

Athletic Field Use and Allocation Guidelines

Youth, Parks, & Community Enrichment Mission Statement

Together we empower our youth, strengthen neighborhoods, and provide life-enriching programs for a beautiful, livable community.

Purpose

The City of Sacramento's Youth, Parks, and Community Enrichment (YPCE) Department is committed to ensuring all community members have equitable access to sports fields. The purpose of this document is to outline the process and procedures for the scheduling of long term and year around sports and occasional or drop-in sports.

Field Allocation Procedure

Fields will be allocated and permitted annually. Please note that fields may be closed for up to 6 weeks at a time for regular field maintenance, which is normally scheduled between primary sports seasons. Primary sports seasons are based on field types and sports traditional seasons, spring (baseball, softball, etc.) and fall (soccer, football, etc.).

Requesting Field Space

Sports field requests are channeled through our Reservations Office located at the Coloma Community Center. Applications for Long Term Athletic Fields for January through December are due on the third Thursday in September. Application(s) must be received/postdated on or before the third Thursday in September. Any requests received after these deadlines will be considered on a first come-first serve basis after the allocation has been completed. Organizations must be in good financial standing to have their applications for field use accepted. Organizations are not in good financial standing if they are more than 30 days late on paying any field reservation fees as of the date their application is submitted.

Seasons

Sports seasons are defined as follows:

- Spring (baseball, softball, etc.): February 15th – June 30th
- Fall (football, soccer, etc.): August 15th – December 31st
- Shoulder Seasons: July 1st – August 14th and January 1st – February 14th

In-season sports shall be prioritized over off-season sports and shoulder season uses during the field allocation process.

Allocation Criteria

As stated in the City's Long Term Athletic Field Use Guide, the City's goal is to accommodate all field permit applications. However, groups frequently request the same field during the same time. Park reservation staff will review all timely field requests and divide the fields as fairly and equitably as possible. ¹

The field allocation process includes organizations in good financial standing who have submitted a completed long term sports field application by the established, annual, application deadline.

Applications submitted after the annual application deadline will be considered on a first come, first served basis after all timely applications are considered.

In allocating fields, the City will prioritize City uses, including:

- City Programs
- City of Sacramento Park Maintenance schedule and planned closures

In allocating remaining field availability, the City will consider various factors regarding the use/applicant, including but not limited to:

- Priority Agreement Holder
- Historic User (2 or more years of continuous use since 2022 and on-time payments)
- In-season sports will be prioritized over off-season sports and shoulder season use
- Non-profit organizations will be prioritized over for-profit organizations²
- Youth programs will be prioritized over adult program games/tournaments
- The number of estimated users that will be served by a proposed use³
- The nature of the proposed use, including:
 - Youth games will be prioritized over practices
 - Consistency of the proposed use with the field type requested
- Other equity considerations

Permit applications for adult team practices will not be accepted and considered during the annual field allocation process. Permit applications for adult team practices are accepted monthly and may be submitted

¹ When applicants file conflicting requests for field use, the City may request that applicants meet to reach an agreement on shared use of the field and related facilities as part of the permit allocation process.

² The City may request proof of non-profit status.

³ The City may request current and/or prior roster information to verify number of estimated users.

three (3) business days before the first of the month of the requested reservation date will be considered on a first come, first served basis.

Field Allocations and Permits

At the conclusion of the annual field allocation process, an allocation letter shall be sent to the permit applicant from the City of Sacramento/YPCE Reservations Office. Following the conclusion of the timeline for appeals, a tentative permit shall then be issued to an organization who has received an allocation letter. The tentative permit reserves the field, but will not be considered “approved” until all additional required documentation and payment has been received by the designated deadline. Only once all additional documentation is submitted and payment has been made, will the permit be approved. Permits remain subject to denial and/or cancellation for the reasons set forth in these guidelines below regardless of status as “tentative” or “approved.”

Appeals

Applicants who wish to appeal the City’s permit allocation decisions must file such an appeal with the City Manager within two (2) business days of receiving an allocation letter or permit denial, pursuant to City Code §12.72.180.

Permits are not transferable

If you cannot use a date you reserved, please contact the City as soon as possible so that the field can be reassigned. Refunds will not be provided for cancellations less than 3 business days prior to the field use date.

Insurance

Field users are required to maintain adequate insurance coverage throughout the term of their agreement, as set forth on the permit application.

Payments

Permit fees are due on the first of the month. Once an application is issued a contract number the cancellation policy becomes applicable.

Preparation of the Field for Play, Requests for Additional Field Maintenance, and Field Closures

The Park Maintenance Division is currently operating at a Level 3 maintenance schedule. A breakdown of the maintenance can be found [here](#).

The City's maintenance activities do not include adding field lines, setting baseball bases, installing temporary soccer goals or nets, rolling fields, infield dragging, etc. (referred to herein as "preparing the field for play.")

Preparation of the Field for Play (by Permit Holders)

When submitting a permit application, sports organizations should include requests for permission to engage in activities necessary to prepare the field for play, as defined above. Such requests will be reviewed and approval by the City's permitting and maintenance staff. Such activities, if approved, shall be completed by the permit holder at the permit holder's expense, shall not cause any damage to the City's facilities, and shall be completed during the time covered by the permit issued.

Additional Field Maintenance or Enhancement Requests

Some organizations may want to fund or otherwise make more substantial improvements or maintenance services to a City field, above and beyond the City's Level 3 maintenance activities (such as reseeding, more frequent mowing, etc.), which may require short- or longer-term field closures.

Requests for such improvements during the 2024 calendar year that are received by September 21 will be considered by the City during the field allocation process. If the City approves such a request, it will be treated as a planned maintenance closure. Requests received after September 21 will be considered after the initial 2024 field allocation process is complete. Substantial field maintenance or enhancement requests must be submitted at <https://forms.cityofsacramento.org/f/ParkEnhancement>, as described in more detail below.

Approval of Additional Maintenance or Enhancements

Prior to beginning any work, such organizations must complete and submit a Park Enhancement Request via: <https://forms.cityofsacramento.org/f/ParkEnhancement> for review and approval by City Staff and execute a Right of Entry Agreement with the City, if required.

Projects may require the submission of additional detail, including but not limited to, certificates of insurance coverage, architectural plans, landscape plans, shop drawings, manufacture/product specifications, materials list, safety data sheets, and necessary equipment lists.

Completion of park enhancements by any individual or organization does not confer any special rights, privileges, or entitlements to access or use any park, except to make the proposed improvements. The requesting party's right to use the renovated park will remain consistent with the rights of the general public and will be subject to the same terms and conditions of use.

Inclement Weather Guidelines

In the interest of player and public safety, as well as preservation of fields, the Department Youth, Parks, & Community Enrichment recommends the following guidelines for all outdoor athletic activities. Events should be scheduled or modified to avoid dangerous conditions, including but not limited to, excessive heat, lightning, and heavy rain.

The Department Youth, Parks, & Community Enrichment reserves the right to close a field at any time due to inclement weather, effectively cancelling any permit for field use during the time of closure. Inclement weather field closures will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Permitted user groups will have the same responsibility in making gametime decisions based on the conditions and field they are using.

In determining whether to close a field, the City shall consider the following factors:

- Current condition of the field as it relates to playability and safety
- Current weather
- Forecasted weather
- Intended use and potential for user injuries
- Intended use and potential for damaging the fields
- Long-term effect or impact to the fields
- Unforeseen maintenance repairs or hazards
- Standing water within the base paths
- Your feet are slipping as you walk through the infields
- Standing water within the majority of a single playing position
- Your feet are suctioned to the ground as you walk within the majority of a single playing position
- Your footprints are filling with water in the majority of a single playing position
- Grass can be dislodged from the parks easily by play

Procedure for closing fields and updating the Field Condition Hotline:

1. Park Maintenance Division staff will assess fields daily to determine sports field conditions, as affected by inclement weather. Based on the professional judgment of staff, a determination will be made as to the safety and playability of all sports field within the city's parks system. When the fields are closed for any reason, no use, permitted or otherwise, will be allowed.
2. On **weekdays**, a final decision about the fields will be made and the Field Condition Hotline will be updated daily by 1:00 p.m.
3. On **weekends**, the fields will be evaluated by the Park Maintenance Division staff and the Field Condition Hotline 8:00 a.m. If it is decided that the fields will be closed but the weather conditions and forecast at the time appear favorable for the day, the fields will be re-evaluated, and the Hotline will be updated if the conditions improve, and fields become playable.
4. If a sporting event is scheduled for the weekend, a determination will be made by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday based upon current and anticipated field conditions and the current weather forecast. The intent of this procedure is to allow the affected organization time to notify the tournament participants

of a cancellation in advance of their arrival. These field closures will be coordinated as closely as possible with the affected organization(s).

5. If, in the professional judgment of Park Maintenance Division staff, at any time the fields become too wet or otherwise unsuitable for play, the fields will be closed and any subsequent use on the fields will be interrupted and the Field Condition Hotline update.

Grounds for Permit Cancellation or Permit Denial

In addition to the grounds for permit cancellation or permit denial set forth in section 12.72.180 of the City Code, the City may cancel an existing field use permit or deny a future permit for any of the following (occurring during the current or prior permit year):

1. Using a field despite permit cancellation, including use of a field closed due to inclement weather.
2. Failure to comply with any permit condition, including maintenance of the required insurance coverages.
3. Repeated failure to cancel reservations/permits so that a field no longer needed by one organization can be reassigned to another organization.
4. Failure to pay permit fees timely.
5. Non-compliance with the City's Long Term Athletic Field Use Guide.
6. Non-compliance with federal, state, and/or local laws, including provisions of the City Code.
7. Non-compliance with County health orders.
8. Providing false information in a permit application.