

Montgomery County Department of Parks, M-NCPPC

Athletic Field Use Permit Policy

Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to establish an orderly and fair procedure for the reservation of athletic fields for the purposes of practices, games and tournaments or special events. It is the intent of this policy to balance the increase in demand for such organized uses with the maintenance, renovation, and rest necessary to protect the long-term playability of our fields and ensure user safety.

Most regional and recreational park fields require a permit for use¹. Regional and recreational fields may be permitted for official league games only; no practices are allowed on these fields. Permits are required at all times for regional/recreational fields and other fields marked “by permit only.”

When no permit has been issued, local park fields may be used on a first-come, first-served basis, unless otherwise posted, or prohibited in this policy. Non-permitted users must cede the field to designated permit holders at all times. Play is strictly prohibited from December 1 – March 31, and August 15 – 31, and during field work, renovations and inclement weather, or when posted signs prohibit use.

All user groups must adhere to all rules and regulations outlined in this policy and comply with all M-NCPPC Rules & Regulations and Park Permit Office Conditions of Use.

Criteria

Permit requests for games are given priority over practice requests. Permits for practices will not be issued until all scheduled games are permitted. Youth practices will be given priority over other practices. Field allocation for leagues will be based on prior use (i.e., the previous year’s game schedules).² When processing permit applications, Montgomery Parks, M-NCPPC, makes every effort to provide each qualifying organization with a permit for at least some of the field time requested. Allocation of athletic fields for games is determined by the following priority system:

FIRST PRIORITY: Montgomery County Department of Recreation Programs, City of Takoma Park Recreation Programs, Adopt-a-Field groups, public/private partnerships or other contractual agreements, and special event/tournament requests.

SECOND PRIORITY³: Montgomery or Prince George's County community-based leagues and schools, including organized youth leagues.

Permit Application Schedule

Season	Application Window
Spring/Summer (April 1 – August 15)	December 1 – 15 (first priority game requests only)* December 15 – January 1 (all other game requests) February 1 – 15 (practice requests from all users)
Fall (September 1 – November 30)	May 1 – 15 (first priority game requests only)* May 15 – June 1 (all other game requests) July 1 – 15 (practice requests from all users)

** Please note: First priority user groups must submit their requests by the end of the priority window or their first priority status will be forfeited for that season.*

¹ All athletic fields at Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Some fields at Damascus, Fairland, Martin Luther King, and South Germantown Recreational Parks are also available on a first-come, first-served basis. Contact the Park Permit Office for more information. When posted, fields are available by permit only.

² An appeal process is available to users denied the fields or dates of their choosing to ensure allocation remains balanced.

³ Organizations must be based in Montgomery or Prince George's County and individual team membership must be at least two-thirds Montgomery or Prince George's County residents. Membership rosters will be required for verification.

Release Dates for Unneeded Field Time

To ensure as many groups as possible have access to field time, we ask groups to release any field time they will not use as soon as their schedules are set. Users will not be charged for returned field time if it is released back to the permit office in writing by March 15 for the Spring/Summer season and by August 15 for the Fall. All returns must be submitted in writing. If a group turns back a field that is on its historic allocation list because it is not going to be used, that field will be removed from that group's historic allocation and released for other groups to use.

Artificial Turf Use Schedule and Regulations

Our turf fields are available for permitted use year-round, except when closed for maintenance or renovation. Applications for seasonal use of our artificial turf fields must follow the permit application schedule outlined above. Off-season use requests can be submitted at any time. For turf fields constructed in coordination with the Board of Education or other partners, Montgomery Parks will permit the community use hours dictated by that specific agreement; available community use hours may vary from field to field.

Holiday Use Regulations

Local Park Fields: This includes athletic fields in local, neighborhood and stream valley parks. These fields may be reserved by permit or used on a first-come, first-served basis, unless otherwise posted. Permit holders have priority.

Regional/Recreational Park and Synthetic Turf Fields: Permits will not be issued for some regional or recreational fields on Memorial Day weekend, Labor Day weekend, or on other established M-NCPPC holidays.

Off-Season Use Regulations

All organized, league or team play is prohibited on all non-artificial turf park athletic fields during the following periods: December 1 – March 31 and August 15 – August 31. These periods are established to allow for rest and seasonal maintenance and prepare fields for the next season of use. Exceptions include Blair and Blake High School fields and contractual partnership agreements. Artificial turf fields are available for permitted play year-round, except when closed for maintenance or renovation.

Field Use for Non-Designated Sports

Field use priority will be given first to games and practices for the sport for which each field is designed (e.g., baseball/softball on diamond fields, soccer/football/lacrosse on rectangular fields). Once all games and practices for the designated sport have been assigned, use of any available fields for non-designated sports will be considered. Any fields not being used for their designated sport can be permitted for a non-designated sport for practices only with the written approval of the park manager. No field will be permitted for two different sports during the same season. Fields used for non-designated sports will not automatically fall into historic allocation use in future years.

Field Renovation Guidelines

Fields designated for the annual turf renovation program will be closed for one year, from September to September. All play is prohibited on these fields during this time and these fields will be posted. Use of all fields rotating out of the turf renovation program will be limited to 50% of the last full year's hours of use for that field for one full year after the renovation is complete, from September to September. This includes all park fields.

General Guidelines for Field Use

All field users are expected to adhere to the following guidelines to help keep our fields in an acceptable condition for public use. Violation of these guidelines may result in fines or the loss of future permitting or use privileges:

- All unlit fields must be vacated by dark.
- The permit must be on site in the possession of the permitted group or individual during the permitted time. (A game schedule or a photocopy of the permit will serve as a permit for the Department of Recreation or leagues once verified by Park staff or Park Police.)
- The permit is for the sole use of the team named on the permit contract and is not transferable.
- Loud music, bands, or excessive noise which disturbs the peace are prohibited.
- Permit holders are required to see that players and spectators adhere to all park regulations, including:
 - No beer or alcohol allowed;

- No urinating or changing clothes in public;
 - No loud noises permitted (boom boxes, horns, car alarms);
 - No littering. All trash must be picked up and placed in the nearest receptacle or carried away for proper disposal. All recyclables must be picked up and placed in the nearest recycling receptacle or carried away for proper disposal;
 - Removal or repositioning of goals installed by authorized M-NCPPC staff or contractors on park fields is not allowed;
 - The use of tobacco products is not permitted on the benches, playing areas, and those areas in proximity to the playing field (this includes cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, and snuff);
 - No selling of food, beverages or merchandise on park property without an approved concession permit;
 - Carpooling is encouraged, and parking is allowed in designated parking areas only.
- Use of an athletic field is prohibited from December 1 – March 31, August 15 – 31, and when:
 - It is closed for renovation or repair;
 - Water is standing on the field;
 - Soil is frozen;
 - The soil is wet and "spongy";
 - Steady rain is falling;
 - A lightning/electrical storm is occurring;
 - The field is deemed unplayable by Park staff or Park Police.
 - If unsure about whether a field can be used, please call the Montgomery Parks rainout line at 301-765-8787.

Permit Penalties, Denial and Revocation

Any users found to be in violation of the guidelines outlined in this policy will be subject to all applicable fines and penalties, including loss of future permitting and use privileges. A permit may be denied or revoked if the permit holder or any member of the permitted user group:

- Violates the guidelines stated in this policy;
- Does not comply with M-NCPPC Rules & Regulations and Park Permit Office Conditions of Use;
- Fails to use permitted field;
- Removes posted signs or markers, or removes or repositions goals installed by authorized M-NCPPC staff or contractors on park fields;
- Uses a field that is closed due to weather or undergoing renovations or repairs;
- Does not comply with league application procedures;

The Department of Parks reserves the right to revoke or deny a permit as necessary if a field needs to be closed for immediate repair. In all such cases, permit holders will be given as much notice as is possible.

Fee Schedule

All field fees must be paid in full by April 1 for the Spring/Summer season and by September 1 for the Fall season.

Athletic Field fees follow the [M-NCPPC User Fee Schedule](#), as approved by the Montgomery County Planning Board. A copy of the current approved fee schedule can be viewed at www.ParkPermits.org or at either Park Permit Office location. Additional fees will be charged for use of lighted fields, changes to a permit once payment has been made (except released fields), and returned checks. These fees are subject to change without notice.

Refunds and Cancellations

Refunds for field time will be provided only when game use is cancelled by park staff. Field users are responsible for tracking these cancellations and must submit a list of all refund requests to the Park Permit Office for consideration. These lists will be compared against our staff cancellation lists and refunded accordingly. Refund requests can be submitted at any time, but will not be honored if submitted after August 30 for the spring/summer season and December 15 for the fall season. Users requesting refunds will receive future use credits only. Practice fees are non-refundable.

Application Procedures

An official Athletic Field Permit Application Form must be submitted to reserve an athletic field for practices or games. Application instructions and forms are available at our Silver Spring and Germantown Permit Office locations and online at www.ParkPermits.org. Completed application forms may be submitted in one of three ways:

1. In person at either of our Permit Office locations:

Parkside Headquarters
Park Permit Office
9500 Brunett Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20901

OPEN:
Monday – Wednesday 8:30am-5pm
Thursday – Friday 8:30am-7:30pm

Northern Region Headquarters
Park Permit Office
12900 Middlebrook Road
Germantown, MD 20874

OPEN:
Wednesday – Friday 8:30am-5pm (closed
daily from 1-2:30pm)
CLOSED Monday-Tuesday

2. Online at www.ParkPermits.org or
3. By faxing the request or mailing it with a written request, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

Montgomery Parks, M-NCPPC
Park Permit Office
9500 Brunett Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20901

FAX: 301-495-2484