

# SPORTS FIELD ALLOCATION POLICY

**Policy Number:** COMS - 010  
**Responsibility:** Recreation Coordinator  
**Approval:** Sarnia City Council  
**Effective Date:** July 25, 2022  
**Date of Last Review:** December 16, 2024

## 1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to provide a framework for community groups and the general public to ensure equitable and transparent access to all publicly owned sports fields, and to consider current and future industry trends that may affect future operations.

## 2.0 SCOPE

This Policy shall apply to all persons, herein named the user, utilizing City of Sarnia sports fields/pitches, sport courts, baseball diamonds and designated outdoor sports spaces. This Policy shall also apply to all staff members who are involved within the Sports Field Allocation process within the Community Services Division.

## 3.0 DEFINITIONS

**“Adult”** means an individual and/or participant who is older than eighteen (18) years of age. May also refer to a group where the majority of participants are over eighteen (18) years of age.

**“Allocation”** means the action or process of scheduling or distributing designated time at City sports facilities.

**“Amendment”** means a modification to a specific session, and/or an addition of a specific session or series, within a rental contract. For example, changing the start time of a booking from 5 PM - 8 PM to 6 PM - 8 PM, or cancelling a recurring Monday booking and immediately re-scheduling it to a Tuesday would be considered amendments.

**“Cancellation”** means the removal of an entire session or series from a rental contract, where the booking is not immediately rescheduled at the time of cancellation. For example, removing an entire Monday 5 PM – 8 PM session, or removing an entire recurring series of every Tuesday night would be considered cancellations.

**“City”** means The Corporation of the City of Sarnia.

**“Contract”** means the formal written rental or “permit” document issued by the City of Sarnia to the user outlining the temporary use of a facility.

**“Daytime Rate”** means the hours during which the applicable fee is charged for daytime facility use at applicable facilities with or without lights.

**“Evening Rate”** means the hours during which the applicable fee is charged for evening facility use at applicable facilities with lights.

**“Fees for Services”** means the Council-approved fees associated to services provided by the City of Sarnia. These fees are approved by Council annually and are subject to change.

**“Non-Resident”** means individuals and/or participants that are not living within the City of Sarnia, including Sarnia and Bright's Grove.

**“Regular Programming”** means bookings or series that typically reoccur on a recurring weekly basis in the same or similar day/time/facility slot, typically consisting of practices and games within a user's season.

**“Rental Discount” or “Subsidized Rate”** means a reduction of applicable facility rental rates outlined in the Fees for Service By-Law for eligible users.

**“Resident”** means individuals and/or participants living within the City of Sarnia, including Sarnia and Bright's Grove.

**“Season of Play”** means the designated time frame a City of Sarnia sports field is to be booked within a contract.

**“Session”** means an individual booking that may either be part of a recurring series or stand alone as a single/one-time booking outside of a series. For example, a series of weekly bookings on Mondays from 7 PM to 8 PM at Facility A for six (6) weeks would consist of six (6) sessions; as well, any random or individual bookings made within a rental contract would be considered sessions.

**“Series”** means a collection of multiple sessions or bookings that occur on the same or similar days, times, and facilities, recurring over a period of multiple weeks and/or months. A rental contract may include multiple series. For example, weekly recurring bookings on Mondays from 7 PM to 8 PM at Facility A over a six (6) week period would be one (1) series; as well, a similar booking that recurs on Tuesdays would be considered a separate series.

**“Significant Weather Event”** means an approaching or occurring weather hazard with the potential to pose a significant danger to participants. An official

warning or statement must be issued by Lambton Public Health and/or authorized governing body. Examples may include a Heat Event, Air Quality Event, Tornado, etc.

**“Special Events”** means a one-time, annual, or infrequently repeating event outside of regular programming that typically has a community and/or economic benefit.

**“Sports Field”** means a City of Sarnia owned outdoor area designed and intended for use for specific sporting activities and includes soccer and football fields, baseball diamonds, multi-use courts, and other established outdoor sporting areas.

**“User”** means the group, organization, or individual utilizing City of Sarnia space/facility.

**“Utilization”** means the temporary use or requested use of a City of Sarnia sports field and/or facility.

**“Youth”** means an individual and/or participant who is younger than eighteen (18) years of age. May also refer to a group where the majority of participants are under eighteen (18) years of age.

## **4.0 POLICY**

### **4.1 Allocation & Facility Operations**

The City of Sarnia Community Services Division has the responsibility to manage the allocation and distribution of sports fields on a seasonal basis reflective of population, registration, utilization and participation patterns. They are also responsible for the implementation of the Policy as outlined.

The City of Sarnia will responsibly manage its sports fields and accompanying facilities to maintain safe and reliable playing spaces, as well as coordinating capital plans for the renewal of these spaces and facilities based on utilization and identifying needs.

Individual facilities may require maintenance time to be allocated between bookings. Additionally, users may be required to provide specific measurements and/or details relevant to the facility and/or activity to ensure accurate scheduling and proper facility management.

Bookable facilities and their operating times will be listed on the City of Sarnia's website.

This Policy will be reviewed as consistent with City of Sarnia procedures by the Community Services Division. City staff will update this Policy as necessary, and relevant portions of this document are to be reviewed and/or approved by City Council.

## **4.2 Allocation Priorities**

### **ORDER OF PRIORITY:**

The Community Services Division will allocate sports fields usage by the priority list below.

1. City of Sarnia Programs, Services and Special Events
2. Special Events & Tournaments
3. Resident Minor/Junior/Senior Level Sports Groups
4. Resident Adult Groups
5. Board of Education, including Post-Secondary Groups
6. Resident Community Groups
7. Non-Resident Groups

Exceptions may include existing license agreements and/or a historical precedent when applying this policy through the allocation and scheduling process. The list of current established user groups is found on Appendix 'A'.

Should the status of a sports group come into question, the group may be required to re-produce documentation indicating the conditions under which it was granted such status still apply.

The Festival & Event Policy, including the application process and procedures, may apply to groups as determined by City staff.

### **DEFINITIONS OF USER GROUPS:**

City of Sarnia Programs, Services and Special Events provide residents with access to recreational sports fields through initiatives managed by the Parks & Recreation Department. While these offerings are primarily open to the public, certain programs may target specific groups, such as seniors, adults, or youth. These initiatives aim to deliver affordable or free recreational opportunities to the community to ensure equal opportunity and access to recreation.

Special Events & Tournaments are organized activities that occur on city facilities that often feature competitive events, including league tournaments, championship matches, or major community gatherings. Such events are typically hosted by existing user groups and may draw participants and spectators from beyond the local community and are usually planned for

particular dates, necessitating advance reservations and coordination to ensure proper setup and support.

Resident Minor/Junior/Senior Level Sports Groups are local organizations that must meet the below criteria to receive this allocation priority:

- a) Be the main provider of the particular activity in the City of Sarnia;
- b) Be an established provider of quality recreational programs dedicated primarily to Minor or Youth sporting activities;
  - i. Some organizations may offer limited adult programming. If a division or team is comprised of players primarily over the age of eighteen (18), they may be considered as an adult or senior division and given separate priority;
- c) Consist primarily of City of Sarnia resident participants, minimum of seventy percent (70%);
- d) Be an incorporated Not-For-Profit Organization with a constitution;
- e) Have an elected body of officers and hold regular meetings of members;
- f) Have an auditable annual financial statement; and
- g) Be affiliated with a national, provincial or regional sport organization.

Resident Adult Groups are local organizations or groups that regularly utilize a facility on a weekly or recurring basis throughout a season, and consistently allocated the same or similar booking times for two (2) or more consecutive years. This includes leagues and drop-in or pick-up activities for women, men, or co-ed participants.

Board of Education are local and public funded or non-profit schools that are recognized by the Province of Ontario as an education institution and may include post-secondary organizations. These School bookings are allocated on a first-come first-service basis.

Resident Community Groups are local duly recognized service clubs, charitable organizations, for-profit organizations or individuals that conduct sports development clinics, training sessions, or other programming. These groups may operate as non-profit or charitable organizations. They may aim to generate revenue through their activities and/or operate as for-profit entities, and may include commercial sports academies, private coaching services, and fitness programs, etc.

Non-Resident Groups are organizations or individuals that do not live within the local area but wish to use City of Sarnia facilities for activities. This may include teams, clubs, or organizations based outside the community.

## 4.3 Allocation Process

Seasonal allocation requests must be submitted in writing via the allocation application process, with all required information, and must be received in advance of the deadline. Failure to do so may result in exclusion from the standard allocation process for equal consideration.

### **SEASON OF PLAY:**

All utilization requests are subject to the designated Season of Play. Such dates are dependent on weather conditions and operational needs, and the City of Sarnia reserves the right to modify the Season of Play dates.

<b>FACILITIES</b>	<b>SEASON OF PLAY</b>
Artificial Turf, Grass Fields, Baseball Diamonds, Multi-Use Courts, Disc Golf Course, Other Facilities	March 15 to November 30, annually

A designated period of time will occur annually to complete any necessary pre-season or post-season maintenance work; as such, soccer fields/pitches and baseball diamonds may be declared closed. Facilities and amenities offered are to be determined on an annual basis per pre-season maintenance requirements, at the discretion of the City.

### **APPLICATION SUBMISSION:**

City of Sarnia utilization requests must be submitted no later than February 1, annually. The City will maintain a goal of allocating contracts by March 1, subject to change.

All applicants must submit, in writing, all requests prior to the above deadline for equal consideration. Users are requested to submit their request through the application form available on the City's website, although other formats may be accepted should the required detail be included.

Applications may be submitted to the Recreation Services Department in electronic or hard-copy format. The City reserves the right to reject requests from users who submit forms which are not complete or contain incorrect information.

### **AGREEMENTS:**

Facility time will be allocated in accordance with existing agreements with mention to allocation priority and/or fee rates. Should a license holder require time beyond what is specified in the agreement, the group will be allocated in accordance with the Allocation Priorities.

**HISTORICAL PRECEDENT:**

The City will make every effort to provide groups that have had the same times for two (2) or more consecutive years access to the same or similar time. It will be a principle of the allocation and scheduling process to give due consideration to the allocation according to previous years. Significant changes to previous year's allocation may be based on changes to registration levels, registration composition or to emerging needs.

**CONFLICTS:**

In the event of a request conflict between groups that share the same allocation priority, preference will be given to those with established historical precedence. If no historical precedence exists and a resolution is not reached following established procedures, then both parties will be required to submit a formal letter outlining their rationale for priority consideration. The final allocation of time will then be determined at the discretion of the City.

**4.4 Contract Obligations**

The Community Services Division will provide to the user a Rental contract listing all time allocated to the user for the season based on the Allocation Priorities identified in Section 4.3. A signed Rental contract may be requested, due to be returned no longer than 10 days from receipt.

**GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE:**

All regular or major users of City of Sarnia facilities are required to obtain and hold general liability insurance, through a Certificate of Insurance (COI). Exceptions may apply, per applicable City of Sarnia policies. Requirements for general liability insurance are outlined in the terms and conditions of the Facility Rental Contract.

Certificates of Insurance (COI) is due to be submitted to the City no later than two (2) weeks following the receipt of a Tentative or Firmed Rental Contract and/or no later than two (2) days prior to the first rental start date, where applicable. Failure to submit an appropriate Certificate of Insurance may result in the cancellation of rentals and/or termination of a contract.

**4.5 Cancellations, Amendments & Delays**

The City reserves the right to reasonably postpone, reschedule or cancel any rentals due to various circumstances. The City reserves the right to cancel a contract or portion of a contract without notice or refund should the City be of the opinion that the facilities and/or spaces are not being used for the purpose contained in the contract, or for a significant or high-profile event as approved by City Council.



**DELAYS:**

The City will undertake all reasonable measures to accommodate any delays in facility usage times. In cases where delays result from facility maintenance, scheduled start times will be adjusted to later slots, or events may be rescheduled or canceled as deemed necessary. Examples may include rain delays, allocation errors, equipment failure, etc.

In cases where delays are caused by a user group, all scheduled end times will remain unchanged, and subsequent rentals will not have their start times modified. Exceptions may occur if the City and/or subsequent renters agree to accommodate the delay experienced by the user group. Examples may include incorrect scheduling times, overtime games, equipment failure, etc.

Delays resulting in a user utilizing the facility more than 15 minutes after the designated start time may receive a partial refund, if the user was unable to extend their time past the scheduled end time.

**CANCELLATIONS AND AMENDMENTS:**

Following the start of the season, users may request amendments to their scheduled bookings. Amendments may include date changes, time changes, additional time or rescheduling of bookings. Cancellations are considered separately from amendments but may be referred to as a contract amendment.

Amendment requests will be accepted during regular office hours up to two (2) days before the date of the affected booking, unless the City is otherwise able to accommodate a request. Amendment requests may not be accepted after-the-fact, and the user will be responsible and charged for any unused facility time. Exceptions may apply due to inclement weather.

Cancellation requests for sessions or series, or contract terminations, must adhere to the below deadlines and may be required to be submitted in writing. Otherwise, the user will be responsible and charged for any unused facility time. Exceptions may apply due to inclement weather.

TYPE OF CANCELLATION	NOTICE DEADLINE	REFUND
Rental Contract, Rental Series	30 days prior to the contract start date	Full refund, less an administrative fee
Individual Rental Sessions	7 days prior to the rental date	Full refund

Excessive amounts of contract amendments and/or cancellations may result in the City enforcing a restricted number of amendments. The City may require amendment requests to be submitted in writing, only.



## **4.6 Inclement Weather Procedure**

The City reserves the right to postpone, reschedule, or cancel any utilization should the facility surfaces show signs of saturation, including standing water due to inclement weather, for the safety and preservation of the facility. Such decisions will be made at the discretion of the City staff. Any inclement weather cancellations or closures will be removed from rental contracts and will not result in charges to the user.

Community Services staff will communicate any delays or cancellations directly to the contract holder anytime up to 4:00 PM Monday through Friday. Once the contract holder has received such notification, they are permitted to communicate the details to their participants and members. A notification will also be posted to the City's website at 4:00 PM outlining the facility closures. In the event of a weekend or late evening cancellation, the on-duty staff will attempt to provide advance communication to the contract holder.

In the event of a Significant Weather Event, as outlined by Lambton Public Health, cancellation of play will be at the discretion of the user group and must be communicated in writing from the user group no later than 4:00 PM to not result in charges to the user. If the cancellation is after-hours or on the weekend, written notification is required within 24-48 hours of the cancellation to not result in charges to the user.

## **4.7 Holiday Hours of Operation**

Holiday hours of operation will be published to the City's website prior to the Season of Play, with specific hours determined annually as part of the pre-season operational procedures. This is to ensure flexibility and fair access to outdoor sports facilities for both organized user groups and the general public on holidays. The City reserves the right to operate all or specific facilities on recognized holidays, as well as unique hours of operation or facility closures.

## **4.8 Payment, Fees & Discounts**

### **PAYMENT:**

Payment and Fee structures and processes must comply with the City of Sarnia Payments & Cancellations of Program Registrations & Facility Rentals Policy. All applicable fees and subsidies are outlined within the annual Council-approved Fees for Service By-Law.

### **DAYTIME AND EVENING RATES:**

Facility rental rates are divided into Daytime and Evening times. Rates will apply according to the following table, unless otherwise identified in the Fees for

Service By-Law. The below rates may not align with times the facility lights are turned on/off.

FACILITY TYPE	RATE	TIMES CHARGED
Non-Lighted Facilities	Daytime Rate	Open to Close
Lighted Facilities	Daytime Rate	Open to 8:00 p.m.
	Evening Rate	8:00 p.m. to Close

#### **SUBSIDIZED RATES:**

A Council-approved subsidized rate/discount for youth groups is available as a twenty-five percent (25%) reduction of the standard facility rental rates, as identified in the Fees for Service By-Law.

To qualify for this discount, the City must consider the group as either a Resident Sport Group or a Board of Education group, as identified in the Allocation Priorities (4.2). Within this, the discount will be applied to youth (under 18) programming, only.

Some organizations may offer limited adult programming, and if a division or team comprises players primarily over the age of eighteen (18), they may be allocated separately as they do not qualify for the subsidized rate.

## **5.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **User Groups and/or General Public**

- Liaise with the Community Services Coordinator or designate on the submission of any sports field utilization requests
- Comply with the procedures as outlined in this Policy, where applicable

### **Administrative Assistant, Community Services**

- Receive and process application and/or request forms for facility allocation
- Liaise with the Recreation Coordinator to ensure alignment on scheduling and operational needs
- Support Users and/or City Staff, as needed
- Uphold the procedures as outlined in this policy, where applicable
- Partake in the review of this Policy to ensure accuracy and compliance

### **Recreation Coordinator**

- Act as a liaison with the user, ensuring compliance with this Policy
- Liaise with departments and/or affiliated individuals/organizations, as required
- Uphold the procedures as outlined in this policy, where applicable

- Coordinate the review of this Policy to ensure accuracy and compliance

## **Sports Field Operations Supervisor and/or Lead Hand**

- Liaise with the Recreation Coordinator or designate on the status of sports field utilization and scheduling
- Uphold the procedures as outlined in this policy, where applicable
- Partake in the review of this Policy to ensure accuracy and compliance
- Communicate and coordinate and/or assist in coordination of any maintenance requirements, where applicable

## **6.0 RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

<i>POL-F02-002, Rev. 00</i>	<i>Payments &amp; Cancellations of Program Registrations &amp; Facility Rentals</i>
<i>COMS - 005</i>	<i>Arena Administration and Allocation Policy and Procedures</i>
<i>COMS – 002</i>	<i>Festival and Event Policy</i>
<i>COMS – 004</i>	<i>Municipal Alcohol Policy</i>
<i>COMS – 001</i>	<i>R-Zone Policy</i>

## **DOCUMENT HISTORY**

<b>Revision</b>	<b>Date</b>
Policy Created.	July 25, 2022
Revision to provide clarity over the application and allocation process, various timelines, and definitions.	December 16, 2024

## **APPENDIX 'A'**

The below is a list of current established user groups categorized per the Allocation Priorities (4.2). Groups are listed in each category alphabetically.

\*Subsidized rate and/or existing allocation agreements may apply to specific programming.

### **SPECIAL EVENTS & TOURNAMENTS:**

- Awareness Athletics Inc.
- Narcotics Anonymous

### **RESIDENT MINOR/JUNIOR/SENIOR LEVEL SPORTS GROUPS:**

- Sarnia Brigade Baseball Association\*
- Sarnia Football Club (F.C.)\*
- Sarnia Girls Soccer Club\*
- Sarnia Imperials Football Club
- Sarnia Minor Athletic Association (S.M.A.A.)\*
- Sarnia Saints Rugby Football Club\*
- Sarnia Sturgeons Football Club\*

### **RESIDENT ADULT GROUPS:**

- B.E.S.T. Two-Pitch League
- Blue Coast Pickleball Club (B.C.P.C.)
- Bluewater Ladies Two-Pitch League
- Bluewater Men's Slo-Pitch League
- C.F.F.L. Two-Pitch League
- Friday Men's Two-Pitch League
- Lambton College Thursdays Two-Pitch League
- Sarnia Cricket Club
- Sarnia Ladies Rec. Two-Pitch League
- Sarnia-Lambton Pickleball Club (S.L.P.C.)
- Sarnia-Lambton Ultimate Frisbee
- Thursday Night Good-Times Two-Pitch League
- Tuesday Night Co-Ed League

### **BOARD OF EDUCATION:**

- Lambton-Kent District School Board\*
- Lambton-Kent Secondary School Athletic Association (L.K.S.S.A.A.)\*
- St. Clair Catholic District School Board\*
- Ontario Colleges Athletic Association (O.C.A.A.)\*
- Conseil scolaire catholique Providence\*