



POLICY TITLE: Recreation and School Space Priority and Permitting		
Policy Number: 06.001	Review Cycle: Yearly	Effective Date: 1/1/2024
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. This policy does not govern programs defined as "Special Events" by the department.

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.

DEFINITIONS

“Certified Recreation Council” means a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization recognized by the Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks. Recreation Councils will need to have a signed approved Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks. MOU approval requires a copy of the Recreation Council’s bylaws, certification of non-profit status, and be in good standing with the State of Maryland.

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

- 1) solely as a seasonal and/or full year program of a single certified council; and
- 2) 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
- 3) with all registrants having an opportunity to participate in the program regardless of skill level; and
- 4) 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:

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

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

- 1) that does not offer guaranteed participation regardless of skill level within the program; and
- 2) can operate as a seasonal and/or full year program of a **single certified council**; and
- 3) 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
- 4) 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
- 5) program costs are affordable as determined by the Department; and
- 6) 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:

- 1) that does not offer guaranteed participation regardless of skill level within the program; and
- 2) 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
- 3) program costs are unaffordable as determined by the Department; and
- 4) coaches/administrators are not mostly volunteers and/or participation is mainly comprised of local/surrounding area participants.

PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

- Organized activities require a permit.
 - Recreation councils must submit game schedules.
 - A certificate of insurance is required for the permit holder of an organized non-rec council group, that is practicing or playing a game.
- Unorganized activities must yield to permitted groups and sign a waiver.
- Blanket Permitting is not authorized. Permit time should be requested only for time actually needed by the program. Effort should be taken by the 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.
- Sub-permitting is not authorized.
- Group has no prohibitive account flags or outstanding balances.
- Permit Holders must be 21 years of age or older and follow all field use guidelines.

ORDER OF PRIORITY

Community Sites and BCPS Order of Priority

- 1) Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks and groups with partnered programs.**
 - a. BCRP Approved Tournaments and Special Events may be scheduled up to a year in advance.
- 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

PLEASE NOTE, RECREATION AND PARKS WILL MAKE FINAL DETERMINATION OF USE PERMITS.

The priority order is designed to help guide the department, make it clear for Recreation Councils, and provide a baseline for the department to make final decisions that are fair and equitable.

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 in advance.
 - 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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RECREATION FACILITIES AND BCPS PERMITTING SEASONS

- Spring: March 1 – June 30 (Ball Diamonds will not be available for permitted use until April 1.)
 - Rec Councils can submit summer camp requests during the spring permitting window.
- Summer: June 15 – July 31 (Not a charged Season for Council Travel/Club)
- Fall: August 1 – November 30
- Winter: November 15 - March 31

The intention in the overlap is to allow programs to finish their seasons. Permits for programs that stretch between seasons or for programs wishing to be started later in a season will only be considered by the department in circumstances that meet policies and procedures and do not impact the overall intent of the permitting seasons.

Northeast Regional Recreation Center Court Seasons:

- Spring: March 1-May 31
- Summer: June 1-August 31
- Fall: September 1-November 30
- Winter: December 1- February 28

In-Season Sports:**Spring Sports (March 1 –June 30):**

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

Fall Sports (August 1 – November 30):

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

Winter Sports (November 15 – March 31):

- 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 REQUESTS

Seasonal Permit Request Timeline:

Season	Spring (March 1- June 30)	Summer (June 14 – July 31)	Fall (Aug 1- Nov 30)	Winter (Nov 15 – Mar 31)
BCRP	Dec 1	March 1	May 1	Sept 1
Rec Council: Youth In-house programs, Youth Travel/Club programs, Adult programs	Dec 1 – Dec 21 *Begin accepting ALL Summer Camp Requests*	March 1 – March 21	May 1 - May 21 *Includes Rec Council school year programs*	Sept 1 – Sept 21
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
BCRP	Dec 1	March 1	May 1	Sept 1

If a window is scheduled to open on a weekend or a designated Baltimore County holiday, then the permit window will open on the next available business day.

Missed Submittal Deadlines:

*****Council programs that miss the council request period may lose priority*****

- Any other overlap requests outside of the season request window will not be considered and must be resubmitted during the appropriate request window.
- Requests cannot be submitted 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.

PERMIT PROCESS

Requests and Approval:

- Beginning with the request window for the Winter 2026 season, Rec Councils will have the option to submit requests via a seasonal request spreadsheet or through CivicRec.
 - All Council Special Event and NERRC Court permit requests must be submitted through CivicRec for review and approval.

- Only the identified rec council contact(s) should be submitting requests.
- All other users/groups must submit permit requests via CivicRec.
- Notifications of approval, denial, or modification will be sent from the permit zone coordinator to the identified rec council contact(s) for rec council programs, or to the customer for other permit requests. Rec councils will receive a summary of their approved seasonal requests with the permit documents.

Release Dates and Schedule Adjustments 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. Groups applying for season-long permits must submit a game and/or practice schedule. Permits will then be adjusted by BCRP according to the submitted game and/or practice schedules. All returns must be submitted in writing to the Regional Coordinator's office.

Schedules Deadlines for Recreation Councils & Other Season-long programs:

- Rosters are due 2 weeks prior to 1st date on approved permit.
- Game/League schedules are due 2 weeks prior to 1st game date.
 - Game schedules must location date, time, and permit number listed.

Changes to game and practices schedules should be submitted immediately to the Zone's Regional Coordinator office.

BCRP reserves the right to modify practice permits in order to ensure that fields are fully utilized. This may include but is not limited to splitting fields or re-assigning permits based on staff observations during the season.

Game schedules may be requested from other permit holders based on the scope of their permit(s)

Unused Space/Field Time:

To ensure fair and efficient use of permitted fields and facilities, Baltimore County Recreation and Parks monitors field usage and tracks programs failing to show up for scheduled permitted time without prior notice. In the event that a program is observed not using permitted time BCRP may adjust the permit and release the time.

Notifications for Late Cancellations No-Show Practices or Games:

Notification Requirement for non-weather-related reasons: For weekday use, teams must notify Baltimore County Recreation and Parks at least 6 hours before the scheduled time. For weekend use, teams must notify Baltimore County Recreation and Parks the day before scheduled use. BCRP will determine if a refund or credit is warranted.

Notification Requirement for weather related reasons: Teams must inform Rec and Park staff at least 3 hours before their permitted use, if they plan to cancel due to weather concerns. If the on-site official/referee/umpire arrives and determines that the game cannot be played due to weather conditions, no penalty shall be given.

Fees and Payment:

Permit fees will follow the Baltimore County Recreation and Parks published fee structure.

Council Participant Fees are due by:

Fall Season - October 1

Winter Season – January 6

Spring Season – May 1

Refund Policy:

For all permitted and rentable spaces:

- 1) If the event is cancelled in writing by the customer 60 days or more prior to the date of the reservation, 100% of the rental fee will be refunded.
- 2) If the event is cancelled in writing by the customer between 30 and 59 days prior to the date of the reservation, 50% of the rental fee will be refunded.
 - Instead of receiving a refund, the customer may opt to reschedule the reservation one time only at no additional cost.
 - Outdoor areas may only be rescheduled during the same calendar year.
 - Indoor spaces may be rescheduled within 180 days of the reservation.
- 3) If the event is cancelled in writing by the customer 29 days or less prior to the date of the reservation, no refund will be given.
 - The customer may opt to reschedule the reservation at no additional cost one time only.
 - Outdoor areas may only be rescheduled during the same calendar year.
 - Indoor spaces may be rescheduled within 180 days of the reservation.
- 4) If the reservation request is denied by Baltimore County Recreation and Parks the full rental fee including the application fee will be refunded to the customer.
- 5) Weather Cancellations- Only field time cancelled by Recreation and Park staff or a game official 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.

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	December 13, 2024: Included roster and schedule update
Revised	February 4, 2025: Added information to Spring Season for Ball Diamonds and Seasonal Permit Request Timeline
Reviewed	May 1, 2026 : No changes
Revised	August 28, 2026: Added permit requirements, updated/clarified permit seasons, added NERRC court seasons, updated permit request timeline chart to be in-line with new council submission window, simplified permit process section, deadlines added for council rosters and schedules, updated notifications for late cancelations no show practice