



**Morris Beach and Recreation
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Inclement Weather Policy Article for CRPA Today

Proper maintenance of athletic fields is a priority for all of us in Parks and Recreation. After seeing other towns have difficulty maintaining safe playing fields, our Recreation Commission noted that we should have a policy regarding use of fields during inclement weather. Our attempt is to be proactive before a field becomes damaged. Budgeting for maintenance dollars is certainly an issue that Recreation professionals are familiar with.

Morris is a small community of about 2,300 residents. We have one soccer field and one baseball field. Both fields are in use nearly every day during spring and fall, and are used by Day Camp in the summer. We receive compliments from visiting clubs on the quality of our facilities. But, it has arisen that we need to decide when inclement weather poses a threat to the players or the facility. Hence, my recent query of collecting policy information. Some of the correspondence from colleagues was as simple as the Department Director making the call on a rainy day, and whether or not there are standing puddles. Others were much more elaborate with procedures on cancellations, objectives, hotlines, notification guidelines, and penalties for policy violations. I found responses to be widely varying. I believe Colchester's policy to be very clear. It states that conditions require cancellation of activity if there are:

1. Standing puddles of water on the field.
2. Footing is unsure and slippery.
3. Ground is water logged and "squishy".
4. Grass can be pulled out of ground easily.
5. Lightning.
6. Severe weather storms.

As for the penalty phase, Trumbull has the toughest. And, I'd bet the policy is never broken: "The penalty for using a wet (closed) field is that the entire league is banned from using the field for the next week".

This leaves the Morris Recreation Commission at our next phase: the drafting of a policy to suit our Town. I'll be meeting with our turf expert to write a document based on feedback from around the State, from his expertise, and from my viewpoint as Department Director.



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The goal in the end of this endeavor is to protect our participants and to protect our playing fields. We'd like the optimal experience of play on high quality fields under the safest conditions. I'd like to thank all of you who have helped me begin our project. I'd be happy to forward any information that I've received. Furthermore, I'd be happy to share our guidelines when they become our inclement weather policy.

Brian Leonard
Town Of Morris, CT
Beach and Recreation Director