



POLICY TITLE: Recreation and School Space Priority and Permitting		
Policy Number: 06.001	Review Cycle: Yearly	Effective Date: 1/1/2024 Modified: 12/13/2024
Reviewer: Chief of Recreation Services	Approval Authority: Deputy Director	

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks staff and the public that submits permit requests for BCRP owned and operated recreation facilities and Baltimore County Public School (BCPS) sites.

POLICY STATEMENT:

Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks seeks to maximize the recreation opportunities that are available for all users in Baltimore County. The permit priority guidelines for community parks/Baltimore County Public School sites, and regional parks should work in collaboration to achieve this goal.

Organized vs Unorganized

- All organized recreation activities require a BCRP issued permit for recreational use.
- An Activity will be considered organized if it is observed to be playing at a regular day/time/location and it contains one of the following:
 - Coaches/Volunteers
 - Referees
 - Uniforms
 - Significant number of spectators in relation to the number of participants
- Groups that are observed to be playing at a regular day/time/location without the presence of coaches, referees, uniforms, or spectators will be considered an unorganized activity. An unorganized activity must leave the field if a permitted group shows up to play during their permitted time(s). Participants of an unorganized activity will be asked to complete a general Recreation and Parks participation waiver which acknowledges the park rules and risk of playing at County facilities.

Order of Priority

Community Sites and BCPS Order of Priority

- 1) **Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks and groups with MOUs per the terms of the MOUs**
- 2) **County Agency/Partner Departments**
- 3) **Certified Recreation Councils – In-Season Sports**
 - a) Youth Recreation/In-House level Program from Local Recreation Council
 - b) Youth Travel/Club Program from Local Recreation Council
 - c) Adult Program from Local Recreation Council
 - d) Youth Recreation/In-House level from other Recreation Council
 - e) Youth Travel/Club from other Recreation Council
 - f) Adult Program from other Recreation Council
- 4) **Certified Recreation Councils – Out of Season Sports**
 - a) Youth Recreation/In-House level Program from Local Recreation Council
 - b) Youth Travel/Club Program from Local Recreation Council
 - c) Adult Program from Local Recreation Council
 - d) Youth Recreation/In-House level from other Recreation Council
 - e) Youth Travel/Club from other Recreation Council
 - f) Adult Program from other Recreation Council
- 5) **BCPS**
- 6) **Outside Non-Profit group** (must provide documentation of non-profit status)
 - a) Youth
 - b) Adult
- 7) **Outside For-Profit group or General Public**
 - a) Youth
 - b) Adult

Regional Park Fields Order of Priority

- 1) **Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks Programs and Events.**
 - a) BCRP Approved Tournaments & Special Events may be scheduled up to a year out.
 - b) BCRP led Inter-council youth leagues.
- 2) **County Agency/Partner Departments**
- 3) **Certified Recreation Councils – In Season Sports** (*Baltimore County Recreation and Parks reserves the right to reallocate the usage of Regional Facilities. Local Council resources must be utilized before a permit for a Regional Facility can be issued.*)
 - a) Youth Recreation/In-House level Program from Local Recreation Council
 - b) Youth Travel/Club Program from Local Recreation Council
 - c) Adult Program from Local Recreation Council
 - d) Youth Recreation/In-House level from other Recreation Council
 - e) Youth Travel/Club from other Recreation Council
 - f) Adult Program from other Recreation Council
- 4) **Certified Recreation Councils – Out of Season Sports** (*Baltimore County Recreation and Parks reserves the right to reallocate the usage of Regional Facilities. Local Council resources must be utilized before a permit for a Regional Facility can be issued.*)
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 - e) Youth Travel/Club from other Recreation Council
 - f) Adult Program from other Recreation Council
- 5) **BCPS**
- 6) **Outside Non-Profit group** (must provide documentation of non-profit status)
 - a) Youth

- b) Adult
- 7) **Outside For-Profit groups or General Public**
 - a) Youth
 - b) Adult

Definitions

“Certified Recreation Council” means a 501c3 non-profit organization recognized by the Baltimore County Board of Recreation and Parks as meeting their criteria established by the Board as part of the bi-annual certification process. Additionally, to be certified Recreation Councils will need to have a signed approved Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks.

“Recognition” means the process established within the By-Laws of the Baltimore County Board of Recreation and Parks to approved Recreation Councils and the MOU process by the Department of Recreation and Parks

“Recreation program” means a program recognized by a certified recreation council as operating:

- A) solely as a seasonal and/or full year program of a single certified council; and
- B) with all funds collected and disbursed by the program controlled and governed by the certified recreation council’s adopted By-Laws, policies, or procedures; and
- C) with all registrants having an opportunity to participate in the program regardless of skill level; and
- D) with the program leadership actively involved in the affairs of the council, as defined by the By-Laws, policies, or procedures of the council.

“Recreation Programs” include, but are not limited to:

- A. In-house leagues operated by one single Council.
- B. Interscholastic middle school sports teams or programs.
- C. Inter-council sports teams or programs wherein any single council has an insufficient number of registrants to provide a viable intra-council program.
- D. Clinic instructional short-term programs (Learn to play style programs etc.)

“Recreation Council Travel/Club Program” means a program:

- A. that does not offer guaranteed participation regardless of skill level within the program; and
- B. can operate as a seasonal and/or full year program of a **single certified council; and**
- C. with all funds collected and disbursed by the program controlled and governed by the certified recreation council’s adopted By-Laws, policies, or procedures; and
- D. with the program leadership actively involved in the affairs of the council, as defined by the By-Laws, policies, or procedures of the council; and
- E. program costs are affordable as determined by the Department; and
- F. coaches/administrators are mostly volunteers and/or participation is mainly comprised of local/surrounding area participants.

In the event above criteria are not met, the Department reserves the right to charge appropriate fees for facility access in line with an Outside Club/Travel Program.

“Outside Club/Travel Program” means a program:

- A. that does not offer guaranteed participation regardless of skill level within the program; and
- B. that itself or its parent/affiliate organization has a non-profit, not for profit, for profit or corporate status **separate from a certified recreation council**; or, that deposits any revenue in a financial institution or makes disbursements from said account which is not under the control of a recreation council or the federal TIN on the account is assigned to an entity different from the recreation council; and
- C. program costs are unaffordable as determined by the Department; and
- D. coaches/administrators are not mostly volunteers and/or participation is mainly comprised of local/surrounding area participants.

Recreation Facilities and BCPS Permitting Seasons:

- Spring: March 1 - Mid June
- Summer: Mid-June – July (Not a charged Season for Council Travel/Club)
- Fall: August 1 -Mid November
- Winter: Mid November - February

In-Season Sports:

Spring Sports (March 1 – Mid-June)

- Baseball
- Softball
- Track and Field
- Lacrosse
- Tennis/Pickleball
 - Outdoor
- Dodgeball

Fall Sports (August 1 – Mid-November)

- Soccer
- Football
- Field Hockey
- Volleyball
 - Indoor
- Cross Country
- Pickleball
- Cheerleading

Winter Sports (Mid-November – February)

- Basketball
- Wrestling

- Indoor Soccer/Futsal
- Pickleball/Tennis
 - Indoor
- Badminton
 - Indoor
- Racquetball- NERRC
- Gymnastics
- Indoor Track

Year-Round Programs (year-round adult programs will be assessed the \$25 per participant fee 3 times per year)

- Fitness Classes
- Performing Arts
- Martial Arts
- Cultural or Artistic Programs
- Dance Programs
- Adaptive Sports
- Walking and Running Clubs

*** Sports or activities that are not listed above will be decided upon a case by case basis.***

Seasonal Permit Request Timeline:

Season	Spring (March 1- Mid June)	Summer (Mid-June - July)	Fall (Aug 1- Mid Nov)	Winter (Mid Nov - Feb)
BCRP	Dec 1	March 1	May 1	Sept 1
Council Recreation/In-House Level	Dec 1 – Dec 15	March 1 – March 15	May 1 - May 15	Sept 1 – Sept 15
Council Travel/Club/Adult	Dec 21 – Jan 6	March 21 - April 6	May 21 - June 6	Sept 21 - Oct 6
BCPS	Jan 12 - Jan 25	April 12 - April 25	June 12 - June 25	Oct 12 - Oct 25
General Public	Feb 1	May 1	July 1	Nov 1

Staff Approval Process:

All permit requests for BCRP, RC In-house, RC Travel/Club, BCPS, and the general public must be submitted through the CivicRec platform or to the permit team via bcrpregistrar@baltimorecountymd.gov using a [facility use permit application](#). Once the permit request window closes, Recreation & Parks (R&P) staff have 5 business days to approve, deny, or modify requests and enter the permitted dates on the CivicRec Calendar. For the general public, permit requests will be reviewed and decided upon within 5 business days of submission. Notifications of approval, denial, or modification will be sent via CivicRec.

Practice Schedule Submission Requirements for Recreation Councils (in-house and travel/club):

Practice schedules are due 2 weeks prior to the first permitted date for the season. Changes to practice schedules should be submitted immediately to the Permitting Team.

Roster and Game Schedule Submission Requirements for Recreation Councils (in-house and travel/club):

Rosters must be submitted no later than 2 weeks prior to the first practice date listed on the approved permit. BCRP will accept rosters via the approved roster form or a roster that was generated/exported by the council registration system. All submitted rosters should have the name and age of the participants listed, with an easily identifiable total number of participants. The name can be first and last initial. All other personal information should not be included or should be redacted. There is no need for addresses or contact information to be turned into the Department.

Game schedules are required by the following deadlines:

Fall: August 25

Winter: November 25

Spring: March 25 Athletic Field activities, April 25 Ball Diamond activities

Summer: June 1

Failure to meet these deadlines may result in permit revocation or other penalties.

If you need additional time to submit the game schedule, contact the Permitting Team.

The 3-Strike Policy for No-Show Practices or Games

To ensure fair and efficient use of permitted fields and facilities, Baltimore County Recreation and Parks enforces the following 3-strike policy for teams failing to show up for scheduled practices or games without prior notice:

Strike 1: A written warning will be issued to the team, and the incident will be documented.

Strike 2: A second no-show will result in a \$20 per hour fee for each permitted hour missed. The fee must be paid before any future permits will be granted.

Strike 3: A third no-show will result in the revocation of the team's permit for the season, along with a \$20

per hour fee for each permitted hour missed. Future permit requests may also be denied or deprioritized. Notification Requirement: Teams must notify Baltimore County Recreation and Parks at least 24 hours before the scheduled time to avoid penalties.

This policy promotes accountability and maximizes access for other teams and community members.

Missed submittal deadlines:

If you miss the deadline to submit a request for your priority group, your request will then be considered within the next priority level. The request will not be given its normal priority consideration. Requests for fields/spaces may overlap one month into the following season. Any other overlap requests outside of the season request window will not be considered and must be resubmitted to the department/community office during the appropriate request window.

You cannot submit a request prior to the request window for the season beginning.

Programs that do not conform to the above schedule, or need to be scheduled further in advance, must contact appropriate Department Office for discussion.

*School Year Childcare Programs submit during the fall for the entire school year (only council-based programs).

Release Dates for Unneeded Space/Field Time

To ensure as many groups as possible have access to facility time, groups should release any unneeded facility time as soon as their schedules are set (see **Roster and Game Schedule Submission Requirements for Recreation Councils**). All returns must be submitted in writing.

Permit Adjustments for Game and Practice Schedules:

1. Councils submit game and practice schedules to BCRP.
2. BCRP will adjust permits to reflect times listed on the game and practice schedules.
3. Updated field availability will be published on the CivicRec catalog at which point any group (including the general public) can submit a request for available field time.

BCRP will issue permits to outside groups only after all fees have been paid in full. These fees are subject to change without notice.

Certified Councils will be subject to participant user fees outlined below, however they will receive their permits prior to the collection of the participant fees. **Appropriate fees will be collected during the season.** Failure to pay associated fees may impact future permits for Certified Councils.

Fees beginning January 1, 2025:

There will continue to be no charges for Certified Recreation Council In-House Youth Programs. However, to support field and facility maintenance, funding for all field equipment (including chalk, goals, nets, etc.), and ensuring quality customer service with appropriate field and facility staffing, the Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks will collect the following fees:

- **Recreation Council In-House Youth Programs:** No charges for participants.
- **Recreation Council Travel/Club Youth Programs:** \$10 per participant per season (up to three seasons per year).
- **Recreation Council Adult Programs:** \$25 per participant per season (up to three seasons per year).

Participant Fees are due by:

Fall Season - October 1

Winter Season – January 6

Season fees for Winter 2025 will be due on February 1, 2025.

Spring Season – May 1

Any unpaid participant fees will result in a late fee being assessed. Any unpaid participant fees by the start of the next permit season will result in the council not being able to submit permit requests for the next season.

Blanket Permitting

Blanket permitting is not authorized. Permit time should be requested only for time actually needed by the program. Effort should be taken by requester to only request time anticipated to be used. Requests should not be submitted for facilities to be “on hold” or for “back up status”.

Unused Space/Field Time

BCRP Staff will perform regular checks of facilities that are permitted for use. In the event that a program is not using assigned time BCRP will contact using group to confirm permitted time is still needed. Repeated instances of programs not utilizing assigned time may result in revocation of existing permits and impact future permit requests.

Cancellations and Refunds

Athletic fields and courts

Only Field time cancelled by Recreation and Park staff due to inclement weather or other reasons is eligible for a refund, account credit, or rescheduling. The refund will be processed after the day of the event. Unless requested by the user, all refunds will be returned as account credits which can be used for future permits/rentals.

General Guidelines for Field Use

All applicants must be 21 years and older. All field users are expected to adhere to the following guidelines to help keep 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.
- A printed or digital copy of the permit must be on site in the possession of the permitted group or individual during the scheduled 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.)
- The permit is for the sole use of the organization 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 nor the use of illegal drugs
 - No urinating or changing clothes in public
 - No loud noises permitted (amplified music, horns, car alarms)
 - No littering. All trash must be picked up during and after field use 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 BCRP staff or contractors on park fields is not allowed
- The use of smoking 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
- No Parking nor driving on the field
- All Pets must be leashed at all times
- Solicitation of any business, trade or occupation is strictly prohibited unless authorized by permit.
- Use of a natural grass athletic field is prohibited when:
 - It is closed for renovation or repair.
 - Water is standing on the field.
 - Soil is frozen.
 - The soil is wet and "spongy".
 - Inclement Weather Policy dictates closure
 - The field is deemed unplayable by Recreation and Park staff.
 - Closed due to weather conditions.
 - A lightning/electrical storm is occurring.
- Use of a turf athletic field is prohibited when:
 - It is closed for renovation or repair
 - Inclement Weather Policy dictates closure
 - The field is deemed unplayable by Recreation and Park staff.
 - Closed due to weather conditions.
 - A lightning/electrical storm is occurring.
- The field is deemed unplayable by Recreation and Park staff.
- Field users may contact the BCRP inclement weather line at 410-88-Parks to determine whether a field is open for play. Users can also sign up to receive electronic field notification alerts via text messages or emails through the County's CivicRec system.

This policy updates and replaces Directive C-1 (priority use of Recreation Facilities) and the Regional Park Facility Request Procedure.

REFERENCES:

- Comprehensive Revenue Policy
- Facility Use Permit Application

REVISIONS:

Revised	December 19, 2023
Revised	June 23, 2024
Revised	November 28, 2024
Revised	December 13, 2024: Included roster and schedule update