

**DRAFT**

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**TOWN OF BERLIN**

**FIELD ALLOCATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY, RECREATION & PARKS**

**DIVISION OF RECREATION**

**DIVISION OF PARKS & GROUNDS**

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- Exhibit A – Request Form**
- Exhibit B - Field Rental Rates**
- Exhibit C – Fee Waiver Policy**

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The Town of Berlin, Department of Community, Recreation, and Parks, is dedicated to encouraging healthy lifestyles through providing an array of Recreational programming. The Town recognizes that sports are a fundamental component of this goal and that field availability is necessary for sports organizations. As such, the Department coordinates and issues permits for the use of all Park Fields for the orderly use by the public of facilities recreation activities/programs. The Department works cooperatively to assign fields with youth leagues and community organizations, in an effort to meet the needs of Berlin residents.
- B. The purpose of this policy is to outline the allocation procedures and rental policies for the permitted use of athletic fields in the Town of Berlin. Due to the limited number of fields and facilities available, the Department has established criteria for priority use. The Department will grant priority to Berlin residents and will monitor proper use of permits. Recognizing that increased demand on fields also creates an increased strain on the Town's financial resources, it is possible that the Town may charge rental/reservation rates in order to recover costs to operate, maintain, repair, improve, supervise, and administer the use of parks and athletic fields/facilities.
- C. The Town has experienced tremendous growth in sports including new sports organizations and emerging sports. This growth is anticipated to continue. The Department has already experienced an increased demand for the use of Town athletic fields and finds it necessary to emphasize sharing in the use of all athletic fields among present and future sports organizations.
- D. This policy has been established to ensure that the fields are used for recreational, educational, competitive, and service functions that meet the needs of the community, as well as set clear policies, procedures, regulations and rental rates for such uses. This policy addresses sports specifically and **excludes** other parks rentals such as picnic areas and pool rentals.
- E. The Department reserves the right to make any decision regarding sports programming and facilities or revise these policies and procedures that are in the best interests of community, youth development, and residents of the Town of Berlin.

## II. PARKS AND RECREATION STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

- A. The Town is dedicated to creating positive sports environments for our community. This is done through the development of fair and equitable sports programs offered at affordable prices and accessible times and locations. The rules of the game for all Berlin sporting events, whether as a player, coach or spectator, are; **sportsmanship, fair play, and safety**. Sports are an essential recreation element that helps build a sense of community pride, teamwork, exercise, and a better sense of self-worth. It is the hope of the Town that all groups promote and teach good sportsmanship, healthy lifestyles, improving skills, and build positive relationships.
- B. The Town provides park and recreation facilities for public use and enjoyment and to give all residents opportunities to participate in organized sports and activities.
- C. Since the demand is greater than tax revenues are available to support, it is necessary to charge for the selected group use of athletic fields.

## III. DEFINITION OF TERMS

- A. **Non-profit youth organization** is defined as groups or organizations comprised of at least **75 percent** Berlin residents. Team rosters with individual participant addresses may be required by town staff to verify residency.
- B. **Youth status** is defined as a person under the age of 18 or a person eligible to participate in high school-sponsored events.
- C. **Field Use Permit** is a document issued by the Town of Berlin, Department of Community, Recreation and Parks, through its field allocation process indicating that a specific organization has been approved to use a specific field location for a specific period of time. Permits must be present and available for inspection during the permitted use at each location.
- D. **Allocation** is the process used by the Department to assign sports fields and facilities to recognized user groups for practice, games, tournaments, and other recognized events.
- E. **A recognized community sports organization** is a sports organization that has submitted all the necessary materials as identified in **Section VII** of this document, is in good standing with the Town, and has been approved by the Department to participate in the allocation process.
- F. **Non-Profit status.** A nonprofit or not-for-profit organization is an organization that conducts business for the benefit of the general public without a profit motive. To qualify as a nonprofit organization, the organization must be recognized as a nonprofit by the State of Connecticut and has received a tax exemption from the Internal Revenue Service under Section 501(c) (3).

- G. **Basic services** are defined as the maintenance of safe, clean, attractive parks and facilities. Every effort is made to cover direct and indirect costs. Basic services preserve and promote physical and mental well-being of the community and will continue to be supported by taxpayer resources. (Defined in **section XIX (1)** of this document.)
- H. **Enhanced services** are those services that are added and beyond basic services where revenues are necessary to support continued use. By this definition, individuals can expect to pay for the privilege of using fields and facilities to the exclusion of others and without interference. Enhanced service requests may require additional out of pocket fees to be charged. (Defined in **section XIX (2)** of this document.)

#### **IV. FIELD USE PERMITS**

- A. **Field use Request forms may be obtained on line at [www.town.berlin.ct.us](http://www.town.berlin.ct.us); or in person at the Berlin Community Center, Division of Recreation. Permits are issued as requested. A permit is issued only after an allocation request has been made, the Department has approved all or part of the request, all required documents are submitted, proof of insurance has been shown, and appropriate fees paid. A request does not constitute approval.**
- B. A field use permit will not be issued if there is any balance due for prior field use.
- C. All field users must have the field use permit available for inspection by Town staff, police, or security officials during each use of a location.
- D. **Facility use permits** are issued for the reservations of non sports related facilities such as picnic areas, and other related park amenities. The permits are independent of the field allocation process and must be obtained by any organization requesting any park facility for an organization function.

## V. PRIORITY GROUP CLASSIFICATIONS

### A. Priority use of fields will be allocated as follows:

- i. **Group 1 - Town-sponsored or co-sponsored events.** This includes all Department athletic programs and/or leagues and school interscholastic competitions. Berlin Public Schools will have priority regarding the scheduling of home games, matches, meets and courts they have been issued. This does not include rescheduled games.
- ii. **Group 2 . Nonprofit Town Youth organizations comprised of more than 75 percent Berlin residents.** The organization must be a recognized community sports organization as defined in Section VII and open for participation by all resident youth or those youth attending public or private schools in Berlin.
- iii. **Group 3 - Nonprofit Adult organizations comprised of 75 percent or more Berlin residents, or work full time in Berlin.** Organization must be open for participation by all Berlin residents.
- iv. **Group 4 . Other Nonprofit Youth and Adult users with less than 75% residents.** This includes all other nonprofit organizations not meeting residency requirements who are requesting fields for, league play, tournaments, club teams, recruiting showcases, clinics and/or camps, with individual or team participation fees. These user groups must be in good standing with the Town.
- v. **Group 5 . For Profit Commercial Business located within the Town limits of Berlin.** This includes all local businesses requesting fields for private use.
- vi. **Group 6 . For Profit Commercial Business located outside the Town of Berlin.** This includes all other businesses requesting fields for private use.

- B. **Verification of Residency.** Proof of residency may be required. This will be established by providing verified rosters from the past season that include the names, street addresses and zip codes for all youth participants. The roster must also include the full name and home address, of each coach. This must be provided with the initial field request.

## VI. ALLOCATION PROCESS

- A. The allocation of fields will follow the guidelines of this document. Fields will be allocated and permitted seasonally. These allocations are not intended to interrupt field assignments for teams and/or organizations during the course of a season that have already started.
- B. The Department must receive completed requests no later than **February 15<sup>th</sup>** of each year for spring and summer reservations, and no later than **June 15<sup>th</sup>** for fall reservations. Requests received past these dates will be filled on an as available basis.
- C. The Department reserves the right to make adjustments in the field allocation process as needed to address recognized needs or resolve conflicts.
- D. After the specified time to receive requests has past, the Department staff will begin the field allocation process of assigning fields, dates and times to the various organizations based on group classifications and the priorities in this policy. Allocations will be conducted in as fair and equitable manner as possible. However, the Department has the discretion to allocate in the best interest of the Town. **It may not be possible to grant all requests.**
- E. **Sport Season Priority**
- i. Traditional sports seasons have priority use over shoulder seasons. Shoulder seasons are defined as the date range prior to or immediately after the months that most traditional sports seasons begin and end.  
**Spring Sports** (baseball, softball, Lacrosse)
    - Priority use is from the beginning of April to mid-June.
    - Shoulder season for spring sports includes those days prior to April 1st and mid-June to mid-August.**Fall sports** (soccer, football)
    - Priority use is from the first Tuesday after Labor Day to mid November.
    - Shoulder season for fall sports includes mid-August through Labor Day and late November to through December.
  - ii. The Town reserves the right to impose charges for the shoulder seasons (as field availability may be limited).

- F. Once completed applications are received, all fields will be assigned using a consistent set of criteria including but not limited to:
  - i. **Priority group and sport season** as outlined in **Section VI (E)**.
  - ii. **Past history** and use of facilities with the Town. This includes previous allocation and use of fields, proper and timely payment, response to requests for information, compliance with established rules and policies and conditions of fields after use. A request for field allocation will not be considered unless all invoices for prior use have been paid in full.
- I. The Town reserves the right to cancel an allocation to accommodate the needs of any Town-sponsored/co-sponsored tournament and/or special event.
- J. Requests for additional use, programs or facilities not covered by the Field Allocation Policy should be submitted with the organization's original request. Additional fees may apply.

## **VII. COMMUNITY SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS**

- A. **The Department recognizes community sports organizations** that provide athletic leagues for youth and adults. These organizations are authorized to provide team sports for Berlin residents in cooperation with the Department and are responsible for managing their programs in accordance within the policies, procedures, and guidelines outlined in this document.
- B. In order to be recognized by the Department and to be eligible to participate in the field allocation process, youth and adult organizations must meet the following criteria:
  - i. Provide a statement of need that explains how the organization will benefit the residents of Berlin.
  - ii. The organization has a mission statement or articles of incorporation or organization stating that the objectives of the organization are of a nonprofit and non-commercial nature.
  - iii. The organization must conduct open registration regardless of skill level. It is strongly recommended that each youth league maintain a national affiliation with the National Alliance of Youth Sports (NAYS) or an equivalent program. The organization must conduct a sports program through volunteer coaches and administrators and make every effort to abide by the philosophy that everyone plays.

- iv. Each organization must establish, maintain and operate under a set of bylaws.
- v. The organization must provide proof of its nonprofit status by providing documentation from the Internal Revenue Service showing that it has a tax exemption under Section 501(c)(3) or other applicable provision.
- vi. It is strongly recommended that each youth organization conduct criminal background check.
- vii. Registration must be open to the public regardless of race, creed, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, economic status, ability or disability.

## **VIII. TOURNAMENTS**

- A. The Town has an interest in developing and attracting tournaments to the community. Tournaments are a unique opportunity to showcase facilities and the community, provide enhanced levels of play, support economic development and provide revenue for the Town. As such, tournaments will be evaluated on a case by case basis with a goal to balance local play with attracting out of town visitors and revenue.
- B. Tournaments will not be part of the allocation process and will be considered and developed by a separate agreement.

## **IX. COST RECOVERY POLICY**

- A. As the Town continues to grow and facilities age, the Department must develop a financial system to support community investment while maintaining a high level of service. The Town acknowledges that the community benefits when residents are engaged in sports activities. Therefore, the recovery policy is intended for participants to supplement, rather than supplant, the investment of the general taxpayers. The recovery policy strives to:
  - i. Pay for and augment operation/maintenance costs for a field.
  - ii. Control use of the field.
  - iii. Assess a portion of the costs to users who may not be tax supporters.
  - iv. Enable the Department to provide fields for which funds might not otherwise be available.
- B. The primary purpose of this policy statement is to develop an understanding that the pricing of services is a conscious procedure that requires continual investigation and review by Department staff.
- C. For details in pricing and fees, please refer to **Exhibit A, Field Rental Rates.**
- D. **A 10% Cancellation Fee will be charged on all permits processed and then canceled.**

## **X. FEE WAIVER POLICY**

- A. Applicants requesting a fee waiver for the use of athletic fields or courts must do so in writing to the Department of Community, Recreation and Parks. Requests will be submitted to the Parks and Recreation Commission for their input and approval. Upon the Parks and Recreation Commission approval, a request is then sent on the Town Council for final approval. The fee waiver process will take a minimum of six to eight weeks. User groups with fee waivers may be billed for fields/courts that they have reserved and have not used. **See Exhibit C.**

## **XI. MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. Field users are responsible for any and all damage or excessive use to Town equipment, and property. If additional maintenance is required (in excess of normal services/time), the applicant will be charged accordingly. All Maintenance issues must be coordinated through the Superintendent of Parks & Grounds or his designee.

## **XII. INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS**

The Town of Berlin is not responsible for accidents, injuries or loss/damage to property of individuals/groups using public fields and facilities. The applicant will be held responsible for all actions, behavior and damages caused by his/her participants/guests/attendees. All applicants requesting use of athletic fields will be required to provide the Town with a certificate of insurance providing proof of the following coverage:

- i. Public liability and property damage insurance in an amount no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.
- ii. The Town of Berlin must be named as additionally insured.
- iii. The coverage shall not be canceled or reduced without a minimum of 30 day written notice to the Town of Berlin.
- iv. The certificate must be submitted a minimum of 10 days prior to the event to:

### XIII. FIELD USAGE RULES AND REGULATIONS

- A. The Organization and all those associated with the Organization shall follow established facility and park rules.
- B. Games and practices are not to start before 8:00 a.m. or extend past 10:00 p.m. (without prior approval). Organizations are responsible for making necessary changes/alterations to their rules and regulations regarding game times to reflect park hours.
- C. Groups of 10 or more individuals wishing to use a field must acquire a permit with the Town. A field permit must be available during use and be presented to any Town or representative upon request.
- D. It is the responsibility of the organization's president and the designated liaison to enforce the rules and regulations regarding the conduct of the group while using permitted facilities. League representatives are also responsible for ensuring that coaches receive and understand that a permit must be on site and presentable during field use.
- E. Use begins and ends at the times stated on the field use permit, including set-up and clean-up.
- F. Groups are not allowed on fields prior to the start time listed on the permit and are required to have the fields cleaned and cleared by the ending time indicated on the permit.
- G. Permits times includes time for warm ups and preparation of the field.
- H. Field preparation and participant warm-up is allowed within the parameters of field use hours. Additional charges will be incurred for any unauthorized or extended field use beyond the times listed on the permit. Check the field use permit for specific times to access the fields. Unauthorized or extended field use beyond times listed on the permit may result in the retention of a portion of or all of the deposit and/or result in the cancellation of current use and /or prohibition of future use.
- I. No subleasing of fields is allowed under any circumstance, unless written authorization is granted by the Town. **Unauthorized subleasing of fields will result in revocation of all permits indefinitely.**
- J. **Any unauthorized use including using fields without a permit or interfering with another permitted use will result in the revocation of any permit indefinitely.**
- K. Parks and Recreation Department staff will perform all maintenance on Town fields unless written authorization is granted by the Town. A field use permit does not

authorize an organization to make improvements or perform maintenance on a Town field.

- L. Town fields will not have bases available. Users may request bases be made available, upon payment of a deposit fee.
- M. Practice fields will not be prepped for each practice; they will be dragged as needed, determined by the Parks & Grounds Division.
- N. Any league or team canceling a lighted field must give 24 hours notice in writing, or it may forfeit payments made or invoiced. The exception is inclement weather.
- O. Portable goals and/or cones are allowed but must be removed daily.
- P. Holes may not be dug in the grass or dirt infield. The Town reserves the right to impose charges to cover the cost of repairing field damage.
- Q. Each user group is responsible for picking up trash and debris and depositing it into the proper trash bins at the conclusion of games and practices. Adjoining areas must also be clear of all trash.
- R. Organizations must leave park areas immediately after games and practices, safely and quietly, especially after late games.
- S. Misuse of a public park or field or the failure to follow established procedures, rules and regulations by any group or individual of a group is cause for revocation or denial of existing permits or future applications.
- T. No group or individual is permitted to maintain a storage unit (or similar object) on or around a field without prior written approval from the Town.

#### **XIV. CONDITIONS OF USE**

- A. Tournament, practice and league game dates must be specified when making field reservations including set up and take down.
- B. All leagues must make photocopies of their facility permits to be carried by each coach or manager. It must be shown upon the request of any designated Town official, staff member, or security official.
- C. ***The Department must be notified immediately if a reserved field(s) is no longer needed or if there is a change in the organization's playing schedule.***

## **XV. TURF PRESERVATION**

Cooperation is needed for the preservation of turf on Town fields by following these guidelines:

- A. Field use, especially practices, should be conducted in such a way that the action takes place on different sections of turf, thus reducing excessive damage in one area. Rotate use of areas and, when possible, stay off fringe or bare areas to limit erosion and further damage.
- B. Replace turf divots at the end of each day to help re-root grass.
- C. No tarps or material that may damage the grass may be placed on the turf. Any turf coverings used must be made of a breathable material.
- D. Do not use fields during or after a heavy rain, or when wet or muddy.
- E. Multi use sports team practices are not to be held on the infield area of a softball or baseball diamond.
- F. Remove all equipment at the conclusion of each day.
- G. It is the responsibility of each field rental group to report hazards in a timely fashion to the Division of Parks & Grounds; 860-828-7027.
- H. Do not drive or park cars, golf carts, motorcycles, or other motorized vehicles on turf areas.

## **XVI. ATHLETIC FIELD LINING/MARKING**

- A. Lining of Town fields is prohibited without prior written approval.
- B. Burning, painting lines or other modifications on Town fields is prohibited.

## **XVII. FIELD/FACILITY MODIFICATIONS**

- A. Requests to modify or improve any Town **field/facility** must be submitted for review to the Department for consideration. **A request to modify or improve a site does not constitute approval.**
- B. No permanent structures or equipment can be erected on Town fields or facilities unless approved by the Town, and must be dedicated for community use.

## **XVIII. INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

- A. The Town reserves the right to cancel or suspend field use permits when field conditions could result in injury to players or cause damage to fields. Permits may also be cancelled when the health and safety of participants is threatened due to impending conditions, including but not limited to, heavy rains, or high winds.
- B. During inclement weather, the Town's Parks & Grounds staff, will assess the playability of all Town-owned fields to determine if use will occur. The Parks & Grounds Superintendent or designated representative has the authority to close any/all fields within the Town. In the event of field closures, the organization's authorized representative will have the responsibility to communicate with all coaches and parents.
- C. In the event Department staff is not available to answer questions regarding field closures, it is the responsibility of each field user/league to demonstrate good judgment in communicating with teams within their programs. Each user/league will be held responsible for any decision communicated.
- D. Groups witnessing misuse of fields by other scheduled or unscheduled users are advised to contact the Town of Berlin, Department of Community, Recreation, and Park Services, at 860-828-7009 or the Berlin Police Department at 860-828-7080.

## **XIX. PARKS MAINTENANCE SERVICES (SUBJECT TO ANNUAL ALLOCATIONS)**

- 1) **Basic Services** - The following services are provided as a **basic level** of maintenance and support, unless otherwise authorized in writing. These services can be requested for additional cost as part of the annual allocation and permit process:
  - a) **Baseball/Softball**
    - i) Appropriate seasonal ball field preparation
    - ii) Mowing of grass at least once a week
    - iii) Infield prep and dragging (where applicable)
    - iv) Trash canister pick up daily
    - v) Installation of pitcher's mound
    - vi) Maintenance of fencing and backstops for normal wear and tear
    - vii) Line infields, as agreed upon for games; no lines for practices

**b) Multi-use sports fields**

- i) Appropriate season field maintenance
- ii) Mowing of grass at least once a week
- iii) Trash canister pick up
- iv) Standard goals at park sites

**2) Enhanced Services – Additional Fees for Out of Pocket costs may be charged.**

- i) Additional Lining
- ii) Additional field grooming
- iii) Use of lights, where applicable
- iv) Use of Restrooms
- v) Additional trash barrels/pick-ups
- vi) Additional per use requests.

**3) Field closures -** An annual turf improvement and renovation program may be scheduled at all sites to maintain field sustainability. This may include the resting of turf that has been recently seeded or replaced with sod and have seen extreme use. The Town makes every effort to accommodate groups and organizations. However, the health and safety of the users and the condition and playability of the fields takes precedence. As a result, the Town may close fields, deny use of a field, and/or alternate sites for athletic use. Closures are kept to a minimum when fields are in playable condition.

## **XX. PERMIT CANCELLATION**

The Department reserves the right to cancel any reservation (permit) for Town or field use for any of the following reasons:

- i. It conflicts with a Town-sponsored league, program, activity, or event
- ii. Maintenance needs/issues
- iii. Overuse of a field
- iv. Unsafe conditions

**In these cases, all attempts will be made to provide advance notice and to schedule an alternate location. In the event of an emergency, when only short or no notice can be afforded, groups must cooperate with the cancellation so as not to risk loss of rental/allocation privileges. The Town is not obligated to provide alternate fields if none are available.**

## **XXI. NOTICE OF NON-USE OF FIELDS**

When permits are issued, a specific field(s) is reserved for the user, to the exclusion of others. **Groups may not assign their scheduled time to other groups.** Any such action will result in the loss of rental/allocation privileges. Recognizing this exclusivity, groups should only reserve the fields they intend to use. Field users must notify the Town to report any reserved time that can be released for general public use or to other groups.

## **XXII. CONCESSIONS**

- C. Any organization wishing to operate temporary concessions at park locations or other locations within the park system, must obtain prior approval from the Parks and Recreation Commission and Town Council and obtain a temporary health permit through the Department of Health at 860-828-2822. A copy of the temporary Health Department permit must be provided to the Department of Community, Recreation, and Parks. The organization is responsible for all trash clean-up, pulling of trash bags from trash cans and removal of trash to dumpsters.
- D. Any tournament organization wishing to sell other food items during its tournament, where concessions are available must obtain permission from the Town, and obtain a temporary health permit as needed.
- E. Any organization wishing to sell or allow a vendor to sell T-shirts, equipment etc. must notify and obtain permission from the Department of Community, Recreation, and Parks, the Parks and Recreation Commission and Town Council. A vendor permit may also be required through the Berlin Police Department.
- F. If an organization that contracts with any outside company, that company must provide the Town with and Insurance Certificate naming the Town as an additional insured.

## **XXIII. ADDITIONAL SUPERVISION**

The Town may require a field user to provide security or police protection when deemed necessary. Additional park personnel will be assigned if required by the Town. Any resulting expenses or costs as a result will be billed to the field user.

## **XXIV. TRAFFIC AND PARKING**

- A. Field users must instruct participants and spectators to park in facility parking lots and public parking areas. If traffic/parking is an issue, the user group/organization must provide volunteers to direct participants and spectators to designated parking areas. It is the users responsibility to alleviate parking and traffic issues.
- B. No vehicles are allowed on Town fields or property (other than parking lots) without written permission noted on the permit issued by the Town.
- C. Some neighborhood streets adjacent to park property have limited parking. It is the field users responsibility to notify participants and spectators of these no parking areas. Violators may be ticketed.

## **XXV. VIOLATIONS**

Violations of this policy may, at the Departments discretion, result in the immediate loss of existing field allocations, the revocation of existing permits, the refusal of future allocation requests, charges for the cost of any modification or repair to a field or facility related to the violation, and other actions as warranted. The Department will provide notice of the violation and the action it will be taking as a result of the violation.

**Town of Berlin  
Community, Recreation & Parks Department  
230 Kensington Rd.  
Berlin Connecticut, 06037**

**860-828-7009  
[www.town.berlin.ct.us](http://www.town.berlin.ct.us)**