

2009 SPRING & SUMMER SYNTHETIC TURF FIELD USE PROTOCOLS
Protocols Will be Revised in the Fall of 2009 Based on Spring and Summer 2009
Experience and Data

STAFF EDUCATION

- The Director of Park and Recreation and the Parks and Forestry Superintendent will consult annually with appropriate general government and school staff (Director of Public Health, Assistant Parks and Forestry Superintendent, Assistant Town Manager-Director of Operations, NHS Athletic Director, NPS Director of Physical Education and Health, Environmental Agent, NHS Athletic Trainer, NHS Assistant Principal, NPS Director of Student Health Services, NPS School Pediatrician, Executive Director of Needham Soccer Club and others as needed) to discuss issues, changes to field use protocols, and any other concerns or information related to synthetic turf fields.
- A majority of the Parks and Forestry staff will be trained by Northeast FieldTurf on maintenance techniques.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

- Information specific to synthetic turf and the Town's Synthetic Turf Protocols will be shared with all youth and adult sports league officials during the annual Field Summit process and during the year, as needed.
- The NHS Athletic Director and/or Athletic Trainer will provide information and training on the Town's Synthetic Turf Protocols with High School coaches and other Needham Public Schools (NPS) users each season.
- The Park and Recreation Director will provide written information for youth and adult sports leagues to share with coaches, participants and parents. Current information and the Town's Synthetic Turf Protocols will be maintained on the Town and NPS websites. The Town will endeavor to ensure that this information is also posted on youth and adult sports league websites.
- The Park and Recreation Director will attend youth and adult sports coaches meetings to discuss the Town's Synthetic Turf Protocols on an as-needed basis.
- The Park and Recreation Department, the Health Department, the NHS Athletic Department, and the NPS Director of Student Health Services will all maintain Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) information relative to the Town's synthetic turf fields. The Parks and Forestry Division shall maintain (MSDS) information if products are used to maintain and/or clean the synthetic turf fields. The MSDS sheets will be on file at Needham High School or the Pollard School, as appropriate.

SIGNS

- The Town will install one sign on each synthetic turf field that will read “Be aware that synthetic turf fields are hotter than natural turf fields. On hot days, please use with caution or avoid use.”
- The Town will install a second sign at each field that will indicate what activities are permitted on synthetic turf and what activities are prohibited.
- The Town will install signage of a general nature, and signage related to dogs.
- The Town will endeavor to ensure that signage is simple and readable.

REPORTING

- The Park and Recreation Department will require that youth and adult leagues submit accident information on a standard incident information form. The Park and Recreation Director will ensure that all members of the Synthetic Turf Use Working Group (consisting of the Director of Park and Recreation, Director of Public Health, Parks and Forestry Superintendent and Assistant Town Manager/Director of Operations) are notified about serious concerns.
- The NHS Athletic Director and/or the NPS Director of Student Health Services will require that coaches report incidents and concerns to the Athletic Trainer and school nurses. A monthly report will be provided to the Park and Recreation Department and the Health Department. The Park and Recreation Director will ensure that all members of the Synthetic Turf Use Working Group are notified of serious concerns, and will arrange for the working group to meet at least weekly to discuss same, as appropriate.
- The NHS Athletic Trainer and the NPS Director of Student Health Services will maintain a daily record of synthetic turf field use, noting any concerns related to heat or other issues and will share their report on a monthly basis with the Synthetic Turf Use Working Group.
- The Park and Recreation Director will share any concerns with league officials.

SCHEDULING

- The Park and Recreation Department will ensure that scheduling is limited to local groups who are educated on the use of synthetic turf.

- Scheduled use of the synthetic turf fields for Needham Park and Recreation Summer Programs shall remain under the Director of Park and Recreation.
- Spring, 2009 use will be limited to Needham High School (during and after school hours), Needham Soccer Club, Needham Boys Lacrosse, Needham Girls Lacrosse, and Needham Adult Soccer Association. Little League may have sporadic use of the 60' diamond. The youngest participant in any of these programs is 8 years old.
- Summer, 2009 use will be limited to Park and Recreation summer programs, Needham Adult Soccer, a one-week clinic in June for Boys Lacrosse, a two-day clinic in June for Girls Lacrosse, a one-week clinic in August for the Soccer Club with no midday activity planned, and evening practices for Junior Football in August. Needham High School "double sessions" will begin in late August. With the exception of Sunday morning adult soccer games, the majority of these uses will be weekdays.
- Summer, 2009 use will also include Needham Track Club's using the track and the synthetic turf fields at DeFazio on a limited basis after 5:00 p.m. on weekdays.
- Special events scheduled in 2009 will include the Exchange Club 4th of July events, the Memorial Day Soccer Tournament, and the Track Club's Youth Classic. Each organization holding a special event on a synthetic turf field will be asked to share information on the rules and regulations with special event participants.

TESTING

- Members of the Parks and Forestry Division, Health Department and School Department will collect readings and recordings of relative humidity, and temperature of air, grass, asphalt, actual synthetic turf, 18 inches above the synthetic turf (turf knee height), and 48 inches above the synthetic turf (elbow height). A schedule for the testing, equipment used and a uniformed data sheet will be developed by the Parks and Forestry Division, Health Department and the NPS and revised as needed.
- Reports of the readings noted above will also include date, time, field name, wind conditions and UV index. .
- Temperature readings will be conducted as needed, daily when the ambient temperature exceeds 90 degrees when the synthetic turf fields are scheduled for use, however this protocol does not preclude testing before the ambient temperature reaches 90 degrees. After the Town has gathered more data, temperature reading protocols will continue to be refined.

- If the temperature readings at ground level meets or exceed 135 degrees, the Park and Recreation Director may convene a meeting of the Synthetic Turf Use Working Group, to discuss continued use of the field on that day.
- The Synthetic Turf Use Working Group will meet on a weekly basis commencing on or before May 15, 2009. After the Town has gathered more data and experience, the temperature reading protocol will continue to be refined.
- The Health Department will oversee the testing of the synthetic turf fields for the presence of Volatile Organic Compounds which are emitted as gases from certain solids or liquids, Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons found in the environment, and metals including mercury, arsenic, cadmium, zinc, selenium, and lead. An appropriately certified and experienced vendor will collect two or three samples of the rubber pellets on each field on an annual basis for submission to a fixed-base laboratory.
- All data submitted through Needham High School, through leagues, by the Parks and Forestry Division, the Park and Recreation Department, the Health Department and any other sources is being collected and will be reviewed by the Synthetic Turf Use Working Group. If needed, recommendations for new rules/regulations or new education materials will be developed.

POLICY and RULES/REGULATIONS

- All rules and regulations related to use of synthetic turf fields and the track will be posted and will be provided to all user groups as well as being placed on the Town and NPS web-sites.
- All existing rules and regulations remain in place. The Director of Park and Recreation is responsible for closing any fields that are deemed to pose a threat to the safety of players and/or spectators. Safety concerns can relate to weather (rain, heat) or particular field conditions (sink hole, irrigation malfunction).

MAINTENANCE

- The Parks and Forestry Division will remove any remaining debris including leaves from the surface of the synthetic turf fields.
- Spot grooming will be performed on an as needed basis, particularly on fields being used for sports that heavily impact the playing surface (field hockey sticks, goal mouth areas);
- Grooming will be performed at least once a year, and more often if the spot grooming is not able to keep up with the changes in the field surface;

*****DRAFT*****

- GMAX testing will be performed at least once a year to insure proper cushioning effect;
- The synthetic turf fields may be watered down prior to use as determined by the Parks and Forestry Superintendent.

FALL 2009

- The Synthetic Turf use Working Group will meet in July 2009 to review these protocols and establish a set of protocols for the fall.