



## PLEASANT VALLEY RECREATION & PARK DISTRICT

### SPORTS TURF POLICY

**Board Approved April 3, 2024**

#### Introduction

The Pleasant Valley Recreation & Park District, hereinafter referred to as “District,” coordinates and issues permits for the use of District parks, open space, sports fields, aquatic center, and other facilities, to organizations and the public for recreational activities including but not limited to sports.

The District issues permits for sports field use through an allocation system with priority given in the following order: District programming, Community Service Organizations (CSO), Resident Organizations or 501(c)3 Non-profit Organizations, In-District Residents, and all other requests.

Reservable fields can be reserved at any time based on the availability of the field(s) or up to six (6) months in advance and a minimum of 30 days prior to the requested date. The District closes fields periodically throughout the year for rest and maintenance periods.

#### Purpose

The purpose of the District Sports Turf Policy (“Policy”) is to establish policies and procedures governing the use of District owned and managed sports fields and turf areas to ensure the District is accomplishing our goal of safe and quality sports fields. The District’s primary role in providing athletic opportunities is to make certain its fields remain safe and are maintained in the highest standards possible for participants, spectators, and officials.

The District takes great pride in maintaining its sports fields and has an overriding interest and expectation in providing quality playing surfaces. This is accomplished through the implementation of athletic turf field preservation and management to maintain wear tolerance and provide quality sports fields. This Policy establishes the following guidelines for anyone who interacts with the District through District-managed sports turf maintenance.

## Definition of Terms

**Cleats** – shall mean a shoe with a rigid outsole. Cleats feature spikes or studs (fixed/molded or detachable) spread evenly over the outsole of the shoe. There are three main types of studs: bladed, hard round and round/conical. The studs may be made of plastic, rubber or metal tipped.

**Community Park** – shall mean a park that generally ranges in size from 10 acres to larger that serves as a recreational point for the community. Many include: playgrounds, pavilions, restrooms, sports fields, and offer active and passive space.

**District** – shall mean the Pleasant Valley Recreation & Park District, its officers, staff, and agents of the District.

**General Use Policy** – shall mean the procedures used in the application of approved District policies.

**Neighborhood Park** – shall mean a park generally up to 10 acres in size which serves as a social and recreational focal point for neighborhoods. Many include playgrounds and may offer a range of facilities and passive or active recreation in response to demographic and cultural characteristics of surrounding neighborhoods. Neighborhood parks are largely accessible by foot, bicycle, within at least a quarter-mile radius from residences, providing easy access especially for children and senior adults.

**Sports Fields/Facilities** – shall mean the fields and facilities at Bob Kildee Community Park, Freedom Park, Mission Oaks Park, and Pleasant Valley Fields (collectively “Sports Parks”) or other fields as may be designated by the District.

**Turf Tarps** – shall mean an artificial covering to be placed on the field to protect and promote healthy turf development.

**Turf Shoes** – shall mean a durable rubber outsole. Turf shoes feature dozens of small rubber studs or patterns on the outsole of the shoe with very little spacing between each stud. They have a somewhat flexible bottom resembling that of a tennis shoe and not of spiked cleats.

**Turf Wear Tolerance** – shall mean Athletic field turf should be able to tolerate the weight of people running and jumping, and the tearing associated with sports.

**User Group** – shall refer to the users of the field, including Community Service Organizations, resident organizations, in-district residents, and out-of-district residents.

**Vendor** - a person or company offering food, snacks, merchandise, or services for sale.

**Winter Rules** – shall refer to the following rules during the dates of **November 1-March 15**:

- Turf/athletic shoes must be worn for all practices at PV Fields.
- Tournaments take precedence over practice in terms of playability during the winter period and tournaments take precedence over league play in terms of schedules during the wintertime period (November 1 – March 15).
- This shall also apply to any practices on the infields at Bob Kildee Community Park and Freedom Park Fields.

## General Policy

1. Field use, especially sports practices, should be conducted in a manner so that play will take place on different sections of the turf, thus reducing excessive turf wear and damage to any one area.
2. Rotate use of areas (e.g., use middle of turf area for drills one day and sides of the field the following day, move older players to less impacted zones, areas), and when possible, stay off the fringe or bare areas to limit erosion and further damage.
3. Ladder training drills shall not be conducted on Turf in order to prevent excessive wear and tear on the turf.
4. Overcrowding fields by scheduling multiple practices and games in reserved areas is prohibited. Allow a safe distance between fields for safe passage of spectators and participants.
5. Use of any equipment must be stated on the permit application/Community Service Organization Field Facility Allocation and Use. Removal of all equipment daily is required unless prior District approval is granted. Fueling or refueling of any equipment powered by an internal combustion engine is strictly prohibited on the turf area. Such activities are only permitted in the parking lot, where a spill containment pan must be used underneath the equipment.
6. Assistant/Referee (A/R) lines shall pinch or widen the field lines during any season to help eliminate excessive turf wear as well as moving teams' seating areas. AR lines shall be moved by a minimum of ten (10) feet in alternating direction every 4 weeks unless directed otherwise by the Park Services Manager or designee.
7. Turf Tarps may only be placed on the turf with prior written approval (6 weeks in advance) and at the direction of General Manager or Designee. Turf tarps must be made of a breathable material if approved.

8. Vendors are prohibited from preparing food on turf without authorization by the General Manager or Designee.
9. Community Service Organizations are required to hold annual trainings with coaches, and volunteers to review the District Policy and with District staff which may include the General Manager, Recreation Services Manager, Recreation Supervisor, Park Services Manager, Park Supervisors, Crew Leads and Board of Directors.
10. Groups witnessing misuse of fields by other scheduled or unscheduled users are encouraged to contact the Parks Department **805-482-1996** who will inform the appropriate personnel.
11. To report maintenance and hazard emergencies (such as broken water lines, pressurized sprinkler heads, restroom facilities issues, etc.), promptly contact the Parks Department at **805-482-1996** during regular business hours from Monday to Friday. For emergencies occurring on weekends or after regular business hours from Monday to Thursday, please direct your calls to the Park Rangers at **805-432-0708**. To report emergencies that occur on holidays and after hours from Friday to Sunday contact PVRPD On-call personnel at **805-432-3394**. When making the call, please ensure you fully identify yourself, provide your location, and describe the specific nature of the emergency or hazard.
12. Games being played during the Winter months will start at **9:00 am** or later. This will assist with excess moisture and cooler temperatures typically seen during the mornings of the winter season. The limited sunlight in the winter months or season means the fields dry much more slowly compared to the other months of the year.
13. If a frost advisory is in effect for the area, no persons or equipment may be on the turf until 9:00am or later to ensure excess turf damage does not occur.

## Approved Footwear

1. **Pleasant Valley Fields (“PV Fields”):**
  - a. Footwear is restricted to molded plastic cleats (max 1/2"), turf shoes, or other soled athletic shoes such as cross-trainers or running shoes.
  - b. **Metal cleats or spikes are prohibited.** With exception of on the softball fields, for softball related activities only.
  - c. Turf shoes are mandatory for all practices. When turf shoes are not available, athletic shoes are acceptable.
  - d. Referees shall wear turf or athletic shoes only.
  - e. Plastic cleats no longer than 1/2” are acceptable as footwear during league scheduled games.

- f. Turf shoes are mandatory for year-round practices. Cleats are not permitted during Winter months.
- g. League scheduled games should not begin sooner than 9:00 am during winter months.
- h. When fields are wet, practices should not occur in goal boxes.

Approved Footwear Examples:



**2. Freedom Park:**

- a. U13 and U14 and above may use Veterans Field and Fields 3-4 will be allowed to use Metal Cleats. All other footwear will be permitted.
- b. No soccer play or cleats allowed on baseball infield.

**3. Bob Kildee Park:**

- a. U13 and U14 and above may use Hibbits Field and will be allowed to use Metal Cleats. All other footwear will be permitted.
- b. No soccer play or cleats allowed on baseball infield.

**4. Mission Oaks Park:**

- a. Footwear is restricted to molded plastic cleats (max 1/2"), turf shoes, or other soled athletic shoes such as cross-trainers or running shoes.
- b. Metal cleats or spikes are prohibited unless approved by the General Manager or designee.

## Turf Preservation & Field Maintenance

It is the goal of the District that fields and facilities remain safe and of the highest quality. Guidelines for preservation of turf are as follows:

1. The District reserves the right to cancel or suspend field use permits when conditions could result in injury and/or cause damage to the District property. This includes during a game that has already started. Permits may also be cancelled when the health and safety of participants are threatened due to impending conditions, including but not limited to, rain, muddy conditions, smog alerts, smoke, extreme heat, maintenance issues, lightning, earthquakes, or other reasons as decided by the District.
2. If it has rained within the preceding 24 hours, groups using the fields must call the Parks Department's Field Condition Hotline at [805-947-5125](tel:805-947-5125) to receive updated information

on field playability. Generally, only same-day information will be provided, except in the case of severe conditions or scheduled maintenance. **The Hotline message will be updated by 1:00 pm on weekdays and by 7:00 am on weekends.** Please do not inquire earlier or about future days as the determination of field conditions are made at that time each day. Determination of field conditions will be made by District personnel, and determinations/decisions are not negotiable.

- a. Fields may not be used during or after a heavy rain, when fields are wet or muddy, or when closed by the District:
  - i. If it rains any more than 0.25" (quarter inch) the District has the right to close down the fields for safety and for the turf management.
  - ii. If water rises when turf is stepped on, the field is too wet to be played on.
  - iii. If the infield becomes muddy and the dirt is not loose, or prevents participants from sliding, the field is not playable.
  - iv. Standing water (puddles) within the playing areas.
  - v. Player footprints fill with water in most of a single playing position.
3. Soccer practices may not take place on the infield area of a softball or baseball diamond.
4. No personal vehicles of any kind (cars, golf carts, scooters, etc.) are allowed on District property, other than parking lots, without prior written permission notated on the field use permit issued by District.

## Sports Field Lining/Marking

1. Lining of District fields is prohibited without prior written approval on the field use permit.
2. Line colors must be approved by the District. White, Blue or Green Paint is acceptable, any other color must obtain the General Manager or designee's approval. **NO CHALK ON TURF.**
3. Burning lines on the District fields is prohibited. If this happens the parties responsible will pay to have the turf replaced at their sole expense.
4. Any user failing to comply with established guidelines and notification requests are subject to reimbursement of costs to include but not limited to staffing, facility, as well as for all damages occurring to the facility with the potential of termination of field use permit.

## Turf Recovery and Field Closures

One component of a comprehensive turf management program is limiting field use by seasonal/temporary field closures or restricting permits for field use. District maintained sports fields and park sites receive a great deal of play throughout the year. The District and maintenance staff of the Parks Division strive to maintain them in a safe, usable, and attractive condition; therefore, most fields are closed every winter from Thanksgiving through the New Year and temporarily throughout the year as weather and/or site conditions dictate.

The District reserves the right to schedule maintenance in an emergency or as needed to provide a safe environment for all users.

**1. Pleasant Valley Fields ("PV Fields"):**

- a. Fields and zones usage will not exceed a maximum of 1,100 hours of use. This does not include lining and league/tournament prep unless authorized by the General Manager or designee.
- b. Required mandatory rest period of 5 days after all tournaments that host more than 80 teams during winter months (November 1 – March 15) and 100 teams during spring and summer months (March 16 – October 31) only at PV Fields and for Zones 1-4. Tournaments exceeding 110 teams will require General Manager approval with a minimum of 30 days notice.
- c. Lining the fields for the next week's games will be permitted.
- d. Fields will close three (3) times annually for five (5) week blocks (or more as necessary) for scheduled maintenance and rest.
  - i. Approximate Dates:
    - 1. November 1<sup>st</sup> -January 2<sup>nd</sup>
    - 2. April—May
    - 3. June—July

**2. Freedom Park Fields:** Second week of July—early September; Third week of December to the first week of January

**3. Bob Kildee Community Park:** Third week of December to first week of January

**4. Mission Oaks Park:** Thanksgiving week to January 1

## Field and/or Facility Modifications

All requests for modification or improvement to District fields or facilities must be submitted in writing to the District. All requests will be reviewed by District staff. The field or facility modification request review process may take a minimum of six (6) weeks depending upon the request of the project. Submission of a request to modify or improve a site does not constitute approval. Approval will be given according to District Ordinance 8 or General Use Policy.

## Inclement Weather Procedures

Always remain aware and alert for incoming weather while using fields. This is a large open area and subject to lightning and other weather-related hazards:

### **Thunder/Lightning Storms**

Following guidance from the National Weather Service regarding thunder/lightning storms, if you see lightning, hear thunder or if the skies look threatening, play should be stopped immediately. User groups should not resume outdoor activities until 30 minutes after the storm has passed. For a full list of details regarding thunder/lightning storms including how to be prepared, where people go for safe shelter, and what should be done if someone is struck by lightning, please visit: <https://www.weather.gov/safety/lightning-sports>.

## Turf Policy Violations

The District recognizes that from time-to-time, field/facility renters may find themselves in situations that may violate District Ordinance 8, General Use Policy, or more specifically, the terms of their reservation. The District will work with renters to correct the issue and have set guidelines for types of violations and resulting administrative actions that may result. Should violations occur, District staff will follow Ordinance 8 and the General Use Policy to address the issues which may include but are not limited to the prevention of future use and collecting reimbursement due to field or facility damage.

\*It is the responsibility of the Permittee to ensure all participants, vendors, spectators, volunteers, and staff under their supervision understand and abide by this process. The District reserves the right to skip steps in this process at the discretion of District Staff if egregious violations occur at the outset or if malicious intent is perceived that suggests earlier punitive action is necessary. An example of an egregious act would be playing on the fields after being notified that the fields were closed. Egregious violations for annual permits will be subject to further District review and permits may be denied for the following year at the discretion of the General Manager or designee.

Any user failing to comply with established guidelines and notification requests are subject to reimbursement of District costs to include but not limited to staffing, facility as well as for all damages occurring to the facility and potential of termination of field use permit.

All renter violations and their frequency will be recorded by District Staff. Any violation could result in a first, second or third offense and multiple violations do not need to be the same in nature to be issued a second or third violation.



### **I. First Violation**

District Staff will provide a written notice of violation to the renter evaluating remedies to ensure the violation does not reoccur. District Staff will make written note of this warning being as such for the violation in question and will include notification of the loss of the reservation deposit or addition charge for damages. Such warning shall also be indicated in writing to the facility user and saved for record. District Staff will indicate the consequences of a second offense should the renter reach that stage.

### **II. Second Violation**

Depending on the nature of the violation and the response of the renter to the repeated warning and District Staff assistance at preventing subsequent violations, the District may issue a third warning or may cancel reservation. Receipt of paid funds from a cancelled reservation due to policy violations may be prohibited at the discretion of the General Manager.

### **III. Third Violation**

Depending on the nature of the violation, the renter may be denied future access to District facilities for reservation in question and/or renter may be suspended from access to additional District facility reservations for a time determined by District staff. Note that such restrictions would apply to reservations in which violating renter is involved regardless of reservation name changes or renter leadership changes for the reservation in question.

Violation examples include but are not limited to:

1. Use of facility or field without a permit.
2. Use of facility or field that has been closed due to inclement weather.
3. Use of facility or field prior to or beyond permit time.
4. Use of additional areas of a facility or field(s) without proper permitting.
5. Subletting, loaning, or trading a facility or field reservation with another renter.
6. Driving a personal vehicle(s) of any kind (cars, golf carts, scooters, etc.) on fields without permission from the District.
7. Violation of District Ordinance 8 or General Use Policy.
8. Intentionally misleading District Staff as to the likely attendance of the reservation resulting in major attendance discrepancies.
9. Intentionally leaving trash, damaging District property, or vandalizing District property.

\*This process does not include parking violations set forth in the General Use Policy and enforced by Park Rangers, as such violations may warrant altogether separate forms of ticketing and/or towing of vehicles.