



Minchinhampton Golf Club

Adverse Weather Policy

Introduction

Minchinhampton Golf Club (MGC) is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy environment for our members, guests and employees. To ensure the aims, objectives and values of the Club are met, and all aspects of the law are observed, this Policy applies to all areas of the Golf Courses, including the Driving Range and Practice Areas.

Each golfer has a personal responsibility to be safe on a golf course and to be aware of the Club's Policy set out below relating to adverse weather conditions in terms of general play and under competition circumstances.

Policy

This Policy establishes the Course Closure Protocols that are to apply at MGC in the event of Adverse Weather. It is important that members, guests and employees understand the need to sometimes close or otherwise protect the courses in extreme weather.

MGC will take all reasonable measures to minimise the risks to employees, contractor's, visitors, and golfers from adverse weather conditions and will take the following action:

For golfers:

- Monitor local weather reports
- Monitor local conditions during "storm warnings"
- Make information available.

For employees:

- Establish and maintain effective tele communication system for advising employees when lightning is in the vicinity
- Establish and maintain an effective tele communication system (ie signal) to advise those employees out on the courses when to cease and then resume work
- Provide protection from extreme heat, cold or high UV activity by the issuing of appropriate weather (hot or cold) work gear and sunscreen creams

- Provide advice as to how to stay safe on the course, for instance, by avoiding tall objects (eg. trees, masts, elevated stiles, high ground) in the event of lightning or high winds, or taking shelter in low lying areas such as bunkers, as appropriate

Responsibilities

This Policy considers the following as Adverse Weather:

- Thunder & Lightning
- Fog & Mist
- Ice & Snow
- Sun, Heat & Humidity
- Heavy rain/high winds/flooding

When any of the above conditions represent an unacceptable hazard to Members, guests, and employees, the course will be closed, play suspended, or work stopped. This decision resides with:

- The Starter (when on duty, relating to Fog & Mist; Thunder & Lightning)
- The Senior Greenkeeper (when on duty, for Ice & Snow; Heavy rain/high winds/flooding; and for Thunder & Lightning instructions to the greenkeeping team)
- The Professional team (when Starter/Senior Greenkeeper not on duty, for all adverse weather conditions).

This applies to both New and Old Courses.

General Procedures

Decisions have to be made and responsibilities are set out to ensure all are aware of what is required. The Senior Greenkeeper on duty will monitor the weather outlook and communicate with the Starter and ProShop to assess whether restrictions are necessary, the outlook for the day, and when reviews might be necessary to update the situation. This would be done as early as possible in the day.

A decision to close the courses would be posted on the MGC web-site as soon as possible. In certain circumstances, the decisions may vary between the New and Old courses.

If the weather deteriorates during the day, the Senior Greenkeeper on site would determine whether the conditions are such that there is a likelihood of play becoming unsafe, or the courses could suffer severe damage. The Starter, if still on duty, and the ProShop would be informed of the decision to close the courses, so play can be stopped.

The Starter, or the ProShop team, would be responsible for informing players of the closure of the courses, so a round cannot start.

NOTE: Once a round has commenced it is the responsibility of each golfer to decide whether to come in – taking into account their safety and the safety of others.

An update of the situation would be posted on the MGC web-site.

If no greenkeeping employees are available on site, the ProShop would be expected to take the matter forward and take the necessary action for the remainder of the day concerned.

Procedures to be followed by employees and golfers are set out in the following Sections.

It should be noted that bad weather, NOT accompanied by thunder and/or lightning, is not of itself sufficient reason to discontinue play. See each section below.

Lightning

IN THE EVENT OF THUNDER AND LIGHTNING, EACH INDIVIDUAL PERSON IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING THEIR OWN SAFETY

When lightning is **IMMINENT** employees and golfers are expected to take shelter indoors, where possible, until it is safe to resume work/play. This is usually 30 minutes **after** the last clap of thunder.

At no time during an episode of thunder and/or lightning will any employee be expected to leave the safety of a building to go outside. Members/golfers can decide for themselves whether to drive away from the Club.

It is acknowledged that **LIGHTNING IS A SEVERE HAZARD THAT MUST BE VIEWED SERIOUSLY.**

Procedures to be followed by golfers (members and visitors)

Under general play, a player should discontinue play when in his/her opinion, lightning is a threat. MGC recommends that if lightning is imminent, all play **MUST** be discontinued.

MGC accepts no liability for any injury to a golfer (member or visitor) who fails to comply with the requirements of this Policy and its Procedures and who continues to play when:

- there is a risk of lightning
- play is suspended
- the course has been closed due to adverse weather conditions

Golfers who have not started their round will be provided with relevant information as to the threat of lightning, based on local weather details by either the Starter (on the first tee) or by staff in the ProShop (when making a tee booking).

If providing this information results in golfers missing their allotted tee time, every effort will be made to reschedule the booking at the soonest mutually convenient opportunity.

If a visiting golfer's tee time cannot be rescheduled after a lightning related delay, a refund will be offered.

If there is no early warning about lightning, and play has commenced, all golfers on the courses will be expected to leave the course and proceed immediately to the Clubhouse. It is the responsibility of each golfer to decide whether to come in – taking into account their safety and the safety of others.

A golf buggy does NOT provide protection from lightning. Golfers must **not** seek shelter under trees or an umbrella.

The Rules of Golf (2019) clearly set out the golfer's responsibilities, in terms of dealing with adverse weather conditions during competitions.

<https://www.randa.org/en/rog/2019/rules/players-edition/rule-5#5-7>

During the play of a formal competition when there is an imminent risk of lightning, the following competition rules will apply:

- the competition will be suspended
- each competitor will be required to stop play, to mark the position of their ball, lift the ball and then leave the course
- any player continuing play, after play has been suspended, will be disqualified from the competition
- the competition will be resumed only when it is safe so to do.
- if the competition committee (where a member of that committee is available at the course) or a member of the Professional team do not consider it safe to resume play, the competition will be cancelled/abandoned.

It remains the responsibility of each golfer to recover/retrieve any equipment they have left on the course during a lightning related delay when it is safe so to do.

Procedures to be followed by employees

When lightning is imminent, employees will be contacted for the cessation of all work on the courses. This would generally be an instruction from the Senior Greenkeeper on site at the time.

Employees are then required to make their way to the nearest place of safety – a building.

When the risk from lightning has passed a further communication will be made by the Senior Greenkeeper on duty at the time. Work may then be resumed.

Employees failing to comply with the requirements of this Policy and Procedures may invoke the Disciplinary Procedures.

Fog and Mist

Procedures to be followed by golfers (members and visitors)

In the event of poor visibility, the Course Starter, or a member of the ProShop team at the Old Course, have the responsibility to decide if the course can be open for play, or remain open for play if the conditions change (eg. visibility worsens and is deemed unacceptable for play).

If the Starter is not on duty, the ProShop team would decide whether the course should be open and play can be started. Once a round has commenced, each golfer is expected to exercise their own judgement on whether it is safe to continue to play the course, or to suspend play, until visibility has improved. It is the responsibility of each golfer to decide whether to come in – taking into account their safety and the safety of others.

The Course Starter or ProShop will provide golfers with sufficient weather information for each golfer to make an informed decision as to the safety of all course users (other golfers,

members of the Greens' team) in the event of fog or mist, including recommending that play be suspended, or the start of a round is deferred.

If providing this information results in golfers missing their allotted tee time, every effort will be made to reschedule the booking at the soonest mutually convenient opportunity.

If a visiting golfer's tee time cannot be rescheduled after a fog/mist related delay, a refund will be offered.

The Rules of Golf (2019) clearly set out the golfer's responsibilities, in terms of dealing with adverse weather conditions during competitions.

<https://www.randa.org/en/rog/2019/rules/players-edition/rule-5#5-7>

During the play of a formal competition when there is a stoppage due to fog/mist, the following competition rules will apply:

- the competition will be suspended
- each competitor will be required to stop play, to mark the position of their ball, lift the ball and then leave the course
- any player continuing play, after play has been suspended, will be disqualified from the competition
- the competition will be resumed only when it is safe so to do.
- if the Competition Committee (where a member of that committee is available at the course) or a member of the Professional team do not consider it safe to resume play, the competition will be cancelled/abandoned.

It remains the responsibility of each golfer to recover/retrieve any equipment they have left on the course during a fog related delay when it is safe so to do.

MGC accepts no liability in the event of injury to a golfer during a period of poor visibility.

Procedures to be followed by employees

In the event of fog or mist, all greenkeepers working on the course should wear:

- High visibility clothing
- Protective headwear (eg. bump caps) to reduce/eliminate the risk of head injuries

If visibility is so poor, employees will be advised whether to suspend work on the course and when it is considered safe to resume work. This decision will be made by the Senior Greenkeeper on site.

Failure to comply with the requirements of this Policy and Procedures by employees may invoke the Disciplinary Procedures.

Ice and Snow

Procedures to be followed by golfers (members and visitors)

Each user of the facilities at MGC's courses is expected to exercise their personal judgement to stay safe and avoid slips, trips and falls during periods of ice, snow, frost, or hail.

In particular, there are areas where slopes and/or steps may be very slippery so extra caution should be exercised.

At times of very cold weather, when there is a risk of ice on artificial surfaces, MGC will:

- take reasonable care to maintain the car park and the paths around the club house free from ice
- display slips/trips yellow Notice Boards at prominent places to advise users of the risk of slipping/falling due to icy surfaces
- consider suspension of the use of buggies
- have a frost/temperature indicator sign on display at the entrance to the New Course car park

Where Ice, Snow or Frost is evident, the Senior Greenkeeping employee will decide whether to impose the temporary/winter greens.

NOTE: MGC has a clear objective to keep the greens open, when possible, during the winter, but it is important to be aware that significant investment has been made over the last few years to maintain the high quality of the greens. Therefore, during periods of frost, especially when combined with rain and subsequent thawing, temporary/winter greens will be brought into play, or in extreme conditions the courses may be closed – to protect the grass root systems from unnecessary, excessive damage.

Golfers who decide to play the courses against the advice of the club's representatives, do so at their own risk. MGC will accept no liability under these circumstances.

Procedures to be followed by employees

Employees who are expected to work outside during periods of cold weather will be provided with warm clothing. It should be noted that several layers of light clothing are better than a single heavy layer. Clothing that breathes and wicks away sweat/moisture from the skin is recommended.

As a significant amount of heat loss is through the scalp, a hat (preferably with a thermal line) should be worn.

Waterproof gloves with a separate thermal liner will keep fingers warm. This is especially important when using handheld vibrating tools, as this will reduce the risk of vibration injury (eg. vibration white finger).

Boots and shoes should be waterproof and be able to protect the feet from crushing and impact damage.

Failure to comply with the requirements of this Policy and Procedures by employees may invoke the Disciplinary Procedures.

Sun, Heat and Humidity

General statement

When it is hot, sunny and/or humid there is an increased risk of individuals becoming dehydrated, particularly if they are out on the courses during the hours of 11.00 and 15.00.

Players and members of staff with pre-existing medical conditions should consider the implications that dehydration may have on their health and whether any medicines they are taking (either prescribed or “over the counter”) could exacerbate the risk of dehydration and take every reasonable effort to minimise the risk.

An additional risk, that everyone on the courses should be aware of when the weather is hotter, is that of **snakes**.

The snakes that may be found on the courses are grass snakes (non-venomous) and adders (venomous). Adders are not aggressive snakes but will bite if trodden on. Whilst a bite from an adder has not been fatal in the UK in recent years, such a bite can result in a range of symptoms (nausea, drowsiness, swelling/bruising in the area of the bite) that may vary in severity between individuals. It is essential that anyone bitten by an adder should call an ambulance immediately and advise the Call Centre that the person has suffered an adder bite.

Any such incident should be reported to the Senior Manager on duty at the respective Clubhouse at the time of the incident and ensure that the relevant Incident Report Form is also completed, as soon as is practical.

Procedures to be followed by golfers (members and visitors)

Each golfer has a personal responsibility for the following when the weather is sunny, hot and/or humid:

- ensuring they have sufficient non-alcoholic and non-caffeine beverages with them on the course
- ensuring they are adequately protected against the harmful UV rays by wearing long sleeved shirts/blouses, trousers rather than shorts, a hat or other suitable head covering
- applying an appropriate sun block preparation. The Club provides suncream for players - bottles can be found in the changing rooms at both New and Old Courses.
- using a buggy (if available) when prolonged exposure to the sun, heat and humidity is unavoidable

MGC will make available drinking water for golfers through the Clubhouse bar services and the water dispensers in the New Course’s changing rooms and the main entrance area of the Old Course. On particularly hot days, additional water or cold drinks may be supplied at each of the half-way houses at the New Course. This is not possible at the Old Course.

Procedures to be followed by employees

MGC is responsible for providing appropriate clothing that will protect employees working on the courses from the adverse effects of sun, heat and humidity.

Any employee exposed to sun, heat and humid weather, who has a pre-existing medical condition that is likely to be exacerbated by the effects of sun, heat and humidity, has a responsibility to advise their line manager of the condition and associated risks.

Each employee has a duty to wear the protective clothing (hats etc) and sun block provided by MGC, unless there are clear reasons for not so doing that have been discussed with and recorded by their line manager.

Where appropriate and in order to protect the health of the employee, MGC may request and will pay for an Independent Occupational Health assessment.

Heavy rain/high winds and flooding

Weather conditions can change during the day and heavy rain with high winds can mean that dangerous conditions can result, regarding trees becoming vulnerable, for instance, by losing branches etc.

When heavy rain results in flooding the issues that need to be considered include dangerous conditions for golfers such as slippery ground, but also the potential of serious damage to the golf course by continuing to play.

Procedures to be followed by golfers (members and visitors)

The Senior Greenkeeper on duty will review the condition of the courses and monitor the weather outlook and will then communicate with the Course Starter and/or ProShop to assess whether restrictions are necessary, the outlook for the day, and when reviews might be necessary to update the situation during the day.

This would be done as early as possible in the day.

The Course Starter or ProShop will provide golfers with sufficient weather information for each golfer to make an informed decision as to the safety of all course users (other golfers, greens' staff) in the event of heavy rain and/or high winds, including recommending that play be suspended, or that the start of a round is deferred.

A decision to close the courses would be posted on the MGC web-site as soon as possible.

If the weather deteriorates during the day, the Senior Greenkeeper on site would determine whether the conditions are such that there is a likelihood of play becoming unsafe, or the courses could suffer severe damage.

The Starter, if still on duty, and Pro Shop would be informed of the decision to close the courses, so further play can be stopped.

If no member of the greenkeeping team is available on site, the ProShop would be expected to take the matter forward and agree the necessary action for the remainder of the day concerned, to assess the flooding situation, or the potential for trees/branches to fall down causing injury, and whether the course is unplayable.

Once a round has commenced, each golfer is expected to exercise their own judgement on whether it is safe to play the course, or to suspend play until the amount of rainfall/ flooding situation has improved.

If the heavy rain causes flooding that makes the course unplayable during play, the decision to cease play and close the course rests with the Senior Greenkeeper on site, or the ProShop team if no greenkeeper is on site.

If providing this information results in golfers missing their allotted tee time, every effort will be made to reschedule the booking at the soonest mutually convenient opportunity.

If a visiting golfer's tee time cannot be rescheduled after a heavy rain, high winds or flooding related delay, a refund will be offered.

The Rules of Golf (2019) clearly set out the golfer's responsibilities, in terms of dealing with adverse weather conditions during competitions.

<https://www.randa.org/en/rog/2019/rules/players-edition/rule-5#5-7>

During the play of a formal competition when there is heavy rain resulting in flooding (making the course unplayable), the following competition rules will apply:

- the competition will be suspended
- each competitor will be required to stop play, to mark the position of their ball, lift the ball and then leave the course
- any player continuing play, after play has been suspended, will be disqualified from the competition
- the competition will be resumed only when it is safe so to do.
- if the competition committee (where a member of that committee is available at the course) or Professional staff do not consider it safe to resume play, the competition will be cancelled/abandoned.

It remains the responsibility of each golfer to recover/retrieve any equipment they have left on the course during a heavy rain/flooding related delay, when it is safe so to do.

MGC accepts no liability in the event of injury to a golfer during a period of high winds or heavy rainfall.

Procedures to be followed by employees

Employees who are expected to work outside during periods of heavy rain or high winds will be provided with the appropriate waterproof and warm clothing.

Failure to comply with the requirements of this Policy and Procedures by employees may invoke the Disciplinary Procedures.

Version Control:

Version	Risk Committee review date	Board endorsement date	Changes
V1		June 2017	
V2	12/01/2022		Annual Review
V2		31/01/2022	Board Approved – no changes