



# Prairie Township Recreation Department

## Purpose

Prairie Township recognizes the considerable benefits of providing a variety of quality recreational youth sport programs, as they promote healthy childhood development and a heightened sense of community. To maximize these benefits, the Township invests in resources necessary for positive, physical, psychological and social development across a broad spectrum sporting activities.

Resource allocation is a key principle in the Township's decision-making process as it supports youth sport programs for its residents. On a finite budget, the Township's responsibility is to balance the use of public resources in a manner that maximizes service to the greatest number of Township residents and generates optimal benefit to the overall needs of the community.

This policy establishes the guiding principles, requirements, procedures and fees that govern the allocation and use of Prairie Township fields.

## Priority of Use

The Township's primary obligation to accommodating youth activities is to first serve Prairie Township residents participating in the general recreational level of play for grades K through 12. Recreational league play is recognized by the following criteria:

- The organization is an Ohio non-profit corporation, has received tax-exempt status from the IRS, files all relevant tax returns, maintains compliance with IRS requirements as a tax-exempt entity and is community-focused;
- Teams are formed by the organization without the use of exclusionary tryouts and participation and provides for the inclusion of all levels of skills and abilities;
- Individual teams are coached by unpaid volunteers that may or may not have participants within the program;
- No league games are played against teams from any competitive or semi-competitive leagues;
- All league games are played within the Central Ohio area. (Exceptions may apply for upper age groups.)

Accommodations for non-residents, competitive and semi-competitive teams/leagues, private instructional activities, for-profit organizations, competitive tryouts that are associated directly or indirectly with an organized group are considered secondary to the Township's priority. The Township recognizes the value of various offerings to the community; however, accommodations for secondary activities and leagues will only be made if additional resources are available providing that the needs of the general recreation activities are met. To support this principle, the Township

will issue permits to other organizations and teams for competitive and semi-competitive level of play as resources are available.

Requests by organizations to provide secondary types of activities for field use will be considered based on but not limited to affirmation of the following:

- Recreational scope (i.e.: level of play/competition)
- Residency status of participants
- Population to be served
- Local economic influence
- Exclusivity of participation
- Organizational make-up (i.e.: private, public, for-profit, non-for-profit, etc.)
- Other Township-endorsed service/program schedules
- Participant fees and financial proceeds (i.e.: fund raising, profitability, etc.)
- Compliance with Federal, State and City Laws/Ordinances
- Existing Township Agreements/Contracts/MOU's and other commitments to community stakeholders/partners
- Facility maintenance schedules (i.e.: field management practices, renovations, etc.)
- Intended use of requested resources and potential site impacts
- Risk/Liability concerns, including background checks of organization representatives
- Costs and availability of Township services required
- Compliance with Township policies

## **Policy**

(COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES):

(A) No person in a park shall sell or offer for sale any article, privilege or service without having first obtained written permission from the Director.

(B) No person in a park shall beg, peddle or solicit for money, a privilege or a service.

All organized sporting activities are applicable, and require written permission for conducting such activities in Township parks. Organized activities are those that are represented or affiliated with an organization, private sports business or other types of structured programs. Such activities include all league play (practices and games), tournaments, organized non-league related activities including, but not limited to, camps, clinics, tryouts, training sessions and other similar activities.

Specific requirements and documentation are required in order to receive the appropriate use permit. Permit applications for Township field use, other than common public use, shall be submitted to the Recreation Department for consideration and approval in advance according to the application deadlines established in this policy.

## **Leagues**

All permit applications and supporting documentation for league play must be received no later than Feb 1 of each year. League play consists of only scheduled league games and associated individual team practices. All other uses (tournaments, camps, clinics, tryouts, structured programs, etc.) must receive a separate permit as noted in the following sections of this policy.

Permits for league play will be issued on an annual basis in accordance with the Townships Field Allocation and Fee Schedule for League Play, (Appendix A.)

The following requirements and documentation must be submitted with all league permit applications to affirm all criteria have been met by organizations to qualify for Tier 1-3, according to Appendix A. Organizations not meeting the requirements will automatically be positioned at the tier 4 level.

1. Organizations must provide documentation of their tax-exempt status with the Internal Revenue Service (i.e., IRS determination letter). Organizations must demonstrate compliance with tax return filing requirements by submitting the most recent federal tax filing submitted to the Internal Revenue Service (Form 990). The Township reserves the right to require additional documentation to affirm non-profit and tax-exempt status as necessary. Additionally, upon request by the Township, organizations must disclose financial details of all direct and indirect affiliations with individuals or organizational entities associated with financial gain resulting from the use of Township property, including but not limited to foundations, sports tournaments, organizations, corporate sponsorships, etc., that are not disclosed on the organization's federal tax filing forms.
2. Organizations must secure general liability insurance for the minimum amount of \$1,000,000 (or an amount deemed appropriate by the Township), naming Prairie Township as additional insured. Organizations must notify Prairie Township immediately if the insurance has been canceled or changed. A copy of this insurance certificate must be submitted to the Township prior to any activities on Township property. Failure to maintain the appropriate insurance will result in immediate cancelation of facility use.
3. Organizations must submit their policy in writing regarding the amount of expected game playing time exposure for participants.
4. Criminal background checks are required for all organization representatives, including all coaches, volunteers, staff, Board of Director members and committee chairs. The process used to conduct such tests must be approved by the Township in advance. Results and documentation of all background checks conducted must be submitted annually prior to the start of each fall season, and prior to the commencement of any new individual representing the organization throughout the year. The Township reserves the right to conduct an additional independent background check for any individual and may determine the eligibility of participation or representation based on the results of such checks.
5. A copy of the following documents must also be submitted with the permit application:
  - a. A copy of the organization's Code of Regulations or Bylaws and roster of its Board of Directors;
  - b. The organization's written code of conduct for athletes, spectators and coaches that stresses the importance of good character and specifies ethical obligations and sportsmanship expectations;
  - c. The organization's policy delineating established disciplinary procedures for addressing behavioral problems of athletes, coaches, officials and spectators;

- d. The organization's emergency communication plan used by the organization to ensure that all member coaches and teams are aware of any severe weather policies or emergency advisory systems. It is the responsibility of the organization or league representative, scheduled referee(s), or permit holder to determine whether or not conditions will endanger the safety of the participants and whether or not the activity will have serious adverse effect on field conditions;
  - e. The organization's previous year's game schedules, indicating the number of games played on Township fields;
  - f. Notifications of all registration fees;
6. Organizations are prohibited of "sponsoring" or representing any other organization for the purpose of altering the classification or field use fee assessed to other businesses or organizations.
  7. Prairie Township reserves the right to require additional information relevant to the permit application process or to protect the interests of the Township.

Organizations must inform the Township of any changes to information provided on the permit application including but not limited to league participation, levels of play or other organizational modifications prior to implementation of such changes. Organizations making any such changes during the given permit period will be required to submit an additional permit application for approval. Accommodations to any such modifications are not guaranteed on Township fields, and must be approved prior to implementation.

#### **Tournaments:**

For scheduling purposes, preliminary schedules for tournaments must be received prior to January 1st, each year. The Township will make an effort to accommodate the schedules as requested, however cannot guarantee all accommodations. A separate tournament permit application and supporting documentation must be received at least 90 days prior to the scheduled tournament start date. The actual number of fields permitted for use will be at the discretion of the Township depending on the amount of play, field conditions or other variables that would appropriately protect field quality. All sports tournaments are subject to the requirements and Township fees in accordance to the Prairie Township Tournament Guidebook, (Appendix B).

#### **Non-League/Non-Tournament Play:**

To best accommodate all other field use requests, preliminary schedules for non-league and non-tournament organized activities including, but not limited to games for independent teams from other leagues, tryouts, camps, clinics, instructional training sessions, and other organized activities should be received prior to January 1st for each subsequent year. All non-league/non-Community tournament activity applications and supporting documentation received after January 1st must be received at least 30 days prior to the beginning date of the activity. Permits will be considered and issued according to Prairie Township Field Allocation and Fee Schedule for All Non-League and Non-Tournament Organization Play, (Appendix C), and according to field availability. Non-League/Non-Tournament permit applications can be accessed online at [www.prairietownship.org](http://www.prairietownship.org)

## **Field Use Fees**

Prairie Township charges non-refundable fees for each type of use as indicated in the attached Appendices A, B and C.

In order to prepare final invoices each year for league play, organizations must submit their entire team rosters including the address of every player that has participated in both the fall and spring/summer seasons (including substitute players, player additions, player eliminations, changes/additions, etc.) Rosters must be complete, with accurate residency address information, and submitted within five business days following the final fall season game. Final payments must be paid to the Township before future applications will be considered for the following permit year.

Payment for non-league/non-tournament activities must be paid in full once the permit has been approved and prior to the scheduled activity.

## **Accountability**

Prairie Township reserves the right to deny permit holders any future or existing scheduled use, assess additional fees according to the respective fee schedules, and/or require compensation for costs associated with damages to Township property if it has been determined that one or more of the following has occurred:

1. Required documentation is not submitted, or inaccurate documentation/information is submitted.
2. Field use fees are not paid within the specified time frame.
3. Lack of good stewardship that contribute to unnecessary field damage.
4. Discrimination because of race, religion, color, gender, national origin, age, disability or any other basis prohibited by state or federal law.
5. Participants of the requesting organization have demonstrated dangerous and/or violent behavior towards others or among themselves, and/or participants/organizations whose literature or stated philosophy promotes hatred and/or violence.
6. Condemnation of other individuals or organizations permitted to use Township fields, or preventing others from participating in activities offered by such organizations.
7. Subleasing or transferring of field use permit to an unauthorized entity or individual without prior approval from Prairie Township.
8. Failure to comply with the policies and procedures outlined within this Policy.
9. Disrespectful behavior toward Township staff, other park users or the general public.
10. Conducting activities on Township property that are not included as the intended permitted use.
11. Unauthorized solicitation on Township property of any kind, including the recruitment of individual players, coaches or teams of Prairie Township organizations for the purposes of joining another organization.
12. Any other occurrence that is deemed to be inconsistent with the intent of this policy and the parameters herein.

## **Miscellaneous**

Permits will be issued based on the above mentioned criteria; however, additional criteria may also be considered prior to permits being issued. These criteria include, but are not limited to, conflicts with Township sponsored events, field conditions, Township field maintenance programs, field capacity issues or other conflicts as determined by the Recreation Director or designee.

All outstanding fees must be paid prior to consideration of any new applications. Permits that are approved by the Township only authorize the use of available fields, and do not guarantee field availability due to unforeseen circumstances. The Township reserves the right to close permitted fields at any time and for any reason.

Organizations and/or individuals receiving field use permits are responsible for all field preparation. This includes all field lining, bases and any other equipment or services required to conduct the activities associated with said permit. General turf management, dragging of fields and other field maintenance shall be solely provided by Township staff and will be based on the Township's field maintenance schedule. Any services that are in addition to this maintenance schedule may be subject to additional fees. It is the responsibility of the permit holder to ensure appropriate safety measures are taken. Use of fields in inclement weather or attempts to improve field conditions by digging, excessive grooming/digging, and the depositing of unacceptable fill is prohibited. Prairie Township may seek further payment to compensate for any damages and future field use will be jeopardized. Ball diamonds and fields may only be used if field conditions are appropriate. Prairie Township reserves the right to cancel or postpone scheduled activities based on field conditions.

All rules, regulations, codes of conduct, protocols and guidelines established by the Township for the sake of administering this policy must be adhered to at all times. Behavior and conduct of individuals representing or participating in activities associated with a permit are the responsibility of the permit holder.

## SPORT SEASONS FOR FIELD USAGE

**Primary Seasons** are the fixed dates recognized by the Prairie Township Recreation Department as a specific sport's main/typical season of play. These are determined by staff and the Field Sports Advisory Committee. These dates generally remain the same from year to year.

**Secondary Seasons** are all dates outside of any sport's recognized Primary Season.

SPRING/SUMMER	FALL
<b>Baseball/Softball</b> (Primary) March - July	<b>Field Hockey</b> (Primary) August - October
<b>Lacrosse</b> (Primary) February - May	<b>Football/Flag-football</b> (Primary) August - October
<b>Ultimate Frisbee</b> (Primary) April - June	<b>Soccer</b> (Primary) August - October
<b>Field Hockey</b> (Secondary) April - May	<b>Baseball/Softball</b> (Secondary) August - October
<b>Football/Flag-football</b> (Secondary) April - June	<b>Lacrosse</b> (Secondary) August - October
<b>Soccer</b> (Secondary) April - May	<b>Ultimate Frisbee</b> (Secondary) August - October

- Prairie Township reserves the right to limit field usage, regardless of season, to rest fields and accommodate the number of parking spaces.

## Evaluation

It is the responsibility of the Township's Recreation Director to monitor and evaluate the intended outcomes of this policy annually. Based on results of such analysis the Recreation Director has the discretion to appropriately modify the administrative processes and parameters herein in order to maintain the intent of this Policy.

## Appendix A

### Tier 1 - Prairie Township Recreation Department

Prairie Township Recreation Department has first priority over field usage.

### Tier 2 - Prairie Township Resident Organizations for Recreational Sports

Organizations or groups that provide a Township-wide opportunity to all youth to participate in a sport/recreational activity. These groups do not have selective criteria for choosing players and make the opportunities for play as economically affordable as possible. Tier 2 teams are granted first rights to all field requests, as long as they do not interfere with internal usage, and the Department makes every effort to accommodate their needs. This type of organization makes considerable efforts to assist the Department in the upkeep, maintenance and/or renovation of Township facilities.

- Tier 2 Organizations may reserve field space for an entire season, or up to 12 weeks in advance

Field type	Fees
Field Sports, Grass	\$10/hour/field
Baseball/Softball	\$12/hour/field

### Tier 3 - Club, Travel, and Competitive League-Play that primarily serve Prairie Township

Organizations that have had a long-standing presence in the community in providing sporting activities for youth on a more competitive level. These organizations have a selection criteria and process that could exclude players based on ability and/or number of players/teams. This type of organization makes considerable and consistent efforts to assist the Department in the upkeep, maintenance, renovation of Township facilities and/or with purchasing of equipment.

- Tier 3 Organizations may reserve field space for an entire season, or up to 12 weeks in advance.

Field type	Fees
Field Sports, Grass	\$20/hour/field
Baseball/Softball	\$24/hour/field

### Tier 4 - Club, Travel, and Competitive Leave-Play that do not primarily serve Prairie Township

Individuals, organizations or groups that provide sporting activities for individuals or teams, comprised of Prairie Township residents. These groups are offered the same playing fields as Tier 2 and Tier 3 organizations, if vacancies exist and are scheduled after all Prairie Township, Tier 2 and Tier 3 requests have been completed. Permits for short-term practices or game play are limited to 2 hours for a duration of up to two (2) weeks from the date you make the first booking.

- Tier 4 Organizations may reserve field space up to 3 weeks in advance.

Field type	Fees
Field Sports, Grass	\$40/hour/field
Baseball/Softball	\$48/hour/field

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- The Recreation Department updates the tier 2 & tier 3 list annually. Organizations seeking placement on one of those tiers must submit their request by January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

Field permits are required to reserve a field for league practice, any organized activity and/or a game(s)/trainings that are advertised, or marketed. Permits for short-term practices or games outside of league play are limited to 2 hours for a duration of up to two (2) weeks from the date you make the first booking. A processing fee, usage and extra fees may apply. Permits are issued on an 'as is' basis. Permits must be available on-site for review by Parks personnel. All players play at their own risk. All field users, permitted and non-permitted are required to check the ball field hotline if field conditions are the least bit questionable.

- All fields are subject to a minimum of 2 hours usage; this time should include your set-up, play/practice, and clean-up.
- A fee of \$3 per child per season will be collected to go towards Field Sports Improvements.

### **ADDITIONAL FINES AND DAMAGE FEES**

**Unpermitted League Play:** Unreported league play may be punishable by a fine of \$100 plus the cost of the unpermitted hours and any applicable application/processing fees. Multiple offenses may result in loss of access to PTRD fields.

**Play during Field Closures and Rain Outs:** Permitted organizations that play during PTRD field closures may be assessed a fine of \$100 plus damage fees and may have their field use permit revoked at any time.

**Play during or after Rain:** Permittees who play during or immediately following inclement weather may be assessed a fine of \$100 plus damage fees and may have their field use permit revoked at any time.

Playability can be determined by the user on-site by using these simple criteria:

- Calling the Program and Ball Field Hotline at (614) 907-7998 whenever you're in doubt. If a rainout has been called play is not permitted. If the hotline has not been updated, please use the following guidelines to determine playability:
- If stepping on the infield produces a ½ inch deep or greater water-filled footprint, or when running produces the same result, play is not permitted.
- If there is any doubt, the rule is to follow this policy. Failure to follow this policy can result in fines, assessment of damage charges and revocation of current and future permits.

## Appendix B

**Tournament:** \$150 plus 30% gross fees collected – this fee is applied to all tournament permits using more than two fields. This fee allows PTRD to provide an increased number of staff to address issues that may arise during the tournament.

### Confirmation of Residency

1. Any youth or adult team or league requesting use of PTRD athletic facilities may be required to submit proof of residency to acquire use. At least 70% or more of a team or league participants must be Prairie Township residents to meet residency requirements.
2. All new leagues are required to provide confirmation of residency.
3. Current leagues may be required to submit confirmation documents every three years.

To prove residency PTRD requires players to provide at least two of the following documents:

- Ohio Driver's License/ID Card
- Residential Utility Bill
- School ID

### Commercial Use Fee: Current fee + 30%

All “for profit” businesses booking outdoor athletic facilities will be charged a Commercial Use fee, which is their resident or non-resident fee, plus 30% of gross registration fees for Commercial users renting our athletic facilities.

All leagues and/or organizations applying for use of field space are required to provide proof of tax exempt status at the time of application. Upon confirmation of such status, PTRD will not require the same League and/or organization to re-submit proof of tax exempt status for other applications during that same calendar year.

To prove tax exempt status PTRD requires a copy of the current letter from the IRS US Treasury Department confirming legal status under the 501 (c)(3) code of 1954. (A Copy of your Form 990 will not prove status.)

## ADDITIONAL FINES AND DAMAGE FEES

**Play during Field Closures and Rain Outs:** Permitted organizations that play during PTRD field closures may be assessed a fine of \$100 plus damage fees and may have their field use permit revoked at any time.

**Play during or after Rain:** Permittees who play during or immediately following inclement weather may be assessed a fine of \$100 plus damage fees and may have their field use permit revoked at any time.

Playability can be determined by the user on-site by using these simple criteria:

- Calling the Program and Ball Field Hotline at (614) 907-7998 whenever you're in doubt. If a rainout has been called play is not permitted. If the hotline has not been updated, please use the following guidelines to determine playability:

- If stepping on the infield produces a ½ inch deep or greater water-filled footprint, or when running produces the same result, play is not permitted.
- If there is any doubt, the rule is to follow this policy. Failure to follow this policy can result in fines, assessment of damage charges and revocation of current and future permits.

## **Appendix C Non-League/Non-Tournament Play Fees**

Prairie Township Field Allocation and Fee Schedule for Organized Activities Not Associated with Permitted Leagues or Tournaments

Prairie Township Residents (General Use):	\$25 per field/hour
Resident, Non-Profit Organizations/Independent Teams:	\$35 per field/hour
Non-Resident, Non-Profit Organizations and Teams:	\$45 per field/hour
For-Profit Organizations:	\$55 per field/hour