



POLICY #:	<i>PWS06-165</i>
DEPARTMENT:	<i>Public Works Services</i>
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POLICIES/PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES:
Field Delay & Cancellation Policy

Purpose:

The development of this policy ensures a proactive approach to maintaining turf and infield integrity of Waterloo’s outdoor sports facilities resulting from interfering natural or uncontrollable factors. (eg. Inclement weather). Prompt recognition of the potential for damage resulting from aggressive use under poor field conditions will reduce the need for costly and disruptive short or long term field closures needed to accomodate revitalization.

This policy also recognizes the increased potential for participant injury resulting from play on fields or diamonds impacted by poor field/infield conditions. This policy provides guidelines for the early detection of such conditions, and mandates restricted participant use in an effort to prevent injury.

Cancellation and delay at the sole discretion of the City of Waterloo Staff:

The temporary cancelation, or imposed delay, of any rental program on any City maintained field and/or diamond as a result of a previous, current and/or prolonged period of inclement weather is at the sole discretion of **authorized staff of the City of Waterloo**. Officials residing over the activity (umpires, referees, convenors) must abide by the decision of the staff under any circumstances. In the event of cancellation under the conditions of this policy, Parks Services will document accordingly and notify Facility Allocation and Booking to make any appropriate fee adjustments.

Considerations for delays and/or cancellations:

Programming will be delayed or cancelled when turf and infield surfaces show signs of saturation, including standing water, sponginess and water being drawn to the surface when aggravated, due to prolonged periods of rain prior to, or during a rental. Staff will also consider the forecast for the remainder of the rental period in determining the extent of the cancellation or delay.

An immediate game delay will be initiated with the first observation of localized lightning activity, and will remain in effect until which time on duty staff are confident the threat of lightning has passed based on frequency of local strikes. It is in the best interests of participant safety to recognize this hazard and react appropriately without staff direction.

Delays and cancellations will also be considered when a temporary and immediate unresolvable physical condition exists in which staff are in the opinion that a risk to players is imminent, or field integrity will be severely jeopardized with use.

Duration of imposed delays:

Delays will remain in effect for as long as it takes for inclement weather conditions to cease, and field condition improve to where staff of the City of Waterloo are satisfied that play on that particular field or diamond can commence without risk of participant injury, or the contribution of significant field damage is reduced.

Duration of cancellations:

Where conditions exist, and staff have made their assessment to cancel, unless otherwise indicated, a cancellation will extend for the full allotted time period, or any remaining time of the allocated rental.

Communication of Cancellations, Status of Delays:

City of Waterloo staff will advise the initial league contact person by telephone of all advance cancellations and delays no later than 4:00 PM Monday to Friday that day based on current and anticipated field and weather conditions¹. If only a delay, staff will advise at that time the anticipated time the rental may resume, and any conditions that must first be met.

Participants of an activity in which they feel could possibly be delayed or cancelled are encouraged to consult the City's daily maintained Field Delay & Cancellation access line², or the Field Conditions Status page of it's website³, for current field playability reports. This information may not be accurate on weekends or holidays.

In the event of weekend, holiday, or late evening cancellations or delays, on duty staff will attempt to provide advance communication to the participating league representative in sufficient time to facilitate call-outs. Should this communication not be available, on site staff will advise of such delays and cancellations.

Cancellations and delays mid rental will be issued by on duty staff in consultation with a participating league representative or tournament convenor, and the presiding official. An immediate delay will be forced in the event of lightning, and/or heavy rainfalls. All delays will remain in place until staff determines no lightning can be seen, heavy rainfall has stopped, and the field shows no signs of saturation.

Group responsibilities under cancellation/delay situations:

It is the responsibility of the league contact person to ensure that all officials and coaches receive timely notification of the cancellation. The City of Waterloo will not accept failure to communicate as an excuse of non-compliance by coaches and officials, nor will it be held responsible for any inconveniences created by communicated cancellations and/or delays.

The league representative or designate will be responsible for communicating the terms of this policy to all staff, including coaches, and officials in a timely manner.

Minimum 30 minute delay after severe weather:

Following the passing of a weather event having forced the suspension of an activity, a minimum 30 minute delay will be imposed to promote the natural drying of the facility, and to provide staff an opportunity to assess and monitor the suitability of resuming play.

Facility users, patrons, and officials are not permitted on the field or diamond during an imposed delay, including the 30 minute minimum. Use of the field under these conditions either to resume play, or to expediate repair, may contribute to greater damage and potential to participant safety. If staff feel that field conditions will not improve within 30 minutes, they are in the position to cancel the remainder of that rental.

As play commences after a delay, should there be a return of the inclement weather, staff once again may impose a delay or a cancellation based on field conditions and current and short-term weather forecasts.

Obligations of staff after an imposed delay:

Only with the permission of on duty staff will groups be permitted on the field (diamond) after a cancellation or delay has been initiated. Should poor field conditions return as a result of inclement weather or other, staff may once again impose a delay or a cancellation.

Prior to a delay being lifted, staff may provide only infield repairs to bring the diamond to a safe playable state as resources permit (ie removal of standing water, infield drying, infield lining touchup). Staff have the right to prioritize such repairs citywide, with Class A Tournament facilities taking precedence, followed by Class A non tournament, and finally Class B facilities. Repair services will not be provided for Class C and D venues.

It is the responsibility of field officials and league representatives to assess field conditions for suitability of resumed play at Class C and D facilities.

Alternate venues under special circumstances:

Alternate venues may be considered by staff in critical situations where the initial rental has been forced into a cancellation. However, this relocation is based on appropriateness, availability and field conditions, and is at the sole discretion of the City of Waterloo. Alternate venues will not be considered for regular season play.

Compliance of cancellation/delay orders:

It is expected that all patrons, players and officials occupying a specific field for a rental respect the decisions of City of Waterloo staff and refrain from use of the facility for the period of the cancellation.

On review of reported instances of user groups failing to comply to a cancellation or delay order, the City of Waterloo reserves the right to cancel the rental agreement in it's entirety without refund.

Users will not be charged for the duration of the cancellation or delay if such are respected as deemed by staff. Delays are still subject to the applicable charges if imposed mid rental, with no further charges applied should a cancellation be ordered.

Notes:

- ¹ Current and forecasted weather conditions and imagery as provided by Environment Canada for Kitchener-Waterloo.
- ² Field Delay & Cancellation Public Access Line - 886-7122 x411 (WMRC)
- ³ City of Waterloo Sports Fields conditions page
<http://www.city.waterloo.on.ca/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=1040>