

Wet weather sports ground closure

Reason for Sports Ground closures

Council may close playing fields for use when:

- Undertaking any repair, maintenance or works on or immediately adjacent to the fields.
- During and following wet weather when the turf and subsurface is particularly vulnerable to damage by users.
- Special event requirements.

When Council closes sports grounds due to wet weather, it is aiming for a reasonable balance between the needs of the sports community to conduct their sport and the damage this use does to the playing fields.

The closure of fields is a management tool intended to maximize the availability and quality of the field for all users throughout the year.

Managing the grounds in this way will minimize the need for major ground refurbishments at the end of the winter sport season.

Wet Weather Sports Ground Status

There will be 3 options for sports grounds status, **open, closed and conditional**.

OPEN- The field is open for all sports competitions, training and school use.

CLOSED- The field is closed for all sports competitions, training and school use.

CONDITIONAL- The field is closed for use unless certain conditions are met (see below). If these conditions are met the controlling body of the sport or school competition has the authority to use the ground for competitions games only.

Grounds in conditional status cannot be used for training or similar non competition use.

The 3 options allow for greater flexibility in managing of individual grounds, therefore the previous, 'one out all out' approach no longer applies. Status can be set differently for individual fields depending on their condition.

Council's determination of Status.

The status of the sports grounds is determined by Parks Operations staff based on the following:

- The current condition of the ground on the morning of inspection
AND
- The BOM forecast until the next status review.

Determination of status is made in the morning of each day from Monday to Friday.
Determinations for the weekend (including long weekends) are made on Friday morning.

Once the field status has been determined and published on the Website, it will not be changed until the next earliest update, (i.e. noon the next day) even if there is a significant change in the weather conditions.

Communication of Status

Parks Operations determines the sports ground status and communicates this to the Recreation section who have the responsibility to advise the wider Community, Sports Associations and Schools.

Parks provide the information in the form of a completed status table or a phone call to the Recreation Officers prior to 11 am. This allows sufficient time for the webpage to be updated and published by Midday.

Wet weather field status is communicated through,

- The wet weather Playing Fields Status page on Councils website.
- Emails to Sports Associations and Schools, with a link to the Councils wet weather status webpage.
- A recorded message on Councils wet weather phone line.

Conditions Determining Use of Grounds under Conditional closure Status.

To allow the use of the ground under a conditional closure, the Association/authority assessing the ground must meet the following conditions,

- Must be a competition game
AND
- Meet their own sports/activities safety assessment requirements which allows the sport/activity to go ahead,
AND
- Meet Councils guidelines to allowing play on fields in wet condition.

Council's guidelines are set out in the document titled ***Wet weather ground inspection guidance.***

Consequence of Decision

If the decision to use the grounds is made under these provisions of conditional closure, and following inspection by Councils staff, it is deemed the grounds have been unreasonably damaged as a result, Council reserves the right to recover the costs of the repair and close the ground for use until repairs are completed.

Who can make a determination under conditional closure.

The decision to use a ground under the conditional closure provisions can only be made by the Association or controlling authority running the competition. Clubs or individuals do not have this authority.