

Haddington Golf Club
Adverse Weather Policy



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Document Change Log

Date	Author	Description	Approved By
28 th February 2024	Neil Bain	Initial version	HGC Special General Meeting
5 th February 2025	Neil Bain	2025 Revision	HGC Management Board

1. Introduction

The course may only be closed by authorised Club personnel.

The Head Greenkeeper has the principal authority to close and re-open the course. In the absence of the Head Greenkeeper, the authority is delegated to his Deputy, the General Manager or the Club Professional. If, in the unlikely event that none of these authorized personnel are available, the action may be authorised by the Greens Convener, Captain / Vice Captain, or other greenkeeping staff.

2. Possible Reasons for Course Closure:

- Flooding
- Frost and snow
- Storm conditions and high winds
- Damage to or hazard on the course from, for example, ground conditions or fallen trees
- Lightning
- Poor visibility due, for example, to fog

3. Course Closed Prior to Play

Course closure, before play has commenced, shall be notified by the Head Greenkeeper (or their Deputy) or the General Manager as early in the morning as possible following a course inspection. Official notification will be via ClubV1. Closure may also be notified via the Club website or social media channels.

4. Play Suspended

The priority is to make sure that all golfers are advised of the decision to either close the course for the day, or to suspend play temporarily. Regardless of the decision, if there is a Health and Safety risk, it is vital that golfers leave the course immediately. The communication to stop play will be made by

- use of an air horn
- by verbal communication to the golfers on the course
- by updating the Club V1 app and club website

Golfers should keep updated with these platforms via mobile phone (when it is safe to do so) for the latest information when there is potential for course closure.

In the event of a temporary suspension, golfers will be advised of the time of the next course inspection. As each occasion will be unique to the conditions at that particular time, it is not possible to make a set ruling on this procedure within this document.

Regarding poor visibility due to fog or poor light, play may be suspended if landing areas are not visible to players. Similarly, if players are unable to read the line of play on a putting green due to a lack of visibility, play may be suspended.

If all the area around a hole is flooded and water cannot be removed, conditions may be such that proper playing of the game is impossible, then in stroke play the course may be considered unplayable and an authorised individual may suspend play under Rule of Golf, 5.7. In matchplay, if water cannot be removed, the authorised individual may suspend play or relocate the hole.

Play Suspended – Normal Play

If players are notified by an authorised person, they must stop play. The choice to stay on the course or leave the course is for the player to make.

Play Suspended – Competition Play

For competition golf, when the fair playing of the game is deemed impossible due to inclement weather, under the Rules of Golf, 5.7a there are three scenarios that may happen:

- (1) Suspension of play by an authorised person
 - all players must stop play
- (2) Stopping play by agreement in Match Play
 - Players in a match may stop play for any reason, EXCEPT if doing so delays the competition. If they agree to stop play and then one player wants to resume play, the agreement has ended, and the others must resume play
- (3) Individual player stopping play because of lightning
 - A player may stop if the reasonably believer there is a danger from lightning, BUT must report to the General Manager/Club Professional as soon as possible

Under rule 5.7b, if an authorised individual declares an immediate suspension of play, all players must stop play at once. Under rule 5.7c, if an authorised individual orders play to resume, all players must resume play. If a player refuses to continue play, the authorised individual may conclude that the player's belief is unreasonable, and they may be disqualified.

5. Play Abandoned – course closed

Play Abandoned – Normal Play

If players are notified by an authorised person, they must stop play and leave the course immediately.

Play Abandoned – Competition Play

Unless a player knows for a fact that the competition is being abandoned, then they should assume play is being stopped for a temporary suspension. Under the Rules of Golf, 5.7, a player is allowed to stop play if they reasonably believe there is danger from lightning. If the belief is reasonable, the player is the final judge.

The decision on whether abandoned competitions will be rescheduled for another date, will be communicated to members as soon as possible. As a guide the following is most likely:

- Midweek medals that are abandoned will not be replayed

- Weekend competitions may be rescheduled where possible or may be combined with another competition at a later date
- For opens and major competitions, the Club would endeavor to reschedule

Scores already returned from an abandoned competition will be entered into a player's WHS handicap record as usual.

6. Notification of Play Suspended or Abandoned

Immediate Suspension of Play

NOTIFIED BY ONE CONTINUOUS SOUND OF THE AIR HORN

If the authorised individual declares an immediate suspension of play, then players must stop play immediately and must not make another stroke until resumption of play is notified.

Normal Suspension such as for darkness or an unplayable Course

NOTIFIED BY THREE SHORT SOUNDS OF THE AIR HORN

7. Player Responsibility

When no authorised individuals are available, players must use their own judgement as to whether or not the course is safe to play, and it is possible to play fairly and within the rules.

If players decide to stop play, then they should assume that this is a temporary suspension. If players deem the course to be unplayable, photographic evidence of the course showing the adverse conditions should be acquired and submitted to an authorised individual as soon as possible.

Players may stop play when they believe there is a danger from lightning (see Rules of Golf 5.7a).

In all cases players should make themselves familiar with rule 5.7.

8. Players Procedures Under the Rules of Golf

If play is suspended for normal reasons, what happens next depends on where each playing group is.

- **Between Two Holes:** If all players in the group are between two holes, they must stop play and must not make a stroke to begin another hole until the authorized individual resumes play.
- **While Playing Hole:** If any player in the group has started a hole, the players may choose either to stop play or to play out the hole.

- If stopping during play of a hole, then the players must mark their ball before lifting it. The players are allowed a brief amount of time (normally no more than two minutes) to decide whether to stop or play out the hole
- If the players continue play of the hole, they may go on to complete the hole or may stop before completing the hole

Once the players complete the hole or stop before completing the hole, they must not make another stroke until play is resumed under Rule 5.7c.

Disagreement on what to do

If the players do not agree on what to do:

- in Match Play, if the opponent stops play, the player must also stop play and both players must not play again until play resumes. If the player does not stop play, the player is awarded the general penalty of loss of hole.
- In stroke play, any player in the group may choose to stop play or go on to continue the hole, no matter what the others in the group decide to do. However, the player continuing to play may only do so if their marker stays to keep the player's score.

Penalty for Breach of Rule 5.7b is disqualification. There is however an exception and there is no penalty if the authorised individual decides that failure to stop was justified.

When Play Resumes (Rule of Golf, 5.7c)

- Where to Resume Play. A player must resume play from where they stopped play on a hole or, if between two holes, at the next teeing area, even if play is resumed on a later day. If a player resumes play from a different spot than where they stopped play, see Rules of Golf, 6.1b and 14.7
- When to Resume Play. The player must be present at the location identified in (1) and ready to play:
 - At the time set by the authorised person for play to resume, and
 - The player must resume play at (and not before) that time

If the ability to resume play is delayed for any reason (such as when players in the group ahead need to play first and move out of the way), there is no breach of this Rule if the player is present and ready to play when the player's group can resume play.

9. Visitor Compensation

When Normal Play is abandoned, visitors, including those playing in member and visitor competitions will be allowed to return and play the course again without paying an additional green fee.

When Competition Play is abandoned during an Open Competition, the visitor credit will remain with the Club for the visitor to use either for another Open Competition or for Normal Play.

10. Lightning Procedures and Guidance

To protect the health and safety of everyone using the course, please be aware of the following in the event of lightning occurring during your round.

- The General Manager will sound the horn if he judges that there is an immediate risk of lightning nearby based on the proximity between lightning flashes and thunderclaps
- The decision to carry on playing in adverse weather is the responsibility of the player, however if the player hears the lightning horn, they **must** either leave the course or take shelter where possible until they deem the threat to have passed (at least 15 minutes from the last lightning strike is recommended).

DO NOT...

- Shelter under trees on or off the course
- Move to high ground
- Put your umbrella or club up - they act as lightning conductors
- Use a mobile phone unless in an emergency
- Stand close to water

DO ...

- Keep as low as possible, ideally crouching in a bunker or hollow
- Leave your golf clubs, and move away from them
- Take personal responsibility for your own safety,
 - Lightning is a severe hazard that must be viewed seriously. Most players will be out on the course and may not hear a horn therefore you should be aware and always follow the guidance detailed here should lightning be in the vicinity