

# ***Athletic Field Maintenance Demonstration Day:***

*"Maintenance Techniques for Athletic Fields"*

*Prepared for:*

*Adopt-A-Field Partners and Friends of the Fields*



*Presented By:*

*The Park Operations Division*

## Section 1 - Ball Diamond Maintenance

### A. Grass Edge Maintenance

Grass Edge maintenance can be performed using a leaf rake, stiff bristle push broom, or a power broom. Infield mix migrates into the grass borders due to game play, maintenance, wind, rain and other factors. If infield mix is not routinely removed from the grass, it builds up and forms a lip. Lips then become a safety concern, as they are a trip hazard and can cause a ball in play to unexpectedly change direction. Lips also form a barrier, preventing water from properly draining and causing puddling. This can delay or cancel games and make it more difficult to prepare a field ready for play.

This task should be performed regularly as a part of all routine prepping operations. Another excellent time to perform this task is after a rain shower, if conditions allow (i.e.- the field is not too muddy to be worked on).



Concentrate your efforts on the infield mix in the grass, not on the mix in the infield. This is done by raking in a direction perpendicular to the turf line, which will prevent lips from forming. Once ALL of the grass edges have been properly maintained, hand raking and dragging can take place.

In areas where dragging will take place, use a leaf rake to rake along the grass edge surrounding the area to be dragged. By raking along the grass edge in this manner, the infield mix along the grass edge will be leveled and an approximately 18" wide border will be created so the drag will not need to drag directly next to the grass. This will help reduce the chance of the drag running off into the grass.

All grass edges should be edged at least once per year. Edging is required for the purposes of safety, ease of maintenance, and appearance. Grass edges can be edged using a sod cutter, power edger, or shovel. Always follow a string or paint line to maintain a straight edge when edging a field. For aesthetic value and ease of maintenance, always keep your grass edge distances symmetrical. In other words, if you edged the outside of the first base baseline at 4', then edge the outside of the third base baseline at 4' as well.



## B. Base, Home Plate and Pitching Rubber Maintenance

A ball-field rake, iron rake and tamper can be used to perform this task.



All low areas and holes in the infield, including ones that develop away from bases and home plate areas, should be filled and leveled to the surrounding grade.

When performing this task, always remove the bases.

When performing this task, always push or pull the infield mix from the high side to the low side into the area to be filled. If the high side is not visibly obvious, then try to imagine where the infield mix goes when a player is batting at home plate, running the baselines and bases, sliding into the base, and covering a base or home plate.

Tamp the area being filled each time you perform maintenance. If the infield mix is too dry, it may be necessary to add some water in order to make the infield mix more compacted. If the area to be filled is deep, it may be necessary to fill and tamp the area in layers in order for the tamping to be effective.



Bases should be pulled and inspected routinely.



When inspecting bases, look for cracked metal, missing or loose bolts, tears in the rubber cover, or warping that will not allow the base to sit flush with the ground. If any of these problems are found and cannot be corrected, or are severe enough to be considered a hazard, then the base should immediately be removed and replaced.

When inspecting home plate and pitching rubbers, look for tears in the rubber cover, make sure that the top of the plate or rubber is level with the grade of the field and that the top of the plate or rubber are not protruding above the ground.

Before installing the base, level the field surface so that the base will sit flush with the ground. The anchor sleeve into which the base inserts should be cleaned using a dig out tool.

Do not install the bases until the infield has been dragged.

Do not drag over top of home plates or pitching rubbers. If unavoidable, do so slowly.



### C. Hand Raking

A ball-field rake or iron rake can be used to perform this task.

The following areas should be hand raked: home plate, baselines, coach's boxes, pitching mounds, first and third base areas if there is infield grass present, and dug out/warm up boxes if the area in front of the dugouts is cut out.



To avoid raking infield mix into the grass, always rake parallel to grass edges.



If excessive material builds up next to the grass edge, rake material away from the edge prior to parallel raking and dragging.

If it becomes necessary to rake towards a grass edge, then lift the head of the rake several inches before getting to the grass edge. After raking towards or away from a grass edge, always rake parallel to the grass edge to keep the infield mix next to the grass edge level.

When pushing or pulling a hand rake, always lift the head of the rake at the end of the stroke to keep the infield mix from building up in spots.

To leave a nice finished appearance, all rake strokes should be in the same direction. This will provide an appearance similar to mowing in a back and forth pattern.



## D. Mound Maintenance

A ball-field rake, iron rake and tamper can be used to perform this task.

When performing this task, the same techniques listed under "Base, Home Plate and Pitching Rubber Maintenance" and "Hand Raking" apply.



On 90' baseball diamonds, the mound is to be installed with the top of the rubber 10" above the top of the home plate. The mound has a 9' radius. This radius is measured from a point 18" away from the center edge of the pitching rubber on the home plate side.

On 90' baseball diamonds, there should be a 3' by 5' flat area on top of the mound. The flat area starts 1' away from the edge on the home plate side of the pitching rubber and goes 3' towards second base. The 5' portion of the flat area is centered on the pitching rubber and runs parallel to an imaginary line running from first base to third base.

On 60' baseball diamonds, the mound is installed with the top of the rubber 6" above the top of the home plate. The mound has a 5' radius. This radius is measured from a point 1' away from the center edge of the pitching rubber on the home plate side.

On 60' baseball diamonds, there should be a 2' by 3' flat area on top of the mound. The flat area starts 8" away from the edge on the home plate side of the pitching rubber and goes 2' towards second base. The 3' portion of the flat area is centered on the pitching rubber and runs parallel to an imaginary line running from first base to third base.



On both 60' and 90' diamonds, the pitcher's landing area should be maintained in essentially the same way. Imagine a box that is as wide as the flat area on top of the mound and goes from the flat area on top of the mound to the bottom of the mound on the home plate side. Within this imaginary box, the mound should be maintained flat and level from side to side and should slope from top to bottom.

On both 60' and 90' diamonds, the remaining portions of the mound should slope from the flat area on top of the mound and the pitcher's landing area, down to the edge of the mound's radius.

## E. Infield Dragging Techniques

Prior to infield dragging, **ALWAYS** remove the bases and then place a plug in the base anchor sleeve.

Prior to infield dragging, **ALWAYS** perform edge maintenance, then hand fill and tamp the low areas. Remember to complete the grass edge maintenance task by raking along the edge of the grass in the areas of the infield where dragging will take place. If excessive material builds up next to the grass edge, rake material away from the edge prior to parallel raking or dragging.



To perform this task, a mat drag is the most affordable and effective tool available. It can be pulled by hand or by a piece of equipment. A standard size mat drag, 72" wide by 40" long, is most effective when field conditions are dry. When field conditions are wet, a standard size mat drag that has been folded or a mat drag that has been shortened to 12" to 18" long should be used.

The following pieces of equipment can be used to pull a mat drag: infield conditioner, utility vehicle, utility tractor, or riding mower. Other types of dragging attachments may be purchased along with these pieces of equipment. Some of these attachments may work better than a mat drag when dragging in wet conditions, but most will not be as effective as a mat drag in dry conditions.

If an artificial turf batter's box is present at home plate; do not pull the drag over the batter's box.

On skinned infields where grass is present between the infield mix and the fence, do not drag around home plate. The home plate area should be maintained with a hand rake only.

On grass infields, never drag the home plate area, baselines or around first or third base. All of these areas should be maintained with a hand rake only.



When dragging skinned infields, start by dragging around the outside perimeter of the infield. Make two to three passes around the outside perimeter, overlapping the previous pass with six to twelve inches of the drag. Next, make one pass through the center of the field. Then, at the center of the area remaining to be dragged, begin circling around the one pass made in the center of the field. Follow this circular pattern, overlapping the previous pass with six to twelve inches of the drag, until the entire infield has been dragged.

When dragging grass infields, begin by dragging around the outside perimeter of the area to be dragged. Make one to two passes around the outside perimeter, overlapping the previous pass with six to twelve inches of the drag. Next, starting at either first base or third base, begin dragging in a circular pattern by making circles almost as big as the depth of the infield mix area. Continue dragging in a circular pattern across the entire infield from either first base to third base or third base to first base, depending upon where you started. With each circular pass, make sure that the drag overlaps the previous pass with six to twelve inches of the drag. Keep dragging until the entire infield has been dragged.

In order to provide the best quality finished surface, be sure to drag slowly.

Routinely alternate the direction the field is dragged. Sometimes drag the infield in a clockwise direction, the other times drag in a counter clockwise direction.

Never take the drag into the grass. When done dragging, stop at the edge of the grass, shake off the built up infield mix from the drag, roll up and remove the drag, and then rake out the area where the drag stopped.



When dragging is complete, exit the infield at a different location each time to eliminate the forming of a hump in the infield mix. An exception to this rule is if there is a low spot at the edge of the infield that requires filling.

## F. Amenity Inspections

Field amenities should be inspected at least weekly and include: bleachers, player benches, trash cans, fencing, athletic field lighting, irrigation systems, concrete pads, goals, signs, foul poles, scoreboards, and all other components.



When inspecting an amenity, look for damaged or missing parts, cracks, protrusions or sharp points, loose hardware, items that have been vandalized and anything that could be considered a safety hazard.



## G. Mowing Techniques

Prior to mowing a field, all debris should be removed. If the field is irrigated, the field should be walked to ensure that no irrigation heads are protruding above ground.

Sharp mower blades should always be used when mowing athletic fields. A sharp mower blade will produce a finer cut and prevent turf damage and disease.

For maximum results, always operate the mower at the manufacturers recommended RPM.

Never operate a mower that has any type of fluid leak.

Use only rotary blade or reel type mowers on athletic fields. Never use a flail type mower on an athletic field.

No more than  $1/3^{\text{rd}}$  of the grass blade (or greater than 1" of the blade) should be cut during any one mowing. If the grass height is higher than  $3\ 1/2"$  prior to mowing, it may be necessary to raise the height of the mower deck, mow the field, then lower the mower deck back to  $2\ 1/2"$  and mow again.



The field should be mowed in a back and forth pattern; and alternately mowed in at least two different directions or patterns. For example, mow the ball diamond following the first base foul line and the next time mow the ball diamond following the third base foul line. Ball diamonds can also be mowed following the arc of the infield to outfield grass edge and following an imaginary line running from second base to the center field distance sign.



In the spring and fall, it may be necessary to mow an athletic field two to three times per week due to the rate of turf growth during these seasons.

If excessive clippings build up on the turf, the clippings should be removed immediately in order to protect the turf.

Avoid blowing grass onto the infield mix areas or the warning track. This prevents the spread of seedlings.

## H. Lining Techniques

Only use marking paint and lime that is specifically manufactured for use on athletic fields.

When using athletic field marking paint, do not put down too much in one application, as this will severely damage the turf. A thin layer of paint is all that is required.

When using lime, use **ONLY** products labeled "Athletic Field Marking Lime" or "Non-Caustic".

Always use a string as a guide when lining a field for the first time or when the original line can no longer be followed.



Limit the use of marking lime if at all possible. Marking lime does not organically break down quickly, and if used frequently it will build up in the affected areas. Once the lime builds up and it rains, the area where the lime has been repeatedly put down becomes thick and pasty. When the area dries it becomes hard and difficult to rake. Consider using lime only when there is an important game for which a field must be lined, such as a playoff or all-star game. When it is necessary to use lime, use it sparingly.

When lining a ball diamond, run a string from the point of home plate closest to the backstop, to the foul territory side of the foul pole. In other words, run the string to the right side of the right field foul pole and to the left side of the left field foul pole. The foul territory side of first and third base should be just touching the string. Once the string has been straightened, apply the marking paint or marking lime to the field side of the string.

## I. Determining Field Playability

**REMEMBER:** Standing water occurs because the ground is saturated. Removing standing water does not eliminate the saturation. It is the saturation and not standing water that causes damage and unsafe conditions.

Determining the playability of an athletic field is crucial to the continued health of the turf and the sustainability of the field throughout the season. The Park Authority will close its athletic fields if park staff determines that fields are too wet for play, or if other issues arise that would compromise patron safety.



An athletic field should be considered closed for play if any part of the field becomes unsafe for field users or if conditions exist where use will cause damage to the field.

An athletic field should be considered closed if any of the following conditions exist:

- There is standing water present on any part of the field that cannot be removed without causing damage to the field.
- There are muddy conditions present that will not dry by the start of the game.
- While walking on the field water can be seen or heard with any footstep.
- If water gathers around the sole of a shoe or boot on any portion of the field.
- While walking in turf areas any impression of your footprint is left in the surface.
- While walking on the infield portion of the field, an impression of 1/2" deep or more is left by a footprint.



## J. Water Removal Techniques for Ball Diamonds

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Water removal should only be undertaken to accelerate the drying of fields. Water removal should not be undertaken with the expectation that fields will be available for play.

A broom with water-resistant bristles or a water roller can be used to disperse water on infield mix areas.



Never sweep or push water into the grass. The water should be spread out on the infield mix portions of the field only.

When removing water from puddles, do not remove mix along with it.



When dispersing water, always try to pull, not push the water with the tool. Pulling with the tool allows you to maintain better control over the end of the tool and therefore less likely to remove any mix from the area being swept.



Once the water is dispersed, use a rake to loosen all wet areas to accelerate drying.





Do not move muddy material from one portion of the field to another; or remove muddy material from the field. If muddy material is not dry by game time, the field should be closed until the material dries.

A hand pump and bucket can be used to remove the water in areas where it cannot be removed without pushing it into the grass. A small hole may have to be temporarily dug in the lowest part of the wet area, in order to gather all of the water in one spot. The pump will then be able to more easily remove all of the water. Once the bucket is filled, dispose of the water outside of the field of play. Once the water has been removed, fill in any holes where possible and rake the area to accelerate drying.



The Park Authority discourages the routine use of drying agents (e.g., - Turface, Pro Choice, etc.). It is recommended that drying agents be used very sparingly and only in cases where it will ensure the field conditions are immediately playable. Do not use the product on isolated areas of the field when the entire infield is too wet for play. The Park Authority has found that the widespread use of drying agents is not cost effective or efficient. If the steps above are followed routinely when maintaining wet areas, field conditions will become as readily playable as if drying agents had been used. If overused, drying agents can create safety and maintenance problems.

In turf areas, the use of materials such as drying agents, wood chips, peat moss, or sand to dry water or mud is not recommended due to secondary problems that can occur as a result of their use.

### **Ball Diamond Maintenance – DO'S and DON'TS**

- To prevent lips from forming, insure that all infield mix has been raked out of and away from all grass edges prior to dragging fields: baselines, home plate, pitching mound, infield perimeter and coach's boxes.
- Prior to dragging, bases are to be removed and inspected, and all holes around the bases and pitching area are to be filled and tamped.
- Fill all holes and low areas completely to insure safe playing conditions and to eliminate areas where water can collect, which creates maddy conditions.
- Trim around bleachers, player's benches, trash cans, goals and fences each time the fields are mowed.
- Do not shovel, scoop, rake or sweep water, mix or topsoil into grass areas.
- Do not remove mix or topsoil from wet areas.
- Do not bring foreign material onto fields to fill wet areas or low spots.
- Do not use any field when such use will cause damage to the field or risk personal injury.
- Do not hit or pitch balls into fences.
- To minimize damage, do not practice hitting or pitching from any turf areas within the field of play.

## II. Rectangular Field Demonstration

### A. Determining Field Playability

- An athletic field is closed for play if any portion of the field becomes unsafe for field users OR if conditions exist where use will cause damage to the field.
- During inclement weather, if standing water starts to form, the athletic field should be closed immediately.
- An athletic field is closed if any of the following conditions exist:
  - There is standing water present in the field of play.
  - There are muddy conditions present that will not dry by the start of the game; and all of the acceptable maintenance practices listed under the section titled "Water Removal" have been performed.
  - While walking on the field water can be seen or heard with any footstep.
  - While walking in turf or bare areas any impression of a footprint is left in the soil surface.
- If all of the rules and maintenance practices listed in the section titled "Water Removal" are followed and a field is still not playable, then the field should be considered closed.
- **REMEMBER:** Standing water occurs because the ground is saturated. Removing standing water does not eliminate the saturation. It is the saturation and not standing water that causes damage and unsafe conditions.

### B. Water Removal Techniques For Rectangular Fields

- **NEVER** sweep or push water into the grass.
- **NEVER** move muddy material from one portion of the field to another. **NEVER** remove muddy material from the field. If muddy material is not dry by game time, the field is closed until the material dries.
- A hand pump and bucket can be used to remove water in areas where there are puddles. Once the bucket is full, dispose of the water outside the field of play. However, this will not make the field immediately playable, it will only accelerate drying of the affected area.
- In turf areas, the use of materials to dry water or mud, such as Turfco, wood chips, peat moss, or sand is not permitted.

### C. Portable Goal Maintenance and Labeling

- If portable goals are used, they must be properly labeled and securely anchored to the ground.  
**NOTE:** See the Miscellaneous Information section for CPSC guidelines about portable goals.
- When securing portable goals, the method used to secure the goals must not create a safety hazard, such as a protrusion or a sharp edge that could cause injury.
- When a portable goal is being temporarily moved or removed, the goal anchors must also be removed, unless the anchors do not pose a safety hazard when left behind. For example, the remaining goal anchor must not be a trip hazard, be a protrusion, have any sharp edges, or leave a hole behind.
- If the portable goals are being permanently removed, then the goal anchors must also be removed; and the ground must be restored to its original condition.

## F. Determining Field Playability

- **REMEMBER:** Standing water occurs because the ground is saturated. Removing standing water does not eliminate the saturation. It is the saturation and not standing water that causes damage and unsafe conditions.

Determining the playability of an athletic field is crucial to the continued health of the turf and the sustainability of the field throughout the season. The Park Authority will close its athletic fields if park staff determines that fields are too wet for play, or if other issues arise that would compromise patron safety.

An athletic field should be considered closed for play if any part of the field becomes unsafe for field users or if conditions exist where use will cause damage to the field.

- An athletic field should be considered closed if any of the following conditions exist:



- There is standing water present on any part of the field that cannot be removed without causing damage to the field.
- There are muddy conditions present that will not dry by the start of the game.
- While walking on the field water can be seen or heard with any footstep.
- While walking on the field of play, any impression of your footprint is left in the surface.
- If water gathers around the sole of a shoe or boot on any portion of the field.



## G. Water Removal Techniques for Rectangular Fields

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Water removal should only be undertaken to accelerate the drying of fields. Water removal should not be undertaken with the expectation that fields will be available for play.

- **NEVER** sweep or push water into the grass.



- **NEVER** move muddy material from one portion of the field to another. **NEVER** remove muddy material from the field. If muddy material is not dry by game time, the field should be closed until the material dries.



- A hand pump and bucket can be used to remove water in areas where there are puddles. Once the bucket is full, dispose of the water outside the field of play. However, this will not make the field immediately playable, it will only accelerate drying of the affected area.

In turf areas, the use of materials such as drying agents (i.e.- Turface, Pro Choice, etc.), wood chips, peat moss, or sand to dry water or mud, is not practiced due to secondary problems that can occur as a result of their use.



## D. Safety Zones

- All rectangular athletic fields are required to have a minimum of 15' between the boundary lines of the field and any objects outside the field (such as bleachers, players benches, trash cans, light poles, fences, asphalt trails, concrete pads, signs, etc.). For example, if there are permanent benches on both sides of the field and the benches are 210' apart, then the widest you could safely mark the field would be 180' wide. Goals that are part of the playing field are the only exceptions to this rule.
- The 15' safety zone must be relatively flat, and a field boundary line cannot be put down less than 15' from the edge of a hillside or drainage ditch.
- Safety zones cannot overlap. If you have two fields side by side and there is nothing but level open space in between them, the two fields may be no closer than 30' to each other.

## E. Lining Techniques

- Only use marking paint and lime that is specifically manufactured for use on athletic fields.
- Always use a string as a guide when lining a field for the first time or when the original line can no longer be followed.
- When using athletic field marking paint, do not put down too much at one time, as this will severely damage the turf. A thin layer of paint is all that is required.
- **DO NOT** mow the grass lower than a height of 2 1/2" anywhere on an athletic field, including areas where you are putting down a painted line or prior to tournaments.

## F. Irrigation and Sports Lighting

- The Park Authority will continue to maintain the irrigation and field lighting systems on an athletic field even if that field is fully adopted.
- **DO NOT** attempt to operate or perform any maintenance on the irrigation system. If there is a problem with the system, contact the Park Authority immediately.
- **DO NOT** attempt to operate or perform any maintenance on the field lighting system, with the exception of turning the lights on or off. If there is a problem with the system, contact the Park Authority immediately.
- If an irrigation head is protruding up out of the ground, **gently** push down on top of it and it should return flush with the ground. If the irrigation head does not return to its proper flush position, contact the Park Authority immediately. **DO NOT** force the irrigation head back flush with the ground or it may break. If the irrigation system is operated with a broken head, it could cause the field to be closed.
- Remember to contact the Park Authority prior to performing any turf maintenance tasks, this includes spraying products to kill weeds on infields or other portions of the fields. Certain turf maintenance tasks will require all of the irrigation heads and valve boxes within the field of play to be marked.

## G. Amenity Inspections

- Field amenities are to be inspected at least once per week.
- Field amenities include: bleachers, player benches, trash cans, fencing, athletic field lighting, irrigation systems, concrete pads, goals, signs, foul poles, scoreboards, and all other components.
- When inspecting an amenity, look for damaged or missing parts, cracks, protrusions or sharp points, loose hardware, items that have been vandalized and anything that could be considered a safety hazard.
- If any of the above problems are found, contact the Park Authority immediately.
- Minor repairs may be made by the adopting partner, but please notify the Park Authority immediately of the problem and the subsequent repair.

## H. Trash Removal

- Trash should be removed and deposited in trash cans or dumpsters at a frequency consistent with the Park Authority's standards for that particular field as outlined in the adoption agreement.
- Trash should be removed from all areas within and around the field of play.

## I. Mowing Techniques

- Mowing and string trimming should be performed at a frequency consistent with the Park Authority's standards for that particular field as outlined in the adoption agreement.
- Prior to mowing a field, all debris should be removed. If the field is irrigated, the field should be walked to ensure that none of the irrigation heads are protruding above ground.
- Sharp mower blades should always be used when mowing athletic fields. A sharp mower blade will produce a better cut and will help prevent turf damage and disease.
- For maximum results, always operate the mower at the manufacturer's recommended RPM's.
- **NEVER** operate a mower that has any type of fluid leak.
- Use **ONLY** rotary blade or reel type mowers on athletic fields. **NEVER** use a flail type mower on an athletic field.
- The grass should **NEVER** be mowed shorter than a height of 2 1/2". This requirement applies even in cases prior to lining or for tournament set up.
- No more than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the grass blade (or greater than 1" of the blade) should be removed during any one mowing. If the grass height is higher than 3 1/2" prior to mowing taking place, it may be necessary to raise the height of the mower deck up, mow the field, then lower the mower deck back to 2 1/2" and mow the field again.
- In the spring and fall, it may be necessary to mow an athletic field two to three times per week due to the rate of turf growth during these seasons.
- If excessive thatch builds up on the turf, immediate removal of the thatch buildup will be required.
- String trimming is to be completed under and around trash cans, bleachers, goals, player benches, light poles, buildings or storage boxes adjacent to the field, and along the inside and outside of the fences if appropriate.
- The field should be mowed in a back and forth pattern. The field should be alternately mowed in at least two different directions or patterns. For example, rectangular fields can be mowed following the sideline, following the goal line, or following a diagonal line from corner to corner.

## J. Turf Maintenance

- Follow all of the turf maintenance tasks listed in the turf plan provided by the Park Authority in the adoption agreement.
- The Park Authority's Turfgrass Specialist is to be contacted prior to any turf task being completed including those tasks listed in the turf plan.
- The Park Authority's Turfgrass Specialist or a representative designated by him is required to examine any product prior to it being applied to any Park Authority field.
- Turf maintenance tasks, other than those listed in the turf plan provided by the Park Authority, can **ONLY** be performed following approval by the Park Authority's Turfgrass Specialist. This includes spraying products to kill weeds on infields or other portions of the fields.
- Since Park Authority fields are open to the public, pesticide applications may **ONLY** be applied by individuals legally licensed to do so. This includes applications of all types of herbicides. Even though these chemicals are readily available for home use, the law requires that they be applied only by licensed applicators on public land.

## V. Maintenance Activities Other Than Routine Maintenance

- Only routine maintenance activities can be performed without prior written approval from the Park Authority.
- **DO NOT** add to, alter, move, or remove any part of an athletic field, including its amenities, without prior written approval from the Park Authority.
- **DO NOT** add to, alter, move, or remove any part of the park or park facilities in which your adopted field resides, without prior written approval from the Park Authority.

## VI. Park Authority Field Availability

- Level 1 athletic fields are open from the second Saturday in April until the first Sunday in November.
- Level 2 athletic fields are open from the last Saturday in March until the third Sunday in November.
- If an athletic field has not been fully adopted, single season sports like football, are the only sports that can play on the athletic field outside of its normal opening and closing dates.
- During periods prior to a field's normal opening date and after a field's normal closing date, fully adopted athletic fields are open for use by the adopting group only. **THIS BENEFIT OF A FULL ADOPTION IS ONLY AVAILABLE TO THE ADOPTING PARTNER, AND IS NOT TRANSFERABLE.**
- Once an athletic field is open for play on the dates outlined above, the field is available for use by the general public at any time when scheduled events are not occurring.

## VII. Differences in Maintenance for Level 1 and Level 2 Fields

- Level 1 athletic fields are fields that have both lights and irrigation.
- Level 2 athletic fields are fields that may have either lights or irrigation, but do not have both.
- On Level 1 athletic fields, routine maintenance must be performed at least three times per week. On Level 2 athletic fields, routine maintenance must be performed at least twice per week. Routine maintenance includes tasks such as trash removal, edge maintenance, filling holes, hand raking, and dragging and are outlined in your adoption agreement.
- On Level 1 athletic fields, mowing and string trimming must be performed at least one time per week, but an extra mowing or two may be required if it becomes necessary. On Level 2 athletic fields, mowing and string trimming must be performed one time per week. An extra mowing or two may be necessary on Level 2 athletic fields especially when irrigated. This extra mowing may not be specified by agreement, but turf growth may necessitate it.
- The frequency and type of turf maintenance tasks required are based upon the presence of an irrigation system, and are not based upon the particular Level of the athletic field. More turf maintenance tasks are required on irrigated athletic fields than are required on non-irrigated athletic fields. Some of the additional tasks that may be required include fertilizer applications, weed control applications, and other chemical applications.

## Athletic Field Maintenance – DO'S and DON'TS

- To prevent lips from forming, insure that all infield mix has been raked out of and away from all grass edges prior to dragging fields: baselines, home plate, pitching mound, infield perimeter and coaches boxes.
- Prior to dragging, bases are to be removed and inspected, and all holes around the bases and pitching area are to be filled and tamped.
- Fill all holes and low areas completely to insure safe playing conditions and to eliminate areas where water can collect, which creates muddy conditions.
- Trim around bleachers, player's benches, trash cans, goals and fences each time the fields are mowed.
- Notify the Fairfax County Park Authority prior to performing any turf maintenance.
- Report all unsafe conditions to Fairfax County Park Authority immediately.
- Do not shovel, scoop, rake or sweep water, mix or topsoil into grass areas.
- Do not remove mix or topsoil from wet areas.
- Do not bring foreign material onto fields to fill wet areas or low spots.
- The grass should NEVER be mowed shorter than a height of 2 1/2". This requirement applies even in cases prior to lining or for tournament set up.
- Do not mow turf shorter than prescribed mowing heights in order to line fields.
- Do not use any field when such use will cause damage to the field or risk injury.
- Do not hit or pitch balls into fences.
- Do not practice hitting or pitching from any **turf** areas within the field of play.
- Do not use an athletic field for any use other than for their original design.
- Do not perform any maintenance that has not been previously discussed with AND approved by Fairfax County Park Authority.

### Portable Goal Maintenance and Labeling Information

- CPSC Document # 326: Guidelines for Removable Soccer Goal Safety
- View the document at: <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/326.html>
- To obtain a written copy send a postcard to:

Soccer Goal guidelines, Publication # CPSC 326  
Consumer Product Safety commission  
Washington, DC 20207

### Park Authority Contacts:

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| • Park Operations Division Office                   | 703-324-8591 |
| • Todd Johnson, Director, Park Operations Division  | 703-324-8596 |
| • Dan Sutherland, Grounds Management Supervisor     | 703-324-8597 |
| • Wayne Brissey, Turf Crew Manager                  | 703-321-7616 |
|   |              |
| • Alan Crofford, Area 6 Manager                     | 703-759-4851 |
| • Ann Shifflett, Area 6 Athletic Fields Manager     | 703-759-4851 |
| • Ferlin Mathews, Lake Fairfax Athl. Fields Manager | 703-759-4768 |