



Wet Weather Ground Inspection Guide

Weekday ground closure decisions are made by Council, the decision is made by 9am following the inspection of fields by Council's technical team. Anyone using grounds that have been closed by Council will be liable for the cost of repairs and may forfeit their user status. On weekdays, if rain has occurred post Council inspection, then grounds must be further inspected by the user. Weekend field closures are the responsibility of the relevant sporting association. There will be exceptions where council will make the decision for all associations regarding weekend fixtures.

Two main issues need to be taken into account for weekend ground closures due to wet weather:

1. **Player safety** – playing on wet and damaged fields may present safety issues
2. **Irreparable damage to field** - clubs need to ensure that the decision to use the ground does not see the ground taken out of action for maintenance and/or see the ground not suitable for play in the last few weeks of the season.

The following measures are to be used as a guide to assist clubs in making a decision about ground closures:

- **Surface Water**— Competition and training must be cancelled if there is any surface water visible on the field.
- **Ground Softness**—Competition and training must be cancelled if, when walking on the field, there is any sinking into the field, it does not bounce back or if water rises to the surface. This indicates ground has reached saturation point and will be damaged very quickly if played on. The only exception to this would be if the affected area was less than 2m², in a low usage/wear area, the rest of the field was firm and poor grass cover is not an additional issue.
- **Amount of Rainfall** - Rainfall leading into competition and training should be used to guide decisions. Clubs should take into consideration the rainfall during the week, the night before and the forecast for the day of training/competition when making decisions.
- **Soil profile and Drainage** - Some fields naturally drain better than others due to the soil profile below the surface and the drainage capacity. Other fields may require many days of continuous fine weather to completely dry out. Clubs should have a good idea of the drainage and amount of rainfall their assigned ground can take, and this should be considered when making decisions.
- **Grass coverage** - During the winter season grass cover can often get below 70% and be fine for play during dry weather. However, during wet weather if overall grass cover is below 70% then this ground is likely to wear more substantially under wet weather training and competition than grounds with more grass cover. If a decision is made to play or train on wet ground with low grass cover, then this may cause irreparable damage to your field.
- **Amount and type of activity**-Consideration should be given to:
 - Whether the type of sport to be played is high or low impact?
 - The number of players in a team?
 - How many teams are due to play?

Clubs need to understand the impact that different groups have on the grounds and prioritise/cancel games accordingly.

- **Inspection of grounds** - If there has been regular rain leading into an event, grounds should be inspected the day before an event. **All grounds should be inspected the morning of an event** and if a decision to go ahead with play has been made then the ground should be assessed before each subsequent game to assess the effect the game has had on the ground. This is especially important when the decision to allow play was a difficult decision. Consistency of inspections should also be a priority for clubs - the same person should do the inspections for a competition day and the club should nominate a couple of people to undertake inspections of their grounds.

For weekend closures contact your club/association or check the club's website for updates. For weekday closures phone Council's wet weather line 9710 0105 or website sutherlandshire.nsw.gov.au