



## 1. Determining Field Playability

**Standing water occurs because the ground is saturated. Removing standing water does not eliminate the saturation. It is the saturation and not the standing water that causes damage and unsafe conditions.**

Determining the playability of an athletic field is crucial to the continued health of the turf and the sustainability of the field throughout the season. The Arlington Parks and Natural Resources Division will close athletic fields if staff determines that fields are too wet for play, or if other issues arise that would compromise patron safety.

Experience has shown that most turf damage occurs with field overuse or use during inclement weather. The use of sports fields when the turf is wet creates ruts, worn areas, and compacts the soil, which reduces turf grass growth. This use results in long-term damage to the turf, which reduces the quality of the playing surface. These problems create unsafe playing conditions and impact field availability.

An athletic field should be considered closed for play if any part of the field becomes unsafe for field users or if conditions exist where use will cause damage to the field.

An athletic field should be considered closed if any of the following conditions exist:

- There is standing water present on any part of the field that cannot be removed without causing damage to the field.
- There are muddy conditions present that will not dry by the start of the game.
- While walking on the field water can be seen or heard with any footstep.
- If water gathers around the sole of a shoe or boot on any portion of the field
- While walking in turf areas any impression of your footprint is left in the surface.
- While walking on the infield portion of the field, an impression of ½ " deep or more is left by a footprint.

## 2. Water Removal Techniques

**Water removal should only be undertaken to accelerate the drying of fields. Water removal should not be undertaken with the expectation that fields will be available for play.**

- A broom with water-resistant bristles or a water roller can be used to disperse water on infield mix areas.
- Never sweep or push water into the grass. The water should be spread out on the infield mix portions of the field only.
- When removing water from puddles, do not remove mix along with it.
- When dispersing water, always try to pull, not push the water with the tool. Pulling with the tool allows you to maintain better control over the end of the tool and therefore less likely to remove any mix from the area being swept.
- Once the water is dispersed, use a rake to loosen all wet areas to accelerate drying.
- Do not move muddy material from one portion of the field to another; or remove muddy material from the field. If muddy material is not dry by game time, the field should be closed until the material dries.
- The Parks and Natural Resources Division discourages the excessive use of drying agents (e.g., - Turface, Pro Choice, etc.). It is recommended that drying agents be used very sparingly and only in cases where it will ensure the field conditions are immediately playable. Do not use the product on isolated areas of the field when the entire infield is too wet for play. The Parks and Natural Resources Division has found that the widespread use of drying agents is not cost effective or efficient. If the steps above are followed routinely when maintaining wet areas, field conditions will become as readily playable as if drying agents had been used. If overused, drying agents can create safety and maintenance problems. In turf areas, the use of materials such as drying agents, wood chips, peat moss, or sand to dry water or mud is not recommended due to secondary problems that can occur as a result of their use.