

City of Milford – Recreation Department
2020 Rules & Regulations Governing Adult Slow-Pitch Softball

These Rules & Regulations shall be considered tentative until April 1, 2020

FEES:

A. Fees: \$250.00 Total per team.

1. **Administrative Fee (\$200) & CT USA SOFTBALL (USA Softball) Fee (\$50):** Applies to administrative duties and credit card fees; it does not pertain to field rental/usage or maintenance. The USA Softball fee allows us to use USA Softball Umpires and offers players the opportunity to purchase insurance.
2. Payable: City of Milford (Two Separate Checks) or via credit card at www.milfordrecreation.com

B. Teams will be responsibility for paying the Umpire(s) directly at the field. Umpires cost \$35.00 per team with two (2) Umpires and/or \$25.00 per team with one (1) Umpire.

C. Non-Resident Fee (if applicable): \$100.00 For non-residents playing in the Men's or Women's Recreation Leagues Only. Non-residents eligible for other leagues such as Industrial or Senior's do not pay.

D. Forfeit Fee: \$70.00 - ***This fee will only be charged if you forfeit. You will be able to pay online.***

ELIGIBILITY:

- A. **MEN'S / WOMEN'S OPEN TOURNAMENT LEAGUE:** Teams and/or individuals may be residents and/or non-residents, in order to provide a league.
- B. **MEN'S / WOMEN'S OPEN RECREATION / COED LEAGUE:** Teams and/or individuals may be residents and/or non-residents, in order to provide a league.
- C. **INDUSTRIAL TEAMS:** Participants (**Male and/or Female**) must be employed full-time in Milford for the Milford based Company for whom they play and must meet all USA Softball guidelines. A letter must accompany Industrial League rosters from the Company's Personnel Manager, which verifies the employment of team members. Teams may enter the Industrial Recreation Division (Wood Bat) or enter the Men's Open Tournament Division.
- D. **MEN'S SENIORS LEAGUES:** Teams and/or individuals may be residents and/or non-residents, in order to provide a league. All players must be or turn age 50 or 62 any time in 2020.
- E. **MEN'S & WOMEN'S MASTERS LEAGUES:** Teams and/or individuals may be residents or non-residents;. All players must be or turn age 35 any time in 2020.

PLAYERS MAY PLAY IN BOTH THE OPEN TOURNAMENT LEAGUE & THE OPEN RECREATION LEAGUE

AGE REQUIREMENTS:

A. All managers must be age 21 as of April 1st of the current year.

B. All players must be age 18.

Exceptions:

1. Men's Senior's (Over 50): A Players must be or turn age 50 in the current year. Men's

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Senior' (Over 62) must be or turn age 62 in the current year.

2. Two (2) players per roster, under 18 years of age, minimum of 16 years of age as of September 1st of the current year are eligible (Exception: Masters & Seniors).

EQUIPMENT:

All equipment must meet the specifications of USA Softball as outlined in Rule 3 of the Official Rules of Softball; and the local variances detailed below.

During the course of the 2020 season any bats whose status (legal or illegal) has been changed by the USA Softball will be changed in Milford.

The Milford Recreation Department reserves the right to ban any and all bats it feels to be in the best interest of the league, the Recreation Department, and the City of Milford.

Prior to buying a bat player's should consult with USA Softball website www.softball.org for the most recent list of both certified and banned bats.

BATS – see specific leagues for requirements

Men's Tournament, COED Tournament

In 2020 the Milford Recreation will provide USA Softball approved Bats at Washington Field, Foote Field, and Platt Field for players / teams to use. THESE BATS WILL BE THE ONLY BATS ALLOWED IN THESE DIVISIONS OF PLAY. NOTE: In the event that a supplied bat is broken each team may submit a same weight/length bat for shared use.

Women's Recreation & Men's Senior

In 2020 these divisions of play will continue to use Bats that are deemed legal by USA Softball in 2020 and meet the proper specifications.

1. Must bear **either** USA Softball approved 2000 certification mark, USA Softball **2004 certification mark**, or USA Softball **2020 certification mark** as shown below, and must not be listed on an USA Softball non approved list, or Must be included on a list of approved bat models published by USA Softball National Office; or Must, in the sole opinion and discretion of the umpire, have been manufactured prior to 2000 and if tested, would comply with USA Softball bat performance standards then in effect.
2. *Bats that have the 2000 certification mark will not be allowed in USA SOFTBALL (USA Softball) Championship Play unless they are listed on an approved bat list on the USA SOFTBALL website.*



So-called "Senior bats" approved for use in USA SOFTBALL (USA Softball) Championship Play are NOT legal in any division of play, including Seniors. The bat standards for Seniors remains unchanged in Milford.

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Men's Recreation; Men's Industrial Recreation; Men's Over 35

In 2020 these divisions will use WOODEN Bats as outlined below.

- **All wooden** bats will continue to be approved for USA Softball Championship Play regardless of whether they bear an USA Softball approved certification mark or are included on a list of approved bats published by USA Softball National Office.
 1. Shall not be more than 34 inches in length, nor exceed 38.0 oz in weight
 2. Shall not be more than 2.250 inches in diameter at its' largest part.
 3. Shall be marked "Softball" or "Official Softball"

NOTE: The Corndog bat is legal.

Co-Ed Recreation

- Male batters shall use WOODEN Bats (as outlined above)
- Female batters shall use Bats that are deemed legal by the USA Softball (as outlined above)

SPECIAL NOTES CONCERNING BATS

- During the course of the 2020 season any bats whose status (legal or illegal) has been changed by the USA Softball will therefore be changed in Milford.
- During the course of the 2020 season the Milford Recreation Department reserves the right to ban any and all bats if it feels it is in the best interest of the league, the Recreation Department, and the City of Milford. This decision would be based upon the input of umpires, players, and Recreation Department officials.
- USA Softball web site (www.teamusa.org) contains a list of certified equipment and updated press releases, which will be utilized to determine the status of all bats.

BALLS - see specific leagues for requirements

All balls must be Optic Yellow.

- **Men's Tournament and 5-man**
12" .52 cor 300 compression Green Stamp
- **Men's Recreation; Men's Industrial Recreation; Men's Masters**
12" .52 cor 300 compression Green Stamp
- **Men's Senior (NEW 2020)**
12" .52 cor 300 compression Green Stamp
- **Women's Recreation**
12" .52 cor 300 compression Green Stamp
- **COED Recreation**
Male & Female 12" .52 cor 300 compression Green Stamp

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Bases

- A. Each team shall have a set of “thrown down” bases in the event that there are no bases at the field. The home team shall provide the bases in this instance. **Note: Double “safety” first base is required.**

GAME INFORMATION (Playing Rules):

- A. **General** - the A.S.A. (USA Softball) Rules and Regulations will govern all leagues, except where local Milford Recreation Rules and Regulations apply.
- B. **Count/ Strike Zone** – In all leagues, batters shall begin with a 1 Ball / 1 Strike count.
1. No fouls after the 2nd strike.
 2. **NEW 2020** – A strike zone mat will be utilized in all leagues. A strike will occur any time a legal pitched ball hits the plate or the strike zone mat.
- C. **Double First Base** – The double first base will be used in all games at fields where it has been installed. The runner shall run to the Orange side (foul territory) of the base and the defensive player shall use the white side (fair territory) of the base.
- D. **Forfeit Time** - A forfeit allowance of ten (10) minutes will only be in effect for the first game(s) of any given day. All other games will start at the originally scheduled or rescheduled time with each team fielding a minimum of ten (10) players
- Exception:
1. To avoid a forfeit, a team may start with nine (9) players. A tenth (10th) player only may be added prior to the team going through the entire batting order. Once the leadoff batter hits for the second time, a team must finish with nine (9) players. NOTE: Teams do not have to declare this to the umpire until this spot in the order is due up. At this point the team must finish with nine and take the out in the order (COED – 10th player can be added at anytime).
- E. **Home Run Limit: None** – All Leagues. All over the fence home runs are “hit and sit” – you do not run the bases and all base runners can clear the field without touching home.
- F. **Interrupted / Suspended Games**
1. In the event that rain and/or darkness causes the interruption or suspension of a game in progress the following procedure shall be adhered to:
 - a. The game shall be declared official if 5 innings (4 ½ if the home team is ahead). The score shall revert to the last completed inning. If the game is not official it will be resumed at the exact point where it was stopped using the same players and/or legal substitutes or may be started over based upon the discretion of the league director.
 - b. In the event of an unofficial game the umpire should return the game fee to the team. If it is not, teams are NOT responsible for paying the umpires for the make-up game.
 - c. In the case where neither team has kept an official scorebook, the Recreation Department may declare the game official regardless of the inning.
- G. **Metal Cleats** – Are not permitted in any Milford Recreation Department league.
- H. **Run Ahead Rule** – All Leagues (Senior Variance): Any game with a score differential of 15 runs or more

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after 4 innings (3 1/2, if the home team is ahead) shall be terminated by the umpires or any game with a score differential of 10 runs or more after 5 innings (4 1/2, if the home team is ahead) shall be terminated by the umpires).

- I. Official Score** – It is mandatory to keep a scorebook. Scorers should compare scorebooks each 1/2 inning and resolve any discrepancies. The Home team is the official scorebook and must keep track of both teams' score. In the event that the Home team does not have the personnel to keep the opposing teams score (or simply does not keep it). The visiting teams score book will be the official scorebook **ONLY IF THEY KEEP BOTH TEAMS' SCORE**. In the event that both teams are only keeping their own score, both books become official and discrepancies shall be settled on the field; with the umpires if necessary. The Umpires decision is final. Absolutely no protests will be heard on scorebook or substitution matters.
- J. Unlimited Batters** – Teams, in all leagues, have the option of batting unlimited batters. The use of unlimited should be declared to the umpires and opponent prior to the start of the games.
1. Players may alternate defensive positions but must remain in the same batting order
 2. In COED unlimited batters must be in pairs (male/female). There should never be an odd number of batters in the lineup or the same sex batting back to back.
- K. Sliding** – Teams /players should all be aware that there is **no** rule that states a player must slide. Players however are not entitled/allowed to crash into a defensive player who has the ball and that they should either slide (if they know how) or give themselves up. Avoiding a collision should predicate being called safe. A player who crashes into or runs over a player is subject to automatic expulsion from the game, with further disciplinary action to follow. A Defensive player shall not block the base/plate without the ball, if they do, they shall be called for obstruction. Calls are umpires judgment.
- L. Missing Bats** – In those leagues where the Milford Recreation Department has provided bats and for whatever reason (due to theft, vandalism, or field scheduling issues) the league bats are not available or not useable the following procedure shall be followed.
- Each team shall provided up to 2 bats, subject to the Umpire's approval
 - Either team will then be allowed to use any of the provided bats, which have been approved by the umpires.
 - If either team refuses to allow an opponent to use their bats both teams (male and female) shall use their own umpire approved wood bats.
- M. Courtesy Runner** – Book rule for all leagues (Any roster eligible player my run once an inning). Please refer to USA SOFTBALL (USA Softball) Rule Book for specifics.
- N. Schedule/Reschedule** – Every effort will be made to play all leagues on a consistent night of the week however it is expected that there **WILL** be some scheduled games on "off" days in order to accommodate the league schedule. All games are to be played as scheduled. It should be expected that make-up games will **TYPICALLY** be on an "off" day, including Saturdays. In any scenario, if you cannot field a team, give 48 hours and the game be cancelled and no fee will be assessed. For standings purposes only, a forfeit shall be declared. **Rescheduled games will not be rescheduled** for any other reason than inclement weather or unplayable field conditions.

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SPECIFIC LEAGUE VARINACES

All leagues will play on 70 foot bases – USA Softball Book rule.
All leagues will use the Courtesy Runner Book Rule – USA Softball Book rule.

A. COED

1. Batting order shall alternate sexes
 - a. If unlimited batters must be in pairs (male/female). There should never be an odd number of batters in the lineup or the same sex batting back to back.
 - b. If playing short-handed (9 players), the vacant position in the batting order shall be an out and shall be listed in either the 9th or 10th spot depending on alternate sex. If the 10th player arrives he or she may be added at any time.
2. Fielding Positions shall be
 - a. 2 Men and 2 Women in the outfield
 - b. 2 Men and 2 Women in the field
 - c. Pitcher and Catcher shall be alternate sexes
 - d. If playing short-handed (9 players), with either 3 in the infield or 3 in the outfield, at least 1 must be a female.
3. A walk to a male batter will result in a 2 base award. The male batter base runner shall legally touch first base prior to advancing to second base. The next batter, a female must bat. Exception: With 2 outs the female batter has the option to walk or bat.

B. Men's Open Tournament

1. Stealing as outlined in Rule 8, Section 4, Subsection F, #3 will be allowed

C. Men's Senior

1. Automatic Force Out At All Bases
 - a. A base runner may be retired at all bases on a non-force situation without a tag. The defensive player must only be holding the ball while touching the base. Runners are not permitted to slide with intentions of being safe or breaking up a play.
 - b. Once a base runner has crossed a line 20 feet from home plate he cannot return to 3rd base. If he returns he will be called out. The ball remains live. Exception: In a run down "pickle situation" the tag play is in effect -Umpire's discretion.

2. Run Rule - All Senior divisions will have a 5 run maximum per inning except for the seventh inning or extra innings where it shall be unlimited. Run-ahead rules still apply.

Over 60 Only

1. The count will be zero – zero with no foul ball.
2. All players must be a in their sixty second year to participate.

D. Women

1. While it is not mandatory the Recreation Department strongly recommends that all female catchers who wear glasses wear either a protective facemask or sports goggles.

E. Men's Over 35: Will follow the Men's Recreation League Rules and Women's Tournament League Rules.

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ROSTERS

- A. **All INDIVIDUAL players (Industrial and Senior TEAMS Excluded) must create a household account and register at www.milfordrecreation.com and sign the electronic roster/waiver of liability. Rosters will then be digital and posted to our website.**
- B. Industrial and Senior Teams must file a paper roster (Official Adult Softball Player, Release of Liability and Indemnification Agreement) prior to the start of the season.
1. Roster may contain no less than 12 players and may have as many players as needed
 - a. Playing managers and coaches must be listed as players
 - b. Only players, coaches, scorers and batboys may sit on the bench
 2. Rosters must be filled out completely and signed by each player.
Exception:
 - a. Industrial Rosters must be accompanied by a letter, from the Company's Personnel Manager, which verifies the employment of team members.
 3. The last day to make changes/additions to your roster is **May 31** of the current year.
 - a. An add-on player form must be completed, notarized, and submitted 24 hours prior to the game in which the added player will participate.
 4. No players will be allowed to transfer from one to another without the written permission from the manager of the team whom they have already played for.
 5. Players are considered official on the roster of the first team they play for.
 6. Use multiple rosters when necessary, making sure players fill out the correct lines.
 7. Requests to see an opponent's roster will be granted at any time however it must be done in person. Rosters will not be emailed, faxed, or mailed.

PROTESTS

- A. COACHES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ELIGIBILITY OF THEIR PLAYERS. No protests will be considered.

Exception:

1. In the case of an Umpire ***misinterpretation*** (not judgment) of the playing rules.
2. In the case of ineligible players.
3. In the case if illegal players.

Both types of protests must be filed prior to the end of the game with the opposing team and the umpires. It must then be filed in writing with the accompanying \$100.00 Protest Fee to the Recreation Department by the close of business on the first business day following your game. Failure to follow procedural guidelines will render the protest as void.

- B. The decision of the protested game may result in the following:
1. The protest is found invalid, the game score stands as played and the protest fee reverts to the City of Milford treasury.
 2. When a protest of umpire's misinterpretation is found valid, the game is replayed from the point at which the incorrect decision was made with the decision corrected and the protest fee returned to the team.
 3. When a protest for an ineligible player or illegal player is upheld, the game will be forfeited and the protest fee returned to the team. ***The player and coach shall be expelled from the league and suspended from all Recreation Department activities indefinitely. The penalty shall also include a***

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minimum of six softball games the following season pending further investigation by the League Director. All rostered players shall be placed on probation for the remainder of the season. All penalties levied shall be at the discretion of the League Director and are final.

- C. Protests: **No protest on player eligibility will be heard after May 31. Only illegal player/roster protests will be heard.**

CLAIRIFICATION: To protest eligibility it is questioning whether a person is permitted by the rules to participate on that team or in that league. An illegal player protest encompasses a broader list of scenarios including but not limited to: The player plays on another Milford team (illegally), the player is not on the roster, etc.

All protests must be submitted in writing with the accompanying \$100 fee by the close of business the first business day following the game in question.

FORFEITS

- A. Any team forfeiting a game (without advance notice) will pay \$70.00 no later than 48 hours prior to their next scheduled games.
- B. If a coach calls the Recreation Department at least 24 hours prior to a game, he may declare a forfeit without losing the forfeit fee.
- C. Two (2) forfeits by any one team may result in the team being expelled from the League at the discretion of the League Director.

CONDUCT:

- A. Any participant (player, coach, fan, etc) participating in a fight will be ejected from the game, to be followed by further disciplinary measures (multi-game or league expulsion) pending investigation by the League Director. Fighting will result in forfeiture of the game.
- B. Only team managers or coaches may enter the playing field to discuss a play. Any other player illegally entering the field will be ejected from the game.
- C. Any participant physically approaching, threatening, or belittling a Recreation Department representative at any time will be indefinitely suspended from all Recreation Department programs pending an investigation.
- D. Any participant making disparaging or insulting remarks, gestures, or threats towards any umpire, player, coach, fan, or recreational official before, during, or after a game will be ejected from the game or the next game. A second offense will result in expulsion from the league. If this violation, in the opinion of the Umpires or Recreation Department, is considered flagrant, it will result in multi-game suspension or expulsion from the league, depending on the severity of the incident, with further disciplinary measures to follow pending investigation.
- E. Teams are responsible for their fans. Abuse by fans can result in the forfeiture of the game and further disciplinary actions.
- F. Any participant will be ejected from the ball field if his/her actions are judged to be the result of alcohol consumption or use of an illegal or controlled substance. Anyone ejected for the aforementioned reasons

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will be automatically suspended with further disciplinary measures to follow, pending investigation. A participant observed consuming alcohol before, during, or after a game will be ejected from the game.

- G. An Umpire or Recreation Official may terminate a game at any time, if in his/her discretion, the ideals of recreation play are not being observed.
- H. A participant may be ejected from a game without warning, if in the mind of the Umpire or Recreation Official, a person's behavior warrants expulsion.
- I. In all of the above instances, the person(s) in question must leave the grounds immediately. Failure to comply will warrant forfeiture of the game and further disciplinary action from the Recreation Department, pending investigation.
- J. ***Any participant ejected from a game for any misconduct reason is subject to additional disciplinary measures (probation, suspension, expulsion, etc. pending investigation by the League Director.***
- K. Any participant expelled for flagrant misconduct will be indefinitely suspended from all Recreation Department activities based on the severity of the incident, pending investigation by the League Director.
- L. CASUAL PROFANITY RULE. The Casual Profanity Rule pertains to expletives and verbal un-sportsmanlike language not directed at an umpire or opposing players or coaches. This is most likely uttered by a player out of frustration. This type of behavior is penalized by an out being charged against the offending team. If the player commits the violation at bat the next batter is out. If committed by the defensive team, the first batter up in the next half inning will be declared out. The above outs will be treated on a delayed, dead-ball situation. Profanity directed at others, especially Umpires will still result in an out and may also result in a warning or ejection. Umpires discretion is final in all cases.
- M. Any participant involved in a misconduct or ineligibility incident late in the season or during the playoffs will be placed on probation for next season and/or program with disciplinary actions being more severe than normal, including multi-game suspensions or expulsions.
- N. The Milford Recreation Department and the Milford Umpires Association operate under mutual cooperation and the Milford Recreation Department will enforce any decision recommended by the Umpire's Association.
- O. If not described in the League Rules & Regulations; the League Director may take any disciplinary measures he/she deems necessary against a participant. The Milford Recreation Department reserves the right to make any decisions it feels to be in the best interest of the League, the City of Milford, and/or the Recreation Department.
- P. Any team, player, or spectator who enters private property to retrieve a ball(s) or any other item(s) without the consent of the property owner will be suspended for a minimum of one (1) game and placed on probation for the remainder of the season with possible disciplinary measures to follow, based on the severity of the incident and pending investigation by the league director. Players whom fail to identify themselves to a property owner and/or league official when requested will face more severe disciplinary action when their identity becomes known. Furthermore, failure to provide identity will subject the entire offending player's team to disciplinary action, including but not limited to single game suspension,

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multiple game suspensions, and / or expulsion from all Milford Recreation Department activities. Violators may also be subject to arrest/prosecution.

- Q. Any team, player, spectator, sponsor organization, independent league / team / and/or independent tournament team / official that without the consent of the Public Works Department performs field maintenance (i.e. removal of puddles; addition of dirt, sand, kitty litter, saw dust; cuts the grass; etc.) on any field will be expelled from the league and/or their event will be terminated immediately. In the case of independent leagues and/or tournaments, those organization's field permits will be revoked immediately and any future use will be subject to review.

The above conduct rules apply before, during, and after games.

SOFTBALL PERMITS

- A. Permits are only available to Milford based teams.
- B. One permit per team per permit week (Monday – Sunday).
- C. Permits will be issued on Thursdays only for the following Monday through Sunday.
- D. Permits will be issued in person at the Recreation Department from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. or by calling 783-3280 ext. 0 between 2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. These are the only times permits will be issued.
- E. Softball permits will not be issued until the Recreation Department and the Public Works Department determines that the fields are playable. The Recreation Department strongly discourages the use of the fields prior to the permit system being activated.
- E. Teams are NOT allowed to practice on Youth Baseball Fields. Any team that is found in violation of this will be automatically expelled from the league and will forfeit any and all fees that have been paid.
- F. Permits may be voided by the Recreation Department for any reason including but not limited to; the purpose of make-up games, field / weather conditions, and / or the violation of any of the Rules and Regulations pertaining to the 2020 softball season.
- G. All teams and players are reminded that many fields are located in residential areas and that every effort should be made to respect the rights and privacy of the residents.

IMPORTANT NOTES

- ***Participants may play in both the Tournament League and the Recreation League however it may only be on one team in each (not each division).*** Non-residents may also play in both divisions .
- All rosters may have an unlimited number of players on it. Players may still only play on one team within the any division.
- All teams are required to have a safety first base.
- Additional players must fill out an add-on player form and it must be notarized.
- No protest on player eligibility will be heard after May 31. Only illegal player/roster protests will be

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heard (you can protest a player if he is not on the roster or if he is not it illegally).

IMPORTANT GENERAL INFORMATION:

- A. All games are to be played as scheduled or re-scheduled by the Milford Recreation Department. Games may be scheduled or rescheduled on as little as 24 hours notice and may be scheduled on the weekends. It should be expected that make-up games will be played on a night other than your regularly scheduled night of play.
 - B. Managers are responsible for reporting in the score of their game (win or lose) prior to 9:00 a.m. by calling 203.783.3280 ext 9 or email Paustin@ci.milford.ct.us.
 - C. In the event of inclement weather, players and managers visit www.milfordrecreation.com. Only postponement or cancellation information will be posted. The cancellation phone line will no longer be used. No decision will be made prior to 4:00pm.
 - D. If there is a tie for 1st place at the end of the regular season in any league/division a single elimination playoff between tied teams will decide the champion.
- Schedules, divisions, league championships, and USA SOFTBALL tournament qualifying will be determined by the best format that suits the makeup of the teams and is determined to be in the best interest of the leagues and the Milford Recreation Department.
- F. The consumption of Alcoholic Beverages is prohibited at all city parks. Violators are subject to enforcement by the Police Department.
 - G. The Men’s Open Playoff Championship Trophy will be continuously dedicated to the memory of Daniel Wasson, who was an active participant in our Men’s Softball Leagues.
 - H. The Women’s Playoff Championship Trophy will be continuously dedicated to the memory of Tim Rose, who was a longtime coach and supporter of our Women’s Softball Leagues.
 - K. All teams and players are reminded that many fields are located in residential areas and that every effort should be made to respect the rights and privacy of the residents.
 - L. The Milford Recreation Department reserves the right to make any decision it feels to be in the best interest of the League, the City of Milford, or the Recreation Department.
 - M. The Amateur Softball Association (USA SOFTBALL) has rebranded itself as USA Softball, still the National Governing Body of Softball in the United States. During this transition logos and umpire uniforms will change but both names represent the same organization.

This document and its contents shall be considered tentative until noted otherwise or April 1, 2020.

LEAGUE DIRECTOR:

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REV:02/07/20

Guidelines For Lightning Safety

All individuals participating in or observing an outdoor softball event are responsible for their own safety and should monitor threatening weather conditions. Before each practice, warm-up time, or game, the home plate umpire should appoint an individual as the designated “weather watcher.” If the home plate umpire is the only official at the event, then the home plate umpire should be responsible for the duties of the “weather watcher.” The individual will make the call to stop play, remove individuals from the field, and announce a warning to the spectators.

The designated weather watcher should be aware of weather conditions at all times, including observing the conditions and keeping abreast of the weather forecast. As a means of monitoring local weather, the designated weather watcher can consult the National Weather Service for current information. All storm warning and storm watches should be heeded.

When the weather becomes dangerous, the designated weather watcher will announce that all play activities are suspended and all individuals, both players and spectators, should seek appropriate shelter. No place is absolutely safe from lightning threat; however, some places are safer than others. Large, enclosed structures (substantially constructed buildings) tend to be safer than smaller structures or open structures. In general, a fully enclosed vehicle with the windows rolled up tends to be safer than being outside so long as contact with metal surfaces inside and outside the vehicle is avoided. The following areas are not appropriate shelter and should be avoided:

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Any area of higher elevation; wide-open areas such as sports fields, tall isolated objects such as flag poles, light poles, or trees; metal fences and metal bleachers, unprotected open buildings like dugouts, picnic pavilions, rain shelters and bus stops.

When determining whether or not to suspend play, the designated weather watcher should use his/her common sense and good judgment. If a thunderstorm appears imminent before or during an activity or contest (regardless of whether lightning is seen or thunder heard), postpone or suspend the activity until the hazard has passed. Signs of imminent thunderstorm activity are darkening clouds, high winds and thunder or lightning. Even storms that are many miles away can pose a lightning danger. This may mean the appropriate decision is to suspend activities even before the first sight of lightning or sound of thunder.

All individuals should have the right to leave an athletic site or activity, without fear of repercussion or penalty, in order to seek a safer structure or location if they feel they are in danger from impending lighting activity. Safety is the number one consideration; the activity can be made up later.

If activity has been suspended due to lightning, the designated weather watcher should wait at least 30 minutes after the last lightning flash or sound of thunder prior to resuming activity. Each time additional lightning is observed or thunder is heard, the minimum 30-minute waiting period should be reset. A clear sky or lack of rainfall are not adequate indicators for resuming play. The minimum 30-minute return-to-play waiting period should not be shortened. Play should not be resumed even after the 30-minute waiting period if any signs of thunderstorm activity remains in the area or if the weather forecast indicates the threat is not over.

NO LIGHTNING SAFETY GUIDELINES CAN GUARANTEE ABSOLUTE SAFETY. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EVERY PERSON TO BE AWARE OF WEATHER CONDITIONS AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION TO BE SAFE. USE COMMON SENSE AND GOOD JUDGEMENT. PLAN AHEAD AND MAKE SAFETY YOUR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY.

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