

Pre-Game/Pre-Practice Field Inspections

1. The entire playing field should be free of any holes, depressions, raised sprinkler heads and other hazards
2. Clear the field of stones, pieces of glass and other objects or debris
3. Spectators & seating: Make sure spectator areas are a safe distance from the field of play. Do not allow spectators to be on the playing field or to stand on the sidelines.
4. Inspect the condition of and access to restrooms and portable toilets (porto-johns).
5. Inspect all fencing to make sure it is in good repair and free of protruding hazards or sharp edges
6. If the field is used for other sports, inspect for fixtures or equipment that may have been left by the previous user. IMPORTANT NOTE: If the field is used for soccer and portable goals are on the premises, NEVER allow players or others to play on, hang from or move the goalposts. Portable soccer goals are prone to tipping over, and have been responsible for catastrophic injuries and fatalities in recent years.
7. If recent rain, make sure ground is not saturated before allowing play. In particular, check low lying areas and areas of high use such as the face-off/draw area and crease.

Pre-Season Practice Field Assessment:

The entire playing field should be free of any holes, depressions, raised sprinkler heads and other hazards

Spectators & seating: Check safety, construction and positioning of seating, bleachers and spectator areas.

Inspect all fencing to make sure it is in good repair and free of protruding hazards or sharp edges

Light stanchions, fence posts and trees that are near the field of play should be properly cushioned or protected, and always be designated as "out of play" areas. All "out of play" areas should be cushioned or fenced off or, at minimum, marked by paint or chalk lines.

If portable toilets are used, make sure they are positioned on level ground, away from inclines or depressions which may cause them to tip over.

Find out if the facility is equipped with lightning detection equipment. Determine where the nearest shelter is from the field in the event of serious weather or other emergency conditions. Note that small, open shelters typically found on playing fields or parks will not provide adequate protection in the event of lightning. A house or substantial building offers the best protection from lightning strikes.

Poisons/Toxins: Inspect facility for toxic materials such as use of lead paint or toxic wood preservatives; ensure that hazardous materials, such as gasoline, cleaning agents, etc., are properly stored and locked up; restrict use of fields immediately after applications of herbicides, pesticides and fertilizer; and eliminate plant materials like poison ivy, and poison oak from fields and walkways, which could be harmful to people and pets.

Locate the nearest land-line telephone to the field and note its phone number

Locate the nearest medical facility, whether on-site or off-site

Check whether there is a security station on-site

Check condition, location and lighting of parking lots, including passenger pick-up/dropoff areas (see Section IV - Parking Lot Inspections for more information)

Parking Lot Inspections and Safety Guidelines

The parking lot is an area often overlooked in the risk management process. Whether or not your team is contractually liable for the parking area in your lease agreement, you can still be held liable for injuries or damages that occur in this area during your team's activities.

Post a sign stating that attendees are parking at their own risk and that your team/league is not responsible for any damage to or theft from vehicles parked during your activities.

Make sure parking area is far enough away from the field of play to minimize the potential for damage to vehicles.

Establish a Player Loading Zone by placing temporary signs during practices and games to indicate where cars should stop to load and unload passengers. This will help eliminate confusion for drivers and passengers. It will create a zone where motorists will expect to see pedestrians and therefore, they will know to slow down. To assist you in setting up a loading zone that is equipped to safely handle large numbers of people, contact your local police or sheriff's department for guidance.

Go Slow Zone - In addition to the Player Loading Zone, help alert motorists to the fact that children are present by putting up temporary signs in the parking lot that say "Children at Play" or "Slow: Children". Work with your local city council, safety board or parks commission to put in speed bumps or road signs to assist in slowing traffic.

Make sure parking lot is clear of potholes, debris and other dangerous conditions.

Report such problems immediately to the facility owner (or take care of them immediately if you are responsible for maintaining the parking lot under the terms of your contract).

Ensure that access to the parking lot and access to the field is not blocked by haphazard parking. Emergency vehicles must have quick, easy access to the facility or playing field in the event of an emergency.

For activities that are held at night (or until dusk), verify that the parking areas are well-lit. Proper lighting ensures that pedestrians and bicyclists can be spotted easily and from a distance by motorists. A properly lighted parking area also increases the personal security of those using the facility, and provides better protection for the vehicles.