

Good Practice Sports Ground Inspection Form

Observation Notes

Grass cover

Ideally, sports grounds have a consistent 100% grass cover. As the percentage of bare areas increase across a ground, the associated injury risks also increase. Safety concerns can arise if bare patches are at a different level to the grassed surface. These can cause an uneven surface and different traction characteristics as players move from one area to another. Weeds, tussocks and tufts of different grasses can also lead to an undulating and uneven surface. Tripping and jarring injuries are possible consequences.

Surface evenness

The sports ground surface should be level, flat and even. This should be considered in two ways: for the whole of ground and for specific parts of the ground. Uneven and denuded areas created by sport dimension markings can be hazardous, but are easily rectified. Uneven ground surfaces are evident in the form of patches of bare ground and tufted grass, holes and undulations. For whole of ground evaluation, the person(s) inspecting the ground seeks to conclude that the overall sports ground surface is even and there are not undulations, holes, tussocks or other raised surfaces that present a tripping or falling hazard to players or officials.

Ground hardness/Shock absorbency

Shock absorbency is the extent to which a surface absorbs the impact of a player running on the surface. Sports grounds can feel soft, firm or hard. Shock absorbency is influenced by soil moisture, soil type and grass cover. Extremely hard surfaces may lead to soft tissue injuries caused by falling and to joint injuries caused by compressive forces.

Playing surface/Grip

Both slip resistance and traction are important characteristics of sports ground surfaces as is the interaction with players through their footwear. A player must have enough grip on the surface to accelerate and decelerate at will. The playing surface must also allow players to have sufficient traction to change their direction during play at will. If there is insufficient grip a player may slip which can result in loss of stability and balance and can result in ligament and muscle damage. Conversely, too much grip can entrap a body part such as a foot leading to ankle, knee and hip injuries.

Physical Hazards

Observations

Is there debris (such as glass, stones, faeces, windrows, etc) on the ground?

Yes

No

Are there sprinkler heads and taps that are uncovered and/or not level with the surrounds?

Is there unsafe and/or unsecured perimeter fencing and signage?

Note: If in doubt about the answer to any of these questions, you should indicate "Yes"

Assessment

Potentially
Unsafe

Safe

In terms of ground surfaces safety the hazards on the field are such that conditions for players and officials is:

Note: If you answer "Yes" to any one of the above questions, you should indicate "Potentially Unsafe".

It will indicate that the ground requires further assessment before it should be used for play.

Ground Profile

Observation Focus	Indicate whether the ground is safe or potentially unsafe for play	Is further testing needed to assess ground as being safe for play? (Yes or No)	Is maintenance required before ground can be rated as being safe for play? (Yes or No)
Grass cover			
Surface evenness			
Ground hardness/ Shock absorbency			
Playing surface/ grip or slip			
Physical hazards			

Fit/Not Fit for Play Recommendation

The ground is currently **fit for play** / **not fit for play**. (circle rating)

The following further testing of the ground is recommended before it can be rated as safe:

We recommend the following maintenance action on the ground before it can be rated as safe:

Signed _____

LGA rep

Date

Club rep

Date

Good Practice Sports Ground Inspection Form

Observation Notes (cont.)

Physical hazards

Physical hazards are quite likely to be present on many community grounds. Damaged signage, broken glass and damaged sprinkler heads and uneven surrounds are but a few of the possible hazards that are known to increase the likelihood of player injury. These hazards are easily rectified.

Fit/not fit for play

For a ground to be considered unsafe for play there must be clear evidence and a strong belief that the likelihood and consequences of the surface conditions present an unreasonable injury risk for players and officials. The inspecting person(s) must be able to say that a ground is not fit for play based on safety reasons, not on the basis of the general outward appearance of the ground.

Ground Profile

A Ground Profile is produced when the person(s) inspecting the sports ground aggregates the outcomes of the judgements made previously. As a result of this they are then required to make a judgement that the ground is fit /not fit for play, that objective testing is required, or that maintenance is required to make the ground fit for play. For example if the evaluation of surface evenness indicated that the sports ground sprinkler system might cause players to trip or fall this would be denoted as being potentially unsafe. The person inspecting the ground now has to decide whether the ground is fit for play and whether to also recommend maintenance to fix the problem.

Disclaimer

This publication may be of assistance to you. The acknowledged agencies and their employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence that may arise from you relying on any information therein.

Acknowledgements

This resource was produced with assistance from the Victorian Government and originally developed by the School of Human Movement and Sport Sciences at Federation University (formerly the University of Ballarat).