

Community Guide for Reserving and Using Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation Athletic Fields & Facilities

Massachusetts Dept. of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) 4 Woodland Road
Stoneham, Massachusetts 02180 Phone: (617)727-4708 x 403 Fax: (617)727-6450

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) welcomes you to enjoy the parks, forests, reservations and recreation facilities throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Department's Divisions of Urban Parks and State Parks manage the many state parks, forests, reservations and beaches found throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts from the Berkshires to Cape Cod.

Across the Commonwealth, DCR manages and maintains a wide range of facilities which protect natural resources, encourage healthy, active lifestyles and enhance the quality of life for state residents and visitors.

Ball Fields, Courts and Active Recreation Facilities

The vast majority of athletic fields, courts and other active recreation facilities are located in the greater Boston area and are managed by the Division of Urban Parks and Recreation. These include tennis and basketball courts and baseball, softball, soccer and football fields.

The following information is provided to assist organizations and residents to reserve facilities and fields for organized sport or other recreation activities.

Use of DCR Tennis and Basketball Courts

DCR's tennis and basketball courts are available for public use free of charge and on a first-come first-served basis except for courts which host summer programming through partnerships with Tenacity and Franklin Park Tennis Association. Visit www.mass.gov/dcr for information on these special programming opportunities.

We ask that you help to make these facilities available in the community by:

- Limiting your use to **one hour** when others are waiting to use the court.
- Reporting any damage to courts, nets, backboards or fences to DCR at 617-727-4708x 403.

Applications for Athletic Field or Facility Reservations

Applicants wishing to reserve any DCR field must be a resident of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Organizations applying to reserve fields must be licensed or authorized to operate in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. All applicants must be at least 18 years of age and the applicant or authorized representative must be present throughout the entire use of the rental.

Applications are not automatically renewed. Time slots and park sites are not guaranteed from one year to the next.

All applications and field permits are a matter of public record. Names of applicants and permitted users shall be made available upon request to other users, the media, and other interested parties.

The first step in reserving athletic field, court and other facilities is completion of the field and facility use application included at the end of this guide. Applications are also available on the internet at www.mass.gov/dcr/ or by calling (617) 727-4708 x 403. Completed applications may be mailed to:

Department of Conservation and Recreation

Athletic Field Reservations

4 Woodland Road. Stoneham, MA 02180

When to Apply

Seasonal Reservations

Seasonal field reservations will be accepted twice a year.

Reservations for spring/summer (April – August) will be accepted between December 1st and March 1st.

Reservations for fall (late August – November) will be accepted between March 1st and June 1st.

Applications received after the ending date above will be accommodated on a first-come first-served basis for remaining space in field schedules.

One – Time Use Reservations

Single daily-use reservations may be requested after March 1st for spring and summer reservations and after June 1st for fall reservations.

Applications for one time use will be accommodated on a first- come first-served basis for remaining space in field schedule.

Applications should be made a minimum of twenty (20) business days prior to the desired date of use. Applications submitted after this time may not be able to meet all the requirements for the reservation.

Processing Reservation Applications

All seasonal reservation requests will be reviewed by DCR staff according to the following timeline.

All spring/summer requests for seasonal field usage will be reviewed beginning March 2nd.
M

All fall requests for seasonal field usage will be reviewed beginning June 2nd..

All applications will be considered according to agency priorities for field use (see DCR priorities for field use on page 5) and the field schedule. DCR will make every effort to accommodate applications; however, space and time limitations may not allow the agency to grant all requests.

DCR may contact one or more groups during the scheduling period to explore alternative scheduling that will allow us to maximize field utilization and equitably accommodate as many requests as possible.

**Applicants will be notified near the end of March of spring and summer field assignments.
Applicants will be notified near the end of June for fall field assignments.**

All assignments are tentative pending payment of appropriate fees and documentation of necessary insurance or other required information as applicable.

Field assignment notifications will include a request for payment of the appropriate fee. Some uses may require that the applicant obtain a Certificate of Insurance or hire DCR Ranger or other security services to ensure public safety. These requirements will be noted on the field assignment notice.

The applicant should return full payment and proof of insurance (as necessary) within ten (10) business days after the date on the field assignment notification.

Actual Field Use Permits will not be issued until DCR has received required payment and insurance certificates (when necessary) have been provided. Field reservations will be cancelled and reallocated to other users if payment and proof of insurance are not provided within 20 business days of the notice of field assignment.

Reservations are not confirmed until the applicant receives the Field Use Permit. Applicants should not distribute publicity or invitations regarding field activities prior to issuance of the Field Use Permit. Separate fees must be paid for each field or time period used, even if located at the same park.

Athletic Field Use Schedule and Fees

Seasonal Rentals (total weeks may vary due to weather and other factors)

- *spring, mid-April to mid-June*
- *summer, mid June to late August*
- *fall, late August to early November*
- ***Please note, seasonal usage may be delayed or extended due to weather conditions. DCR shall have sole responsibility to determine when fields can accommodate use.***

Seasonal rentals shall be for 2 or 3 hr periods as follows:

- 9am-12noon
- 12noon-3pm
- 3pm-5pm
- 5pm-7pm
- 7pm – 9pm *Note, may not be available during all seasons*
- 9pm – 11pm *Note, late evening field use may only be scheduled on lighted fields and when neighborhood disturbance is not a concerns.*

Seasonal Rental Fees

Seasonal Rentals

: \$100.00 for the first 2-3 hr. block, then \$25.00/hr. (per field, per day for the season) Season = baseball season, soccer season, etc.

Lighted fields: \$40 per hour electrical charge is added for use of field lights. Half of the total seasonal balance shall be paid in advance. The remaining balance must be paid by July 1st.

Daily Rentals

Daily rentals shall be for 2 or 3 hr blocks of time as follows:

- 9am-12noon
- 12noon-3pm
- 3pm-5pm
- 5pm-7pm
- 7pm – 9pm *Note, may not be available during all seasons*
- 9pm – 11pm *Note, late evening field use may only be scheduled on lighted fields and when neighborhood disturbance is not a concerns.*

Daily Rental Fees:

ONE TIME USE: \$25.00 for first 2-3 hr.block, then \$25.00/ hr. thereafter (per field)

THREE OR MORE DAYS: \$100. for first 2-3 hr. block, then \$25.00 / hr. (per field)

Lighted fields: \$40 per hour electrical charge is added for use of field lights. This charge needs to be paid in advance for daily or single use.

Discounts and Waivers

Youth leagues with demonstrated financial hardship may apply for reduced fees for multiple “season day” purchases. All requests for waivers of fees must be submitted in writing to:

Commissioner
Department of Conservation and Recreation
251 Causeway St. Boston, MA 02114-2104

DCR Priorities for Field Use

With increasing demands for the use of athletic fields and other facilities, the Department may not be able to accommodate every applicant. Therefore the Department applies the following considerations in allocating field use:

- ***Compatibility***
- ***Regional and Community Affiliation***
- ***User Group Needs and Opportunities***
- ***Partners for Healthy Communities***
- ***Years of Service to the Community***

Compatibility

- No events or activities shall be scheduled which are likely to damage fields, irrigation systems or other agency resources.
- Athletic fields designed and maintained for sports activities shall be primarily used for their intended purpose during appropriate seasons. **Activities such as walks, fairs and other events that are not dependent on athletic field facilities shall not be scheduled on athletic fields during their primary season.**
- No events may be scheduled before 9:00 am or past dusk, with the exception of lighted softball fields that may be scheduled no later than 10:00 pm.

Regional and Community Affiliation

DCR fields and facilities provide critical community access to active recreation activities. In addition, agency properties in the Urban Division are part of a regional network established to serve the residents of the greater Boston area. In recognition of both local and regional needs the agency shall make available all fields and courts as follows:

- 70% of facility reservations shall be allocated to the local community
- 30% of facility reservations shall be allocated to the regional and statewide community

User Group Needs and Opportunities

Various groups require access to fields at certain times—schools during school hours, youth during the daytime, etc. DCR shall generally schedule fields according to the following guidelines.

- School organizations shall have priority use during school hours.
- Youth sports organizations shall have priority between the hours of 3:00 pm and 7:00 pm weekdays, between 8:00 am and 1:00 pm on Saturdays, and 1:00 pm and 4:00 pm on Sunday.
- Adult organized and informal sports activities shall have priority after 7:00 pm with extended evening hours on lighted fields.

Partners for Healthy Communities

DCR properties provide vital opportunities to promote active lifestyles that are essential to healthy communities. Organizations that encourage active and accessible recreation for youth, adults and seniors also play a vital role in community health. DCR will place higher priority on allocating field space to organizations that demonstrate their commitment to:

- Initiating standards for youth sports such as those established by the National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS) www.nays.org
- Encourage participation throughout the program community:
- Regardless of group affiliation or athletic ability.
- By advertising in community publications and other media
- By limiting fees to maintain affordability and/or providing scholarship opportunities for disadvantaged community members.
- Providing equal opportunities for all participants to play in both practice and games.

Years of Service to the Community

Many organizations have been providing healthy recreation opportunities to regional residents for years and even decades. Their long-term commitment and experience in delivering quality programs are assets to the community and the agency. Therefore, DCR will consider years of service in its determination of field allocation.

Cancellations and Refunds

Cancellation by the Applicant

DCR's cancellation policy has been developed to discourage last minute cancellation. Our goal is to offer low-cost sports field use for organized groups and individuals. If a cancellation is received on short notice, the agency's ability to make the field available to other users is severely limited. The cancellation/refund policy is therefore structured to offer the greatest refund in instances where DCR has the highest probability of re-renting the field.

- Cancellation of single day field rentals must be made a minimum of seven (7) days in advance to receive a refund of daily reservation fees.
- Cancellation of seasonal field reservations must be made according to the following schedule to receive a refund of seasonal field reservations.
- **Spring/summer seasonal cancellation must be made before March 15th.**
- **Fall seasonal cancellations must be made before August 1st.**

It is the applicant's responsibility to provide written or e-mail notification of cancellations. Agency staff will not be held responsible for cancellations made by telephone. Cancellations will only be accepted from the applicant (the person who signed the reservation application), not from anyone else acting on their behalf. This policy is designed to prevent the unauthorized cancellation of an event.

Cancellation by DCR

The Department reserves the right to cancel any use of facilities and/or equipment in emergency situations or when deemed necessary for public safety or facility protection. In such cases, the Department will provide a full refund of all payments or provide an opportunity for future field use. Every effort will be made to notify the permittee of a necessary cancellation at the earliest possible date.

Refunds will not be issued for inclement weather. DCR cannot refund light costs. However, the Department will attempt to accommodate makeup dates at the end of the season.

Liability Insurance

All applicants must complete an indemnification form which protects the Commonwealth and its citizens in the event of accident or injury while using DCR fields. For some events and activities, the Department may require the applicant to obtain comprehensive general insurance. Notice of this insurance requirement shall be provided with the notice of field assignment. When required, insurance coverage must:

- Include a minimum limit of \$1,000,000 Combined Limit for bodily injury and property damage.
- Name the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, its officers, and employees as additional insured against any and all liability arising or resulting from your usage of said premises.
- The policy must read: Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation 251 Causeway St. Boston, MA 02114
- Include the name of the facility and the dates of use.

The certificate of insurance for the required policy must be on file with the Athletic Field Reservation office PRIOR to the use of the facility.

The applicant will be responsible for any and all damage to Department property or equipment. If after an activity, additional janitorial maintenance is required (in excess of normal cleaning services/time), the applicant will be charged accordingly. The applicant will be held responsible for all actions, behavior, and damages caused by his/her participants, guests or attendees. The individual or organization granted use is responsible for reimbursing the Department for any loss or damage to property caused by such use.

The Department has the right to revoke any permit(s) issued due to the group causing damage to the field by inappropriate behavior or activities caused by the group's use of the field.

Field Cleanliness

All field users share in the responsibility to help keep your fields clean and safe by requiring that players, fans and coaches place all trash in barrels or remove it from the site. If you find that your field is consistently littered by another group, please report concerns to DCR at (617) 727-4708. Repeated complaints regarding a particular group may result in permit cancellation and/or denial of

permit applications in subsequent years.

Rain Days or Wet Fields

On rainy days, DCR staff will check field conditions and make a decision on use for that day by 12:00 pm Monday to Friday and by 8:00 am on Saturdays and Sundays. Permittee should check on the playability status of the fields by contacting their designated Ball Field Liaisons or during office hours contact the DCR permit office at (617) 727-4708 x 403.

If a footstep leaves an impression in the turf or if the sod is removed easily with a cleat, this is considered a wet field.

Knowledge of a group playing on and damaging turf will result in the immediate cancellation of that permit. No refund will be granted.

Refunds will not be issued for inclement weather. However, the Department will attempt to accommodate makeup dates at the end of the season.

Field Rehabilitation

DCR may periodically remove fields from the reservation system for one or more seasons for rehabilitation. Steady use of fields results in soil compaction, turf damage and other problems which will result in poorer quality fields. The agency appreciates your patience and understanding when your favorite field is scheduled for rest or rehabilitation.

Restrooms

Please note, some properties do not have restrooms available. If you are renting a field at one of those parks, you may wish to rent portable facilities depending on the size and type of event. The DCR can provide information regarding portable toilets. Restroom reservations should be made a minimum of twenty (20) business days prior to the desired date of use.

Lighting

Some fields are equipped for night lighting. Please contact the Field Reservations Office at (617) 727-4708x 403 for information about lighted fields. In the event that lights are not operational when scheduled by your group, please contact DCR's Ranger Desk at (617) 722-1188.

General Rules and Regulations

The Department retains the right to set conditions and requirements suitable to safe, reasonable, and orderly use of the DCR facilities.

Alcoholic beverages are not allowed on DCR properties without written permission from the agency. Alcohol use during a permitted event will result in revocation of the field permit.

Any person(s) violating the established Rules and Regulations or constituting a public nuisance may be required to leave the premises.

The misuse of the field, failure to conform to field regulations, or any other Federal or

State law, rule, or regulation, shall be sufficient reason for immediate termination of permit. No refund will be granted.

Permittees are only to use those fields and times specifically designated in the Field Use Permit. There may be another group following yours, so it is essential that your group vacate the field by the scheduled ending time.

Gambling on DCR property is prohibited. Gambling shall be defined as any game of skill, chance, or raffle, played with cards or any other device for money or any other representative item of value.

All food vendors on state property must follow normal public bid processes determined by the Department. Selling food or other items may be subject to an additional fee for the right to conduct sales on public property. Vendors must adhere to all State, County, and City health requirements. Sales of any kind must be approved in writing by the Department prior to the activity.

All events charging an admission fee will require special written approval by the Department.

Amplified sound is not permitted in any park without special written approval by the DCR. DCR staff shall have the right to enter all fields at any time during any and all use for observation of activities.

The Department may revoke or suspend the right to make a reservation as a means of a disciplinary action.

Field use permits/reservations cannot be transferred, assigned, or sublet. Field users are not allowed to apply any chemicals on the field or turf except field lining products.

All signs and advertising are prohibited without written permission from the Department. Signs or decorations may not be tied, stapled, etc. to plants or structures.

Egg toss or water balloon games are not permitted. No vehicles are to be driven or parked on DCR property, except under strict staff supervision. Any unauthorized vehicle on DCR property will be cited and towed.

DCR shall regulate or prohibit such activity or use, which in its judgment is determined to be of a hazardous nature or is potentially dangerous or damaging to property or is not in the best interests of the residents of the Commonwealth.

DCR is not responsible for accident, injury, or loss of individual property.