

RECOMMENDED PROCEDURE FOR THE GUIDANCE OF CLUBS and REFEREES IN DETERMINING THE SUITABILITY OF GROUNDS IN ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS

When the regional weather conditions are known to be extreme e.g. prolonged severe frost or heavy snow then the game can be postponed at the discretion of the home club after consultation with the NCEL General Manager. Under such circumstances, the earliest the decision can be made is the day prior to the scheduled date of the game whilst the latest is one hour prior to the time the visiting team are scheduled to commence their journey.

In all other circumstances a referee should be called in to make a decision in the following order of availability –

- 1) the match referee (subject to time and travelling distance)
- 2) another more local referee who must not be connected with either club. Prior to reaching his decision the referee who is making the inspection should consider the following:-
 1. Consultation on the telephone with the match referee prior to the inspection
 2. Consultation on the telephone with the match referee after the inspection to mutually agree on a decision prior to notifying the home club.
 3. The existing condition of the playing surface in conjunction with the prevailing weather conditions as previously confirmed with the local weather authority.
 4. The views of the home club groundsman in terms of local knowledge and draining capabilities.
 5. The manpower available to the home club to carry out any necessary work to make the ground playable.
 6. The time the visiting club are due to commence their journey.
 7. Whether or not the ground is dangerous, e.g. frost is dangerous but water isn't.
 8. Whether or not conditions are, or could turn farcical, e.g. excessive water on the pitch combined with a forecast of continued rain. In the event of fog check with the local weather authority re possible clearance, also bearing in mind the visitors travel arrangements if the fog is known to be widespread.
9. If a decision is still in the balance after considering the above, then also consider:-
 - a. The time, distance and cost of the visiting teams travel. If, after consultation with the match referee, the ground has been declared fit and the clubs instructed to travel, then only in exceptional circumstances should the match referee reverse this decision. If an

early inspection has not been carried out and the match referee arrives at the ground to find the playing conditions in doubt due to an unexpected deterioration in the weather, he should first consider all of the above points before committing himself to a decision e.g. whether or not either or both of the teams wish to play. If fog is the problem then the match referee should also consider whether or not the paying spectator will be able to view the whole of the game. Please consult with the two clubs under such circumstances. Remember - there are far less problems with a postponed game if the visitors have not travelled.

PAYMENT OF REFEREE

If a local referee is called in to inspect a pitch he will not be paid a fee, although travelling expenses will be paid when actually incurred. Should the Match Referee attend to inspect the pitch ½ fee and travelling expenses, will be paid if the game is postponed. If the game is played normal fee and expenses shall be paid, although additional travelling expenses should be paid to the Referee if incurred.

NOTIFICATION OF POSTPONEMENT Upon reaching the decision to postpone the game, the home club must immediately inform the following:-

1. Away Team
2. Assistant Referees
3. NCEL General Manager & NCEL Referee Appointments Secretary

CONDITION OF PITCHES

All clubs are reminded that they should keep their playing surfaces and equipment in a safe condition. Any breach of this requirement should be reported to the League/Competition in which they participate, who will arrange a Safety Inspection. The League/Competition have power to require the club to carry out remedial work and close the pitch if necessary. A club may appeal the League/Competition decision to the Football Association. Details of the appeal should be submitted in writing together with the appropriate fee.