

Concord NH Parks and Recreation Department

Athletic field use reminders

Please review our rental process for parks and facilities. The rules & regulations as well as fee schedule can be found online at www.concordparksandrec.com

Many factors determine how fields are scheduled and closed. We try to maintain open fields mid-April through early November annually however this depends on weather and field conditions.

- *Mowing Schedule:* The mowing schedule usually begins in late April and ends in late October. The mowing schedule takes roughly two weeks to complete a full rotation of all parks. We have a large area mower that will mow athletics fields once a week during the growing season.
- *Fields shouldn't be used unless the grass is growing, to insure it has the ability to recover from use.* This is a difficult condition to honor. The compromise is that we do not schedule athletic fields to open until April 15th at the earliest. It is typically closer to May before the grass starts growing, so how the fields are used in April is an important decision. If weather and conditions allow we will open before April 15. However, we do not recommend leagues and groups plan on being on the fields before April 15 or after November first annually.
- *Fields should not be used when frozen or covered in frost.* The April 15th opening date is often delayed as the fields are still snow covered, frozen, or soaked even though the snow has gone. Fields are not scheduled in the winter months, and depending on weather and field conditions we typically close fields in early November.
- *No field should be used if it is excessively wet.* Parks and Recreation staff will close fields with “standing water” or when fields are wet/soft to play on. Those announcements are made by staff via email to contact person on rental paperwork. The group is responsible for contacting their participants. A wet field incurs about 5 times more damage from regular use. If the City cancels a rental due to weather a full refund will be issued.
- *Softball and Baseball Infields:* Only City staff will prep infields. Staff will notify renters if fields at not playable. We know weather often changes after fields are prepped. If permit holders arrive and the infield is very soft or has standing water please do not use field. Do not use brooms to disperse puddles, do not sweep puddles into grass or remove muddy infield mix. Do not pitch from the grass!
- *The goal is to limit use to 60-70 scheduled activities per year per field.* An activity is a single use that is 2-3 hours in length. Wear patterns can start to show after 10 activities. After 25 activities, the turf will become thinner and more vulnerable to weeds. Beyond 60 activities...we all know what that looks like! We often close heavily used fields in summer months to help turf to heal (30-60 days). When we close a field down we will immediately aerate and typically seed.

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- *Heavily used fields are closed during growing season.* We shut down the heavily used grass multi-purpose fields during the summer months and baseball and softball fields in the fall, and allow for some recovery time. Although the summer time is not optimal time of year for recovery due to heat it does allow fields to be available in the heavily-used spring and fall. After we close fields we aerate and typically seed. The following fields are closed annually during the seasons listed below.

Memorial Field

Soccer/Lacrosse Varsity Field JV and Varsity Football Field (early July – mid August)

Baseball and Softball A field are closed in late September to allow staff to work on infields

Keach Park:

Youth Soccer Field next Loudon Road (late-July to mid-August)

Other fields:

Depending on use and wear we may have to close other fields during the year to allow time for the grass to recover from heavy use. We will work with leagues to limit the down time of field closures.

After field permits are issued:

We ask the organization's help to achieve our goal of having safe parks and athletic fields.

- *Keep practices and drills off of high traffic areas, and move to different locations each time.* Reducing the stress on heavily used areas will decrease the amount of compaction and allow for more growth of grass.
- *Communicate with your people/participants when fields are available, and when they aren't.* A single coach, ignoring the decision of the league and city, who uses a field when closed can create enough damage that can result in a field being damaged and closed for an extended time.
- *Move practice equipment around so the same areas aren't impacted.* For practice, game areas do not need to be used, particularly for repetitive drills or activities that need heavy equipment. No storage is permitted on grass or in parks without written permission – let the grass breathe and thrive!
- *Put items away after use.* The covers need to be returned to the sandpits on the track; any portable nets/goals should be put back if the field is used for multiple sports.
- *Ask athletes to use "gentler" footwear that is less likely to create divots or tear root systems.* A stressed field will receive less damage if sneakers are worn, but the decision is also based on the athletes having proper footing.

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- *Report concerns about field conditions to league officials who will report to the city.* A low spot on a multi-purpose field or a lip between the infield and outfield of a diamond can all decrease the safe conditions on a field. Prevent activities that create these issues and report any concerns!
- *Reduce unpermitted use.* The organizations that have permits tend to work with the department to assist with how the fields are used to properly maintain their conditions. The most damage is caused by groups using a park/field without permits as they are not aware of the field use rules. Your assistance in helping us get these groups off the fields is greatly appreciated!
- *Carry in and Carry Out Trash* We ask everyone to carry in and carry out their trash. We have a limited number of parks with trash cans and they are emptied twice a week. Please help us keep the parks in great shape and carry in and out your trash.

Additional information on park and facility rules, rental process and rental rates is online at:

<https://concordnh.gov/755/Rental-Information>