

## Rule Summary and Video links

The purpose of the Rule Summary is to provide a brief description of the rule and/or inform you of any penalties. The **Bold underlined** descriptions contain a video, infographic or other material to help further clarify the situation.

### Teeing Area

**Starting the hole** The teeing area has a defined size and shape that is a two club-length deep rectangle measured from the tee-markers you are playing your round from.

**Playing outside the tee-markers in stroke play,** You incur a two-stroke penalty and must then play a ball from the correct teeing area before making a stroke to begin another hole. If you do not correct the mistake, you are disqualified.

**You will receive a 2 stroke penalty if you move the tee markers on the hole you are playing**

### General Area

**Abnormal Course Conditions:** Abnormal course conditions include ground under repair, temporary water, immovable obstructions (cart paths, sprinkler heads, etc.), and animal holes.

**When Relief is allowed for Abnormal Course Condition** There is no free relief from an abnormal course condition when the abnormal course condition is out of bounds or your ball is in a penalty area. The bridges on hole #8 and path to the left on hole #14 are not an Abnormal Course Condition, your relief options are Penalty area relief.

**Relief for Abnormal Course Condition General Area** If your ball is in the general area and there is interference by an abnormal course condition on the course, you may take free relief by dropping the original ball or another ball.

**Relief for embedded ball in the general area:** You may take relief if your ball is embedded anywhere (except in sand) in the general area (which is the new term for "through the green"), except where a Local Rule restricts relief to the fairway or similar areas (this reverses the default position in the current Rules).

**What to do when your golf ball is stuck in a tree** If ball is located, it can be played as it lies as long as you are not standing across your line of play. For one penalty stroke you can go back and play ball from original spot (stroke and distance), back on the line of play from the flag, or dropping straight down for lateral relief (two club lengths).

### Penalty Areas

**Penalty areas expanded beyond water hazards:** Allowing committees to designate "penalty areas" (currently called water hazards) for areas that don't contain water and to mark all penalty areas as red (so that lateral relief is always allowed) if they choose to do so.

**Expanded use of red penalty areas:** Committees are given the discretion to mark all penalty areas as red so that lateral relief is always allowed (but they may still mark penalty areas as

yellow where they consider it appropriate).

**Elimination of opposite side relief option:** You are no longer allowed to take relief from a red penalty area on the opposite side from where the ball last entered the penalty area (unless a Committee adopts a Local Rule allowing it).

**Touching or removing loose impediments or touching ground in a penalty area:** There is no longer a penalty if you touch or move loose impediments (such as leaves, stones and sticks) or touch the ground or water with your hand or your club in a penalty area. You can also make practice swings that touch the ground.

**No Free Relief for an abnormal course condition (immovable object) in Penalty Area** You can play the ball as it lies or take one of the penalty relief options for one penalty stroke.

## Bunkers

**Removal of special restrictions on moving loose impediments:** There is no longer a penalty if you touch or move loose impediments in a bunker.

**Relaxed restrictions on touching the sand with your hand or club when your ball is in a bunker:** You are now prohibited only from touching the sand (1) with your hand or club to test the condition of the bunker, (2) with your club in the area right behind or in front of the ball or (3) when making a practice swing or the backswing for your stroke.

**Relief for Abnormal Course Condition Bunker** There is an additional Penalty Relief option by Playing from Outside Bunker (Back-On-the-Line Relief): For **one penalty stroke**.

**Unplayable ball in a bunker – relief option:** Extra option – for two penalty strokes, you may take relief outside the bunker by dropping a ball back on the line from the hole through where your ball was at rest in the bunker.

## Putting Green

**Putting with flagstick left in the hole:** There is no longer a penalty if you play a ball from the putting green and it hits the unattended flagstick in the hole.

**Repairing damage on the putting green:** You may repair almost all damage (including spike marks and animal damage) on the putting green (rather than being limited to repairing only ball-marks or old hole plugs). You must not improve your line of play other than damage.

**Touching your line of putt or touching the putting green in pointing out target:** There is no longer a penalty if you or your caddie does either of these things, so long as doing so does not improve the conditions affecting your stroke.

**Accidentally moving your ball or ball-marker when it is on the putting green:** There is no longer a penalty. Whether you moved it accidentally with your club or foot or ball marker. Simply replace the ball in original spot or estimated spot.

**Replacing your ball if it moves after you had already marked, lifted and replaced it:** Anytime this happens on the putting green, you replace the ball on its spot – even if it was blown by the wind or moved for no clear reason. No penalty

**Relief for Abnormal Course Condition Putting Green** When taking relief, you must take complete relief from all interference by the abnormal course condition on the putting green or in the general area.

**Your golf ball on the green hits another golf ball on the green** In stroke play, you putt your ball and it strikes a competitors ball also on the green, you will incur a 2 shot penalty (stroke play only). Your ball will be played from where it lies, and your competitors' ball will need to return to its original resting position. In match play, also no penalty. **NOTE:** Failure to replace the ball that was moved to its original spot; or moving the ball that did the striking (rather than playing it as it lies) results in loss of hole in match play or a 2-stroke penalty in stroke play.

**Your ball in motion accidentally hits you, your equipment, your caddie, someone attending the flagstick for you or a removed or attended flagstick:** There is no longer a penalty such as when your ball bounces off a bunker face and hits you. But you can't deliberately use equipment as a back stop or to deflect the ball.

## Taking Relief

**Where a dropped ball must come to rest:** Your ball must come to rest in the relief area, within 1 club length of the drop point (think of half circle) where it was dropped, or else it must be re-dropped.

**New dropping procedure:** Likely you will only need 1 drop. Your ball must be let go from knee height and fall through the air without touching any part of your body or equipment. If you forget and drop from shoulder height, simply drop again.

**Longest club is used to measure the relief area:** You use the longest club in your bag, other than a putter, to measure the relief area.

**Taking relief in Red penalty areas:** In taking lateral relief, you will drop within two club-lengths of where your ball entered the penalty area, not on the opposite side unless your Golf Club has introduced a Local Rule, either generally for all Red Penalty Areas or for specific Red Penalty Areas, allowing relief on the opposite side of the Penalty Area

**Taking Back-on-the-Line Relief:** dropping procedure will be in a specific "relief area"

**A new Local Rule will provide an alternative to stroke-and-distance relief for a ball that is lost outside a penalty area or out of bounds.** **Note:** this rule cannot be used if you have already hit a provisional ball

## Unplayable Ball

**Only the player and the player's partner can declare a ball unplayable.** A ball in a penalty area cannot be unplayable. The player must take penalty area relief. There are three 1 penalty stroke relief options for any unplayable ball - stroke and distance, back-on-the-line, and 2 club-lengths lateral.

## Alignment for a Stroke

**Expanded restriction on caddie help with alignment:** Your caddie or your partner are not allowed to stand on a line behind you from the time you begin taking your stance until you have made your stroke.

## Ball at Rest

**Accidentally moving your ball while searching for it:** There is no longer a penalty. Replace the ball in the original / estimated spot and condition.

**Standard for deciding if you caused your ball to move:** You will be found to have caused your ball to move only if that is known or virtually certain that it is at least 95% likely that you were the cause – and you will incur a 1 stroke penalty. Otherwise simply play the ball from the new location. (except on green)

**Replacing Ball When Original Spot is Not Known:** You must replace the ball on its estimated original spot (rather than drop the ball at that spot); and if the estimated spot was on, under or against growing, attached or fixed objects (such as grass), you must replace the ball on, under or against those objects.

## Ball Struck More Than Once

**Accidentally hitting your ball more than once during a stroke:** There will be no penalty and the ball will be played as it lies.

## Damaged Clubs

**Use of damaged clubs:** You may keep using any club that is damaged during the round, no matter how it happens (for example, even if you damaged it in anger).

**Replacement of damaged clubs:** You may not replace a damaged club, unless you were not responsible for causing the damage.

## Lost Ball

**Reduced time for ball search:** A ball is lost if not found in three minutes (rather than the current five minutes) after you begin searching for it.

## Marking, Lifting and Cleaning

**When cleaning a golf ball is allowed** If the player lifts the ball without ***marking*** its spot, ***marks*** its spot in a wrong way or makes a ***stroke*** with a ***ball-marker*** left in place, the player gets one penalty stroke.

**When changing a golf ball is allowed** If the player cleans a lifted ball when not allowed, he or she gets one penalty stroke.

## Promoting Faster Pace of Play

**Encouraging you to play promptly:** It is recommended that you make each stroke in no more than 40 seconds – and usually more quickly than that. Prepare in advance for each stroke. Move at a good pace between strokes and holes

**Playing out of turn in stroke play (“Ready Golf”)** This has always been allowed without penalty, and now you are affirmatively encouraged to do so in a safe and responsible way for convenience or to save time.

**Maximum Hole Score for Posting** The maximum hole score for each player is limited to a Net Double Bogey, Par + 2 + Pops. In the case where a player's Handicap Index is >54, the Maximum Holes Score is Par + 5.

## Standards of Conduct and Trusting Player Integrity

**Playing in the spirit of the game:** New provisions are added to reinforce the high standards of conduct expected from all players on the course and the Committee's discretion to disqualify players for serious misconduct.

**Code of player conduct:** Committees are given authority to adopt their own code of player conduct and to set penalties for the breach of standards in that code.

**Elimination of need to announce intent to lift ball:** When you have good reason to lift your ball to identify it, to see if it is cut or cracked or to see if you are entitled to relief (such as to see if the ball is embedded), you are no longer required first to announce to another player or your marker that you intend to do so or to give that person an opportunity to observe the process.

**Reasonable judgment standard:** When you need to estimate or measure a spot, point, line, area or other location under a Rule, your reasonable judgment will not be second-guessed based on later evidence (such as video review) if you did all that could reasonably be expected under the circumstances to estimate or measure accurately.