

## **17. Course Closure and Competition Suspension or Abandonment Procedure**

If the course is closed golfers must not commence play under any circumstances.

The Directors have a duty of care to their employees and under the Occupants Liability Act they have responsibilities to users of the golf course which requires them to take all reasonable steps to ensure that golfers are not subject to unnecessary risks. They also need to ensure that members of the public using the public rights of way across the course are protected. This may on occasions result in the course being closed when it is judged conditions are unsafe. The processes and procedures when deciding if the course should be closed or competition suspended or abandoned are detailed below.

Each individual golfer on the course is also responsible for their own safety and should continually assess the conditions they are playing in. If at any time they feel the conditions pose a risk to themselves or others they should leave the course without delay, and in a handicap affecting competition advise a member of the Golf Team of their action, regardless of whether the Klaxon has been sounded or heard.

The course may be closed or competition suspended or abandoned if the course becomes unplayable, (Rules of Golf - Committee Procedures - 6E).

Any member of the Ground Staff, the Golf Director or member of the Golf Sub Committee (Golf Team) are authorized to close the course.

The Golf Director or any other member of the Golf Sub Committee (Golf Team) are authorised to decide if any competition, in particular a handicap effecting competition, should be suspended or abandoned depending on the prevailing conditions regardless of whether the course remains open.

**The following signals will be used to signal decisions regarding course closures or suspension or resumption of play in competitions.**

- One prolonged klaxon blast (repeated) Abandonment of Play/Course Closure
- Three short klaxon blasts (repeated) Suspension of play
- Two short klaxon blasts (repeated) Resumption of play

If play in a competition has been suspended, signalled by three short klaxon blasts repeated, then the procedures in **Rule 5.7** must be followed.

### **17.1 Circumstances that may lead to Course Closure or Competition Suspension or Abandonment**

#### **Poor Visibility** (Fog or mist.)

The course will be closed and/or in a competition play may be suspended or abandoned when the landing area for a players shot is not clearly visible. This will vary depending on each golfer's ability but as a guide on Hole 1 if the trees just beyond the penalty area ditch are not clearly visible from the yellow tee then the course will be closed.

When the klaxon has been sounded, 1 long blast repeated, to signal the course is closed or competition abandoned players **MUST** leave the course immediately by the safest possible route. If play in a competition has been suspended, signalled by three short klaxon blasts repeated, then the procedures in **Rule 5.7** must be followed.

When visibility is patchy across the course the decision to continue to play when there is poor visibility is the responsibility of individual golfers. Every individual must assess whether it is safe

to hit the ball; based on whether they can see the clear distance of their intended shot. If they can't see the intended landing area for their shot they **MUST** not play.

## **High Winds**

Heaton Moor Golf Club has a large number of trees on the Course, many of them are aging Manchester and Black Poplars that are particularly susceptible to damage during high winds.

Wind speeds between 30 mph and approximately 45 mph are considered to be medium risk and Golfers will be informed, before teeing off, that the winds are strong and to take extra care particularly when playing shots from under or close to trees. In some circumstances certain holes may be closed due to increased risk from falling branches and the risk of balls being blown onto adjacent properties or other golf holes.

Once golfers have commenced their round they should continually assess the conditions and discontinue play if they consider they are at risk.

If wind speeds are in the region of 45 mph (Gale force 9) the Course will be closed as there will be significant risk of falling branches, flying debris and little control of wayward golf shots.

When the klaxon has been sounded, 1 long blast repeated, to signal the course is closed and or competition abandoned players **MUST** leave the course immediately by the safest possible route. If play in a competition has been suspended, signalled by three short klaxon blasts repeated, then the procedures in **Rule 5.7** must be followed.

## **Lightning**

If there is lightening in the vicinity of the course a klaxon will sound 1 long blast repeated and all golfers **MUST** leave the course immediately, in a competition there may be an immediate suspension of play, signalled by three short klaxon blasts repeated, and all golfers **MUST** leave the course immediately.

It may on occasions, in the interests of safety, if lightning storms are virtually certain to arrive during a competition to cancel that competition before play commences.

Any golfer on the course is responsible for their own safety and it is therefore their responsibility to leave the course immediately they believe that they could be in danger from lightning even if during a Club Competition and/or the klaxon has not been sounded or heard.

Golfers should leave the course by the most direct route and never shelter under trees.

## **Casual Water on Greens (Rules of Golf - Committee Procedures - 6E)**

If any hole is completely surrounded by temporary water which cannot be removed, the course should be considered unplayable and the course may be closed and or competition abandoned a klaxon will sound 1 long blast repeated to signal course closure abandonment of play.

In a competition play may be suspended, signalled by three short klaxon blasts repeated, then the procedures in **Rule 5.7** must be followed.

(To minimize the impact on competitions when heavy rain is forecast holes will be positioned in areas of the greens least likely to become waterlogged.)

## **Course Waterlogged (Primarily in the Winter)**

After periods of prolonged heavy rain areas of the course can become waterlogged and it may become necessary to restrict players access to the Course both for Health and Safety reasons and to prevent damage to the course.

We are always mindful when implementing any weather-related course restrictions of the impact it can have on the diverse groups of members within the club and we always endeavour to be as inclusive as possible, but we must also strike a balance between this and minimising the damage and wear to the course and the safety of players.

We operate a tiered system for course restrictions when the course is waterlogged by doing this we are giving some of the members the opportunity to play rather than closing the course completely.

### **Course Closure “Tiers”**

**Tier 1 Open** no restrictions

**Tier 2 Open** Buggies restricted to certain holes. Electric Trolleys must have Winter Wheels

**Tier 3 Open** No Buggies allowed. Electric Trolleys must have Winter Wheels

**Tier 4 Open** No Buggies or Electric Trolleys allowed

**Tier 5 Open** No Buggies, Electric Trolleys or Manual Trolleys allowed

**Tier 6 Course Closed**

**(Tiers 2 to 6 may be applied to all or parts of the course.)**

### **Lying Snow**

When there is lying snow on fairways and greens the course will be closed.

### **Special Circumstances**

Certain special circumstances may necessitate course closure for example accidents or emergencies or police action.

### **17.2 Responsibility for Course Closure and / or Competition Suspension or Abandonment.**

Any member of the Ground Staff, The Golf Director or member of the Golf Sub Committee (Golf Team) are authorized to close the course.

The Golf Director or any other member of the Golf Sub Committee (Golf Team) are authorised to decide if any competition, in particular a handicap effecting competition, should be suspended or abandoned depending on the prevailing conditions regardless of whether the course remains open.

### **17.3 Process for Course Closure**

The Head Greenkeeper, normally in consultation with the Golf Director or another member of the Golf Sub Committee (Golf Team), will make the decision to close and re-open the Course. In the absence of the Head Greenkeeper, the authority is delegated to the Deputy Head Greenkeeper, normally in consultation with the Golf Director or another member of the Golf Sub Committee (Golf Team). However, when neither Head Greenkeeper nor the Deputy Head Greenkeeper are available the action may be authorised by:

In priority order:

- 1 The Golf Director
- 2 Golf Sub Committee (Golf Team)
- 3 The member(s) of Ground Staff on duty

#### **17.4 Action when Course is to be Closed**

When the decision to close the Course has been made, the person responsible for the decision is to ensure that:

If play is in progress ensure that the klaxon is sounded to advise players on the course that the course is closed, **One prolonged klaxon blast (repeated) Abandonment of Play** (Klaxons are available in the Professionals shop, Ground Sheds and Club Office.)

Signs are positioned prominently on or around the 1<sup>st</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> tees. The Club Office, Ground Staff, Club Professional, House Staff and Caterer are advised of the closure as soon as possible. Whenever a competition is about to begin or is in progress, the person responsible for the decision to close the course is to inform the competition or event organiser at the earliest opportunity. All members are to be advised of the course closure as soon as possible, by the most suitable method, e.g. Email. Course status information should be updated.

The responsibility for reopening the course is the same as for closing the course. When the Course is re-opened the person responsible for the decision, is to ensure the course closed signs are removed. The Club Office, Ground Staff, Club Professional, House Staff and Caterer are to be advised the course has reopened as soon as possible. If competition is about to begin or is in progress, the person responsible for the decision to reopen the course is to inform the competition or event organiser at the earliest opportunity. All members are to be advised that the course has re-opened as soon as possible, by the most suitable method, e.g. Email. Course status information should be updated.

#### **17.5 Action when Competition is Suspended or Abandoned**

When the decision to suspend or abandon play in a competition has been made, the person responsible for the decision is to ensure that; if play is in progress ensure that the klaxon is sounded to advise players on the course that the competition is suspended or abandoned, **One prolonged klaxon blast (repeated) Abandonment of Play, Three short klaxon blasts (repeated) Suspension of play.**

(Klaxons are available in the Professionals Shop, Ground Sheds and Club Office.).

Advise the Professional and the competition organiser that the competition has been suspended or abandoned. If play suspended monitor the prevailing weather conditions and if they improve within a reasonable time (within an hour), manage the restart of the competition.

When competitions are abandoned handicap reductions will be applied for completed rounds in accordance with CONGU rules.

**Note** In practice suspending and restarting a competition is not straight forward and often impractical e.g. visitor or member tee bookings full after the competition, loss of daylight etc; so in poor weather conditions competitions are more likely to be abandoned and where appropriate rescheduled than suspended.

### **17.6 Reviewing Course Closures**

To ensure the course is re-opened at the earliest opportunity conditions will be reviewed as detailed below.

#### **Temporary Water on Greens**

Every two Hours from 7.00 am to 3.00 pm in summer and ~~hourly~~ from 8.00 am to 2.00 pm on weekdays in winter. At weekends reviews will be on an ad hoc basis.

#### **Course Waterlogged**

Every morning before 08.00

#### **Lying Snow**

At 8.00 am and 12.00 noon daily.

#### **Electrical Storms**

On a half-hourly basis from play being suspended.

#### **Fog and Mist**

On an hourly or ad hoc basis, whichever is deemed most appropriate.

#### **Special Circumstances**

On an ad hoc basis, depending on circumstances.

## **18. Local Rules**

Introduction : Local Rules have the same status as a Rule of Golf. A Local Rule cannot be used to waive or modify the Rules of Golf simply because it might prefer a Rule to be different.

### **Extract from the Rules of Golf - Section 1.3a - Meaning of "Rules"; Terms of the Competition**

*The "Rules" means:*

- *Rules 1-24 and the Definitions in these Rules of Golf, and*
- *Any "Local Rules" the Committee adopts for the competition or the course.*

*Players are also responsible for complying with all "Terms of the Competition" adopted by the Committee (such as entry requirements, the form and dates of play, the number of rounds and the number and order of holes in a round (See Committee Procedures Section 5A for more information regarding "Terms of Competitions").*

### **Authority and Responsibility**

#### **Local Rules**

The Golf Director has the authority and responsibility for the agreeing and publishing all Local Rules at Heaton Moor Golf Club. Local Rules apply to all Sections and Competitions at all times.

Individual Sections cannot produce their own Local Rules nor can they waive or modify a Local Rule published by the Golf Director.

### **Terms of Competition**

The Golf Director has the authority and responsibility for producing “Terms of Competition” for all handicap qualifying competitions at Heaton Moor Golf Club and these are published in Bye Law 14.

Individual Sections may set the “Terms of Competitions” as detailed in Committee Procedures Section 5A for competitions run by their Section that are not handicap qualifying.