or change in wind speed.
- Large, dark, or low-lying clouds.
- Loud roar, like a freight train.
- Clap of thunder or lightning strike in the distance.

Warning – Severe weather (tornado, hurricane or thunder and lightning) has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. There is imminent danger for people in the warning area. Cease all outdoor play and take shelter immediately.

Procedure

If there has been a weather warning issued for the area or early signs of a storm are present, all use of outdoor facilities shall cease immediately.

- Cease all play and take cover in a safe shelter immediately. Do not wait for lightning to strike nearby before taking cover.
- Apply the 30-30 rule, remain sheltered in place for 30 minutes after seeing the last lightning flash or the last rumble of thunder is heard.
- After storm has passed and weather has been clear for at least 30mins the play surfaces must be reassessed to ensure field conditions will allow play to resume.

Communication of Cancellations

City of Woodstock staff will advise the permit holders by email or phone of all extreme cancellations and delays no later than 3:30 pm each day based on current and anticipated field and weather conditions.

Cancellations and delays made after 3:30 will be determined by sport officials (i.e. referees, umpires, etc.) at the field. An immediate delay will be forced in the event of lightning, thunder, and/or heavy rainfall. All delays will remain in effect until the officials determine that: there is no thunder rumbling for 30 minutes; heavy rainfall has stopped; and the field/diamond shows no signs of saturation.

It is the opinion of the official/umpires at this time whether the field is safe for play. Should the official not feel the field is safe for play it is the responsibility of the official/umpire to cancel play until further notice. Permit holders and officials/umpires will be accountable if play is continued, and field damage occurs because of this play.

City staff has the right to cease play if the field conditions and weather conditions aren't adhered to by the permit holder.

If a game has been delayed or cancelled due to weather, the user group must contact staff immediately (after hours contact: 226-228-5071). Additionally, the permit holder must contact the assigned Parks and Recreation Clerk no later than two business days following the event to receive a rental credit.

Permit Holder Responsibility under Field Closure Standard Operating Procedure

It is the responsibility of the permit holder to ensure that all officials/umpires, coaches, and players receive timely notification of the cancellation. The City of Woodstock will not accept failure to communicate as an excuse of non-compliance by coaches and officials, nor will it be held responsible for any inconveniences created by communicated cancellations.

Compliance of Cancellation Orders

It is expected that all patrons, players, and officials occupying a specific field for rental respect the decisions of the City of Woodstock staff and refrain from use of the facility for the period of the cancellation. Upon review of reported instances of the user groups failing to comply with a cancellation, the City of Woodstock reserves the right to cancel the rental agreement for the duration of that rental agreement without refund.

Groups failing to comply with a cancellation order will be held responsible and may be subject to pay for the repair of all damages incurred by failure to comply with this policy.

Users will not be charged for the duration of the cancellation if such cancellations are respected as deemed by staff.