



AVON RECREATION AND PARKS FIELD ADMINISTRATION AND USE MANUAL

Purpose of this Manual

This manual is intended to be a reference for sports league official representatives, and their coaches using the Town and Board of Education athletic fields and amenities. The policies and procedures outlined in this manual are driven by the permitting processes, Town Ordinance, Parks and Recreation Rules and Regulations and established practices for grass turf fields.

Role of the Recreation and Parks Department

The Department is responsible for the oversight of all Town parks, athletic fields and recreational facilities. The Director of Recreation and Parks schedules all facilities and controls their use, and, in conjunction with the Director of Public Works, administers the parks maintenance schedules. With the assistance of the Department of Recreation and Parks staff, the Director oversees the operations and staffing related to field and park administration. Recreation and Parks serves as the communication link to the community groups using the fields and the residents utilizing recreational facilities and the other Town Departments with various responsibilities.

Additionally, the Director of Recreation and Parks, acting as the Town Manager's designated representative, may issue permits for proposed activities on, or uses of, Town-owned property that meet the criteria outline under Chapter 41, Section 26 of the Code of the Town of Avon, also known as the Parks and Recreation Ordinance (Chapter 41).

Role of the Department of Public Works

The Department of Public Works (DPW), Building and Grounds Division (Grounds) is responsible for the maintenance of athletic fields. The Division is directly supervised by the Buildings and Grounds Foreman, as well as the Director of Public Works. The Director of Public Works, in conjunction with the Director of Recreation and Parks, administers the planning, scheduling, and maintenance of parks, athletic fields and facilities. Through the permitting process, the Department of Recreation and Parks provides the Grounds Division with work assignments to prepare fields for athletic competitions and to ready facilities for community use. Athletic field maintenance begins as early in March as possible, and ends in late November, depending of the weather, field conditions, and, workload of the Grounds Division.

It is important to note that while the maintenance and improvement of parks athletic facilities are important duties of the Department of Public Works, these are not their only areas of responsibility. Projects involving the Town's parks and athletic fields must be prioritized alongside other projects and maintenance that DPW is responsible for completing, including road and infrastructure construction and maintenance, facility construction, routine work and unscheduled projects.

Role of the Board of Education Staff

The Avon High School Athletic Director and Board of Education (BOE) Operations Manager work closely with the Recreation and Parks Department and Department of Public Works on school grounds use and maintenance. The BOE is responsible for maintenance of the school grounds, amenities and facilities. Although DPW does not mow BOE fields, they do line them when there is community use permitted on the fields.

The Athletic Director schedules and coordinates the High School teams' practices and games for each sporting season; coordinating field schedules with the Recreation and Parks Director. BOE athletics have priority use of all Town and BOE Fields.

Role of Other Town Departments

While all use of Town owned PUBLIC PLACES require a permit as issued by the Department of Recreation and Parks, certain events such as tournaments for large gatherings, require additional permits from Department of Planning and Community Development, Avon Police Department and or Farmington Valley Health District.

It is imperative that groups planning to hold a large event contact these Departments as soon as possible to initiate all the requirements of their application processes.

Role of User Groups/Athletic Leagues

Each user is responsible for submitting an application, for a permit FOR USE OF TOWN PUBLIC PLACES (Appendix A-1) along with the appropriate fee as delineated in Appendix B of the Public Place Regulations, to the Recreation and Parks Department. A separate application should be submitted for each season, and, for each facility for which use is requested, before the season is to begin. A Certificate of Insurance, naming the Town of Avon and the Avon Board of Education as Additional Insureds, and indicating evidencing Bodily Injury and Property Damage Insurance in an amount not less than \$1,000,000.00, must be submitted with the application. Once the application has been processed, the organization will receive an email detailing approved times, dates, fields, blackout dates, and rules and regulations. Each group is responsible for making sure that all coaches, parents and participants are aware of all the information provided.

Each user group is responsible for securing additional amenities for special events (Portable toilets, garbage, recycling, and dumpsters), beyond the standard amenities provided by the Town, if necessary. The user group will inform the Department of their intentions to bring in additional amenities.

Each organization is responsible for any additional personnel services required as a condition of their permit(s), such as police services, or lifeguards. Procurement and payment for such services are arranged directly with the furnishing agency. A Facility Maintenance Fee of \$6.00 per player, per season will be submitted to the Department of Recreation and Parks by each user group in the form of a check made payable to "The Town of Avon Collector of Revenue" before the expiration of the organization's permit.

Athletic Leagues have official representatives, who work directly with the Department of Recreation and Parks to submit permit applications, coordinate facility use, and resolve other matters throughout the season. Coaches, parents, and participants **should not** contact the Department of Recreation and Parks for league or facility use related matters. The Department will direct them to contact their League's official representatives in order to make a formal request. It will be up to the official representatives to take further action or to bring the matter to the attention of the Department of Recreation and Parks if necessary. The Department of Recreation and Parks is respectful of the decisions that League officials make on behalf of their entire program and seeks to work with the Leagues to conduct their programming. Maintaining this procedure for responding to formal requests is critical to sustaining a relationship of cooperation, partnership, and mutual respect between the Town and the Leagues.

Leagues that are permitted to use Town baseball or softball fields will arrange to have volunteer coaches attend an annual *Best Practice Maintenance Training* led by the Buildings and Grounds Foreman. Coaches will only engage in field maintenance practices that are discussed during this Training. **Coaches will not engage in any field maintenance practice that the Town deems unacceptable including the use of tarps on baselines, the raking of standing water into grass lines, or the use of any drying agent. Appropriate maintenance practices as instructed by DPW Grounds are allowed.**

League official representatives are responsible to the Town for ensuring that coaches and players are familiar with all rules, regulations, important information, policies and procedures outlined in this manual, and in other documentation provided by the Town, including written communications such as e-mails or letters.

Organizations may be authorized to use athletic lighting provided at certain facilities. This authorization will be stipulated in the organization's permit and many be accompanied by conditions limiting light use. In general, organizations are responsible for the efficient, conservative use of the lighting and should adjust its programming to make the most of daylight hours, particularly in the late fall and early spring.

INFORMATION FOR USER GROUPS AND LEAGUES

Inclement Weather

For up-to-date changes in field closures please set up an account at www.avonrec.com and check off the box to "Receive Email Notifications for Cancellations".

Cancellation information will be distributed as follows:

- Recreation Cancellation line (860)409-4365: Updated seven days a week if fields are closed.
- Email Blasts to avonrec.com account holders who opt-in for cancellation notifications; *Only sent out during regular business hours.*
- Refer to your League's methods of sending out notifications.

Field Closure Purpose and Policy

Town and Board of Education athletic fields have been designed and are maintained for the enjoyment and use of Avon residents, student athletes and visiting teams. The purpose of this policy is to guide the use of Town athletic fields, to prevent damage to the playing surface and injuries to field users brought upon by inclement weather or unsafe playing conditions. An effective field maintenance program is essential for safe, quality-conscious fields and sport complexes. User groups are asked for assistance by accepting and adhering to these rules. Groups who use Town athletic fields and facilities are expected to assist in protecting their participants and fields during periods of rain or inclement weather. It only takes one practice or game to destroy a field that is not ready for play.

User groups are responsible for any damages caused to a field by playing in questionable weather. This includes damages done trying to dry out the field such as digging ditches, raking mud into the fencing, pushing water into the outfield/grassy areas or applying a drying agent. Violations may result in cancellation of your permit.

Policy

As the Town Manager's designated representative the Director of Recreation and Parks may suspend the permit of any person (Group) at any time upon determining that such suspension is reasonably necessary for the purpose of preserving the peace, safety and welfare of any person or preserving the public place from damage or injury.

Upon making this determination the Director of Recreation and Parks has the authority to cancel or suspend outdoor facility or field use permits for games, practices and other uses whenever field conditions could result in damage to the fields or injury to players. Permits may also be cancelled when the health and safety of participants are threatened due to impending conditions including but not limited to rain events, weather alerts, and pesticide applications.

Procedure

During inclement weather, the Director of Recreation and Parks, the Grounds Division Foreman, the BOE Athletic Director, and/or the Operations Manager, shall will work together to assess the playability of all athletic fields to determine if use will occur.

The staff shall be responsible for assessing field conditions and updating field status. Should weather conditions deteriorate; staff will reassess field playability and close fields if conditions dictate. Field use or playability will be determined by safety conditions and/or hazards that could be deterrent to the welfare of user/players, existing and forecasted weather conditions for the day and potential damage to the field due to play or practice use.

- Avon High School and Middle School decisions on field use will be made by 12:00pm. The decision to allow High School teams to play may differ from the one made later in the day for community groups, based on weather and conditions at the time. The Athletic Director is responsible for this communication.
- During Recreation and Park's regular business hours, Field Closure Announcements for Community use of any or all fields, will be announced after 2:00pm and before 4:00pm. This is to give the fields the most opportunity to dry and determine accurately if fields can be used. Once Recreation closes fields the decision will not be reversed by staff or League Officials.
- After Recreation's regular business hours, including weekends and holidays, League Officials are responsible to assess and determine playability of the fields for which they have permitted use. Each league is responsible for their own methods of communication.
- Once it has been determined that the fields are closed, NO work is to be done by any organization to attempt to make the fields playable.

Miscellaneous

- Violations of any provisions of Chapter 41-Parks and Recreation is subject to be fined not more than \$25 for the first violation and not more than \$100 for each subsequent violation.
- All Avon Parks and School Grounds are "TRASH-FREE PARKS." Garbage and recycling bins are not provided. Everyone must carry out what they carry in.
- All parking laws must be followed; No parking on the grass, on neighbors lawns or blocking of resident's driveways.
- DO NOT block gates or obstruct emergency access to all parks and on all neighborhood roads.

- Dogs are not allowed on or around athletic fields with the exception of Service animals. Areas where dogs are allowed must be on leash 6' or less attached to the owner. Dog owners are responsible to pick up dog waste. DO NOT leave bagged waste in the parks.
- Articles that are found in parks will be brought to the Recreation and Parks Department, 60 West Main Street, Avon CT. Items not picked up after one month will be donated.
- In the event of an accident or injury, please contact the Recreation and Parks Department on the earliest business day at (860) 409-4332 or at avonrec@avonct.gov
- It is the responsibility of the vendor to secure any and all permits required, however the sponsor of the tournament or special event should be prepared to explain the application requirements and the timelines to their vendors. **This is a lengthy process.** No vendor will be permitted to sell goods on Town property without the proper permits in place at least one (1) week prior to a special event.

Tournament and Special Event Procedures

All general rules and reservation procedures specified in the Public Place Ordinance, the Recreation and Parks Regulations, and this Field Administration and Facility Use Manual apply to the scheduling of tournaments and other special events. Tournament applicants should submit an APPLICATION FOR USE OF TOWN OF AVON PUBLIC PLACE, a HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENTS, and a CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE, to the Recreation and Parks Department and an APPLICATION FOR TEMPORARY SPECIAL EVENT to Planning and Zoning.

If vendors will be at the event, each vendor is required:

1. To submit their own Application for Use, Hold Harmless Agreement, and Certificate of Insurance to the Department of Recreation and Parks.
2. Apply for an Itinerate Vendors Permit with the Avon Police Department
3. Obtain their Health Permit from the Farmington Valley Health District

Tournament or special event officials will work directly with the Department of Recreation and Parks on the permits, conditions, layout, and equipment needs for the event. The Director will then coordinate with the Grounds Foreman as necessary. Upon the request of the Foreman, one event official shall be available to meet on site prior to the event to ensure that the facilities have been set up per the requirements of the event officials. For particularly large or complex events requiring extensive coordination, the Director of Recreation and Parks may require a planning meeting or meetings with event officials and Town staff to coordinate the particulars of the event.

Tournament officials shall abide by all conditions of the special event permit unless otherwise agreed to by the Town in writing. The officials are responsible for arranging and paying for any additional amenities that are needed, beyond those normally in place in the park, i.e. added portable toilets and dumpsters. Officials are also responsible for the cleaning and emptying of Town's amenities during the tournament

MAINTENANCE MATTERS

Rest and Renovation: An annual rest and renovation program is scheduled at all Town-owned facilities to maintain field sustainability. The Recreation and Parks Department attempts to accommodate user groups requesting field use but, ultimately, the health and safety of the user and the condition and playability of the fields take priority. This may require the closure of fields or facilities, denial of use of a

field, and/or the provision of alternate sites for athletic use. All of Avon's athletic fields exceed the amount of recommended use, so compaction becomes a major issue leading towards other issues.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM): The Town works from an IPM and attempts to have as natural a maintenance program as possible, with limited use of chemicals on an as-needed basis.

Components of a Natural Turf Maintenance Program: • Soil and water testing • Fertilization and Lime • Mowing • Aeration (various methods) • Topdressing • Overseeding • Drainage • Irrigation, where appropriate.

Mowing and Lining: All Town athletic fields are scheduled to be cut twice per week. The Grounds crew cuts all fields at the same height to promote strong root growth and reduce need for chemicals. All fields are painted weekly during the sporting seasons. The Director of Recreation and Parks works with BOE Director of Operations to coordinate the BOE's mowing schedules at the school facilities with the Grounds Division's lining of the fields. The Grounds Division makes every effort to line fields near the end of the week to give user groups the best possible conditions for weekend game schedules. We do modify these mowing and lining schedules based on weather conditions.

Diamonds and Clay Infields: Maintaining and preparing clay infields is labor intensive. The Grounds Division will drag most fields once or twice a week during the playing seasons. Additionally, Grounds will drag and line fields for scheduled games during the week. Fields are dragged and lined on Fridays for weekend games.

Field Modifications: Requests to modify, resize, or add multiple small fields on a large one, or improve any Town field or facility shall be submitted, in writing with the application for a permit, with conceptual drawings to the Department of Recreation and Parks.

No temporary or permanent structures or equipment shall be erected on any facility unless previously approved, in writing, by the Department of Recreation and Parks and is intended for community or league use.

Occasionally leagues need additional support of the Grounds Divisions on weekends. Requests for weekend support shall be made in writing to the Director of Recreation and Parks at least two (2) weeks prior to the event to allow for adequate time to schedule staff.

BEST PRACTICES

The industry often uses the information provided by UCONN and UMASS Extension Services who provide a lot of information and educational opportunities on the management of grass turf fields and diamonds. Many factors related to maintenance best practices and appropriate use are considered when scheduling field use. . Decisions are based on science, experience, working knowledge of each field and or other concerns.

- No field should be used if it is excessively wet, has standing water, or is excessively dry. These conditions warrant closing the field.
- Playing on a wet field causes about five (5) times more damage than average field use in dry conditions.
- Fields should not be used when frozen, has a frost covering or is partially thawed.

- Repetitive drills should not be practiced in the same place, but should move to different locations each time. This varies the wear patterns on the field.
- Practice equipment should be moved off the field when practice is over to allow for mowing.
- Coaches, parents or players should report unsafe conditions to League Officials immediately. Officials should first take steps to prevent injury (i.e., an unanchored soccer goal could be wrapped with yellow tape or secured if possible), and then report the condition on the earliest business day to the Department of Recreation and Parks.
- Coaches should make a practice of engaging players in picking up trash around team benches and spectator bleachers after each game or practice. Remember, Avon has a **Carry In, Carry Out** policy.
- Support the Town's decisions to close fields by proactively communicating the reasons and benefits of not allowing play during field closures
- Coaches shall not put tarps on any field, rake wet clay into the grass line, apply drying agents or dig holes to bail water.

TOWN OF AVON RECREATION AND PARKS

60 WEST MAIN STREET, AVON CT 06001

PHONE: 860 409-4332

FAX: 860 409-4334

CANCELLATION LINE: 860 409-4365

EMAIL: WWW.AVONREC.COM

WWW.AVONCT.GOV

AVON RECREATION AND PARKS FACILITY USE AGREEMENT RULES AND REGULATIONS

Please complete and return to Recreation and Parks.

Contact Person Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Cell: _____ Home: _____

Work: _____ Email: _____

Backup contact person; Name/Cell/Home/Work/Email: _____

AVON RECREATION AND PARKS FACILITY USE AGREEMENT

I _____, acting as THE LEAGUE OFFICAL REPRESENTATIVE of _____, hereby acknowledge that I have read and comprehend the Rules and Regulations detailed in the attached packet and understand that my organization's use of any facility under the supervision of Avon Recreation and Parks is contingent on compliance with the rules stated herein.

Signed _____ Date _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Email Address _____