



ATHLETIC FIELDS USE AND ALLOCATION GUIDELINES

Updated February 18, 2025



County of San Diego
Department of Parks and Recreation

Athletic Field Use and Allocation Guidelines

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Field Allocation Procedure	4
Requesting Field Space	4
Seasons	4
Required Documentation	4
Classification of Groups	5
Field Allocation Formula	6
Fees	7
Regulations	8
Code of Conduct	8
County Parks Ordinances	8
DPR Guidelines and Policies	9
Artificial Turf Fields	9
Field Maintenance and Alteration	9
Inclement Weather	9

Introduction

San Diego County Parks and Recreation Vision Statement

A park and recreation system that is the pride of San Diego County and a national model for park and recreation organizations.

San Diego County Parks and Recreation Mission Statement

We enhance the quality of life in San Diego County by providing exceptional parks and recreation experiences and preserving regionally significant natural and cultural resources.

Purpose

County ordinance 41.124 and DPR policy C-22 recognize that certain athletic facilities are intended to be used for organized sports activities, and require that a permit be obtained for the use of those facilities. The purpose of this document is to outline the process and procedures for the scheduling of those facilities, keeping in mind the greatest benefit to local communities and providing opportunities for everyone.

Designated Sports Facilities

The County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has identified the athletic fields at the following locations to be used for organized sports, therefore subject to sports facility allocation guidelines and permit requirements:

- Cole Grade Park
- 4S Ranch Sports Park
- Hilton Head Park (practices only)
- Horse Creek Ridge Park
- Jess Martin Park
- Pine Valley Park
- Potrero Park
- Rainbow Park
- Scibilia Field
- Steele Canyon Park (practices only)
- Sweetwater Lane Sports Complex
- Tijuana River Valley Regional Park
- Valley Center Community Park

These additional County owned facilities are currently operated by other entities, but are still subject to DPR policies and procedures according to their signed agreements:

- Cactus Park
- Lakeside Sports Park
- Rios Canyon
- San Dieguito Park (Miracle Field)
- Sweetwater Regional

More information on each of these parks is available on the DPR website at www.sdparks.org.

Field Allocation Procedure

Fields will be allocated and permitted semi-annually – once for the spring season, and once for the fall season. These allocations are not intended to interrupt the field assignments for teams and/or organizations during the course of a season that has already started. 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.

Requesting Field Space

Sports field requests are channeled through our sports offices at 4S Ranch Sports Park, Spring Valley Gymnasium, or a specified location in the local community. All requests for the spring season allocation are due by December 1st, and all requests for the fall season are due by June 1st. Any requests received after these deadlines will be considered on a first come-first serve basis after the allocation has been completed. Depending on the area in which an organization is requesting space, membership in a local sports council may be part of the criteria for eligibility or prioritization, and collection of request forms may take place at a designated sports council meeting.

Seasons

Sports seasons are defined as follows:

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

In-season sports shall be given priority over off-season sports. Fees may apply to leagues/teams requesting field space during the shoulder seasons for pre-season and post-season activities, as availability may be limited.

Required Documentation

In addition to the field request form, the following documentation is required at the time of the request:

- Proof of Insurance (must remain current for entirety of the season)
- Code of Conduct
- Team Rosters from Previous Season (to determine local community participation level)

After receiving the requests and other documentation, DPR will review requests and schedule fields, and will issue the following to the organization:

- Field Use Agreement (must be signed by league representative and returned within 7 days)
- Field Use Permit

The following additional documentation is required after the permit is issued:

- Board of Directors Roster (prior to first day of field use)
- Practice Schedule (prior to first day of field use)
- Game Schedule (7 days prior to the first game)
- Team Rosters (7 days prior to the first game)

Classification of Groups

DPR is dedicated to creating partnerships with local youth sports organizations to ensure there is ample opportunity to participate in athletics at various ability levels. Our primary role in these partnerships is to make certain our fields remain safe and of high quality for the athletic opportunities that we provide. The allocation/permitting process provides an organization the exclusive use of a field to the exclusion of all others. Therefore, DPR has determined the necessity to group organizations into the following categories:

Group A

County sponsored or co-sponsored programs or events. County youth/adult athletic programs and/or leagues.

Group B

Youth recreational organization. In order to be classified as Group B, an organization must meet all of the following criteria:

- Participants are age 18 and under.
- A majority of the organization's field users must reside within a defined area of the local community.
- The league must abide by an "everyone plays" philosophy. This means that there are no tryouts, no players are cut, and everyone who signs up will receive playing time.
- Volunteer based. All local administrators, board members, and coaches must serve in a volunteer capacity.
- In season. The dates of field use must fall within the primary sports seasons outlined in this document.
- National affiliation. The group must be affiliated with and adhere to guidelines set forth by a governing national youth sports organization.
- Membership in the local sports council, if applicable.

Group C

Youth organization which does not meet all of the criteria for Group B. This is a group which holds selective tryouts and/or registration, provides some form of payment to coaches/administrators, regularly travels and competes against other teams outside of the local area, is not affiliated with a governing organization, is playing outside of the previously defined seasons, or does not comply with any of the criteria for Group B.

Group D

Adult sports organizations, or youth tournaments, camps, clinics and/or special events with individual or team participation fees.

Field Allocation Formula

Priority for allocating field space is first determined by group classification, as identified above. When multiple organizations within the same classification are requesting the same space and time, DPR uses the following formula, based on national sports field allocation standards:

X = number of field users in the organization residing within the local defined area

Y = number of field users residing within the local defined area from all organizations requesting field space

Z = the percentage of field time/space allocated to organization

$$X \div Y = Z$$

Example:

X = Organization A has 250 field users that reside within the local defined area

Organization B has 750 field users that reside within the local defined area

Y = Total number of local field users = 1000

Z = Organization A receives 25% of total field time/space

Organization B receives 75% of total field time/space

Fees

Field Use Fees

Group Classification	Hourly Rate
Group A	N/A
Group B	No Fee
Group C	\$20
Group D	\$30
Tournament	Daily fee, varies by location

Miscellaneous Fees

Item	Fee	Notes
Lights	Hourly fee, varies by location	Available at 4S Ranch and Sweetwater Lane
Sports Equipment	\$50/day	Where available
Security Deposit (refundable)	\$250	Applies to camps, tournaments, and special events as deemed applicable by DPR.
Concession Stand (permanent facility)	Varies by location	Available at 4S Ranch and Sweetwater Lane
Concession Stand (temporary) or Vendor (not selling merchandise)	\$25/day	At the discretion of DPR
Vendors (selling merchandise)	\$50/day, or 10% of gross revenue (whichever is more)	At the discretion of DPR
Caterer	\$50/day	At the discretion of DPR
Food Truck	\$50/day, or 10% of gross revenue (whichever is more)	At the discretion of DPR

Payments

Permits will not be issued until all applicable payments are received. Detailed information on payment schedule and refund policies can be found in the field reservation agreement.

Insurance

Field users are required to maintain adequate insurance coverage throughout the term of their agreement. A certificate of commercial general liability insurance, including an endorsement naming the County of San Diego as additionally insured, must be submitted prior to approval of the field use permit. Specific coverage limits may vary based upon the level of risk of the event. Detailed information on insurance requirements can be found in the field reservation agreement.

Regulations

Compliance with Laws

In the interest of player and public safety, all youth sports organizations are required to comply with applicable laws and regulations that pertain to the organizations use of the field. This includes criminal background checks for all coaches and administrators and head injury laws. Procedures for handling head injuries and providing education shall include the following components:

- Coaches and administrators must receive training prior to each season.
- Athletes and their parents/guardians must be given an informational sheet each season, which must be signed and returned prior to participating in games and practices.
- Any athlete suspected of sustaining a concussion or other head injury must be removed from play immediately, and may not return to play without written clearance from a licensed health care provider.
- If a player is removed from play due to a suspected head injury, the organization shall notify the parent/guardian of the player of the time and date of the incident, symptoms observed, and treatment given.
- Each organization is required to identify one person who is responsible for ensuring compliance with head injury laws.

Details shall be included with the field use agreement.

Code of Conduct

Each organization conducting athletic programs on DPR fields is expected to comply with a Code of Conduct, partially adopted from the National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS) and Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA), which is in place to emphasize safety, sportsmanship, inclusion of all ages, ethnicities, and genders, and a positive experience for all participants. The Code of Conduct shall be submitted along with the field request form. For more information on best practices in youth sports, please visit the NAYS website (www.nays.org), PCA website (www.positivecoach.org), Fair Play for Girls in Sports (www.fairplayforgirlsinsports.org), and/or National Council of Youth Sports (ncys.org).

County Parks Ordinances

The following list contains some ordinances, along with a brief summary, that commonly come into play in sports facilities. For the detailed ordinance, please see a DPR staff person or visit

<http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll?>

[f=templates&fn=default.htm&vid=amlegal:sandiegoco_ca_mc](http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll?fn=default.htm&vid=amlegal:sandiegoco_ca_mc) for a complete list of the San Diego County Code of Regulatory Ordinances.

Compliance with Instructions and Signs (41.106) – No person shall refuse to comply with any lawful order, rule, or regulation, disregard or deface signs, or refuse to leave a County park after being ordered to leave by DPR staff or law enforcement officer.

Damage to Facilities Prohibited (41.115) – It is unlawful to destroy or deface any man-made object in a County park.

Waste Disposal (41.116) – No one shall litter or abandon waste material outside of an appropriate waste receptacle.

Smoking (41.118.5) – There is no smoking permitted in a County park, including pipes, cigars, cigarettes, electronic smoking device, or other smoking devices.

Erection of Structures (41.122) – No person shall erect or construct a structure in a County park without written authorization from DPR.

Pets and Animals (41.123) – Pets shall be physically restrained at all times. A person who brings a pet into a County park is responsible for any injury or damage caused by the animal.

Use of Designated Sports Facilities (41.124) – No organization shall use a designated sports facility for organized sports activity without written authorization from DPR.

Park Hours (41.125) – It is unlawful for anyone to enter or remain in a County park after closing hours. Local park hours are defined as Sunrise to Sunset. Field use permits on lighted fields allow use of the field as late as 10:00 pm.

Children (41.131) – Children under the age of ten shall be supervised by an adult when playing in a playground area or near a water body.

Soliciting, Selling, and Advertising (41.136) – Any selling of any merchandise or services, advertising, commercial filming/photography, or any other activity of a commercial nature is prohibited in a County park without written authorization from DPR.

Disorderly Conduct (41.138) – Willfully making loud or unreasonable noise, using horns or noise-making devices, engaging in violent conduct, and/or using vulgar language in a threatening manner is prohibited in a County park.

Alcoholic Beverages (41.139) – It is unlawful for any person to possess an alcoholic beverage contrary to any written rule or regulation established by DPR.

DPR Guidelines and Policies

Artificial Turf Fields

Many DPR athletic fields are constructed with synthetic turf. Artificial turf has different maintenance requirements than natural grass fields, and therefore additional considerations are needed when using them. The following items shall not be used on artificial turf fields:

- Gum, taffy, sunflower seeds, or other food and drinks other than water
- Any goal, fence, canopy, folding chair, metal cleats, or other object which could potentially puncture the turf. Equipment required for the activity must have smooth edges.
- Animals

Field Maintenance and Alteration

Sports organizations may make temporary modifications to the playing area when it is necessary for the operation of the activity (example: field lines, outfield fence, pitcher's mound, etc.), but only with prior written approval from DPR. Maintenance of the modification shall be at the organization's expense and shall not cause any damage to the park/facility. Details of any approved field modification shall be made at the time of completing the field use agreement.

Inclement Weather Guidelines

In the interest of player and public safety, as well as preservation of fields, the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) 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.

It is recommended for a league/team/event organizer to designate someone to review the local weather forecast and monitor weather conditions throughout the day, especially during occasions when severe weather is predicted. It is best to use multiple sources of information to remain in touch with changes and the most current conditions. Up to date information on severe weather, including heat and humidity levels, radar, lightning, etc., can be found on the National Weather Service website at www.weather.gov, and local information can be searched by zip code. Current weather information is also available on mobile devices via applications, internet connection, and subscribing to automatic updates.

The following guidelines are for permitted leagues to follow when determining whether it is safe to continue play under certain conditions:

Excessive Heat

Based on guidelines from the American College of Sports Medicine and the National Weather Service, DPR recommends using Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) or Heat Index (whichever is accessible to the league/event organizer) as the standard measuring tool to monitor weather conditions and determine the safety of continuing the event. Use the charts below to determine when to exercise caution, reschedule, or cancel activities.

WBGT incorporates measurements of radiant heat and air water content. Portable monitors can be purchased to measure WBGT.

Heat Index is a measure of how hot weather “feels” to the body, using relative humidity and air temperature. Note that heat index values are for shady locations only. Exposure to full sunshine can increase heat index values by up to 15°F.

Heat Level	WBGT	Heat Index	Action
I	<75°	<80°	All activities allowed, but remain alert for heat related illness during prolonged activities
II	75.0°F – 78.9°F	80°F - 89°F	<p>Continue with Caution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Longer rest periods, using shady areas• Water breaks every 15-20 minutes• Remove excess equipment or pads• Modify practice intensity• Provide unrestricted access to cold water
III	79.0°F – 84.9°F	90°F - 104°F	<p>Continue with extreme caution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stop activity for unacclimatized persons* or high-risk persons• Cancel long distance races• Reduce the duration and intensity of activities• Provide rest and water breaks every 15 minutes• Remove excess equipment or pads• Provide unrestricted access to cold water• Provide wet towels• Recheck heat readings every 30 minutes
IV	>85°F	>105°F	Cancel all athletic activities

*Unacclimatized person is defined as any player who has participated in less than 10 practices or 3 weeks of activity.

Additionally, for activities taking place on artificial turf fields, it is recommended to discontinue activity on the field when the surface temperature is in excess of 140°F.

Heat Index Chart

Lightning

If lightning is detected visually, via radar within 10 miles of the facility, or when thunder is heard, all outdoor activities shall be immediately suspended. All patrons should be advised to seek shelter in a safe location (inside of a fully enclosed building or vehicle). When no lightning or thunder has been detected for 30 minutes, outdoor activity may resume. The activity area should be surveyed for damage prior to resuming the activity, and any damage shall be reported to DPR staff.

Rain

While it can be considered acceptable to continue play while some rain is falling, continuing the activity during heavy rain can cause injury to athletes and damage to fields. Activity shall be cancelled or postponed when any of the following conditions exist:

- Standing puddles of water on the playing surface
- Ground is waterlogged
- Feet slip or sink into the ground on dirt infields
- Grass can be easily dislodged