



FOOTBALL
VICTORIA

PITCH INSPECTION GUIDE

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CONDUCTING THE PITCH INSPECTION

The referee has authority to decide whether conditions allow the match to take place. Complete the inspection with purpose and, where possible, avoid walking onto the pitch while another match is in progress.

Before you begin

- Arrive with sufficient time: as a practical guide, approximately 60 minutes before a senior match and 45 minutes before a junior match.
- Introduce yourself and the officiating team to both team officials.
- Identify the home club's responsible ground official and explain any concerns using facts, not opinions.
- Take a match ball, notebook or phone, and appropriate footwear for testing the surface.

MAKING AND COMMUNICATING THE DECISION

Show the ground official the specific concern and clearly explain what needs to be corrected

If a problem can be corrected

Give the club a reasonable opportunity to make the area safe, this may include

- Removing a hazard
- Pumping or sweeping away water
- Remarking field lines
- Securing the goal net
- Making another appropriate safety correction

If the pitch remains unsafe

Do not start the match. Player and official safety must come first and is not subject to a vote by clubs, coaches or players. Record useful evidence, Including:

- Time of Inspection
- Weather conditions
- Areas affected
- Tests or inspections completed
- Corrective action requested
- Photographs, where appropriate

DELAY, POSTPONE OR ABANDON?

TERM	WHEN	ACTION
Delay	A temporary issue may improve or be corrected.	Keep both teams informed, reassess regularly and consider daylight, later fixtures and the relevant weather policy.
Postponed / called off	The match has not kicked off and cannot safely proceed.	Notify the Call-Off line, report the washout for DRIBL administration and do not touch the match sheet.
Abandoned	The match kicked off but cannot safely continue.	End play, keep participants safe, record the time and circumstances, and complete the required FV reporting process.

REPORTING A WASHOUT AND DRIBL

Do not touch the match sheet

For a pre-kick-off washout, do not open, edit, submit or complete the match sheet. Do not enter a score, cards, teams, attendance or a result, and do not use the match-sheet abandonment function. The washout status must be handled through the notified FV process so payment and fixture administration can be completed correctly.

Match-day reporting steps

- Confirm the final decision with the home and away team officials
- Call the weekend emergency call-off line on 03 9474 1867. Give your name, role fixture, competition, venue, scheduled kick-off, the reason for the washout and the names of officials present
- Ask for or note confirmation that the fixture will be updated as a washout on DRIBL. If directed to lodge information through another FV channel, follow that direction
- Take screenshots or photographs showing the fixture and unsafe pitch conditions. Keep a record of the time you called and who you spoke with
- Leave the match sheet untouched. If you have already opened or changed it, tell the call-off line immediately; do not attempt to fix or complete it yourself
- Complete any requested pitch and facility inspection report or follow-up notification by the stated deadline.

CALL OFF LINE INVOLVEMENT

CONTACT	DETAILS
Weekend Emergency Call Off Line	03 9474 1867 — open Friday 5:00 pm to Sunday 9:00 pm.
If the line is busy	Leave a detailed voicemail with your name, contact number and full match details. Keep your phone available for a return call.
Outside weekend hours	FV central line: 03 9474 1800, option 4, or referees@footballvictoria.com.au during business hours.
Other reasons to call	A day-of-match role change or inability to check in must also be reported. This helps FV correct DRIBL and avoid payment delays.

FEES AND FAQs

If the referee attends the venue and calls the match off before kick-off because the pitch is unplayable, the appointed match officials present are entitled to 50% of their normal match fee.



What if the match has already kicked off?

If the match starts and is later abandoned, all appointed match officials are entitled to 100% of their normal match fee.

Do the assistant referees also receive the fee?

Yes. The entitlement applies to the appointed match officials who were present, subject to the applicable competition rules and correct reporting.

What if I officiate several scheduled matches at the same venue and they are all washed out?

Under the 2026 Community Competitions Rules, a match official may not claim more than one postponed-match fee from one venue on one day.

What if the club or council called the ground off before I travelled?

The automatic 50% entitlement in the Community Competitions Rules applies when the official was present at the venue when the fixture was due to commence. Contact FV if you were told not to travel or if the competition has a different rule.

FEES AND FAQs

If the referee attends the venue and calls the match off before kick-off because the pitch is unplayable, the appointed match officials present are entitled to 50% of their normal match fee.

This only applies for that specific match only and not for any other subsequent matches at that venue to which the same officials are appointed.



Who decides whether a pitch is safe?

At the venue, the appointed referee decides whether match conditions allow play. FV may also postpone a fixture, and an authorised council representative may close a council-controlled venue.

Can the clubs agree to play anyway?

No. If the referee determines that safety is compromised, the match must not begin or continue.

Does mud automatically make a pitch unplayable?

No. Assess traction, hazards, standing water, visibility of markings and whether the ball can move normally across several areas.

Should I complete the DRIBL match sheet to trigger payment?

No. For a pre-kick-off washout, leave the match sheet untouched and notify the Call-Off Line so the fixture and payment pathway can be administered correctly.

What if I cannot check in or my appointment role changes on the day?

Call 03 9474 1867 during weekend operating hours. Failure to notify FV may cause payment delays or non-payment.