

## **Pitch Inspections**

At this time of the year a lot of football is lost due to the bad weather. It is really important from a referees view point that when asked to undertake a pitch inspection you do so professionally and without any distraction from others. Remember the overriding factors are the players and your safety. At the forefront of your mind you must always think - is the playing surface safe to play on?

Here are just a few points for you to consider when carrying out a pitch inspection:

1. Have a look at the weather forecast beforehand
2. The majority of council pitches have a general update telephone line informing people that the pitch is playable or not. Make sure you know the number.
3. Contact the home club beforehand and seek advice regarding the state of the pitch
4. On match day, turn up in plenty of time to do a thorough pitch inspection
5. With boots and track suit on, inspect the playing area making sure you look at the whole of the field of play but particularly the penalty areas, the centre of the field of play as well as the touchlines.
6. If the pitch slopes in a certain direction is there an area where water collects?
7. Have a ball with you and run the ball on the surface. If there is a lot of water and the ball stops in puddles then you might have a problem.
8. If it is frosty, does the ball bounce too high? Is there a case of the surface just being too hard?
9. Again thinking about frost, are there ruts or divots that will cause a problem for players' control and cause potential danger?
10. Stand in each goal, what does it look like from your position? Can you physically see lots of surface water or are their just patches of water?
11. Is there more rain forecasted and if so how heavy is it going to be?
12. In the case of frost, is the temperature due to rise? If not is there any chance of the pitch thawing out?
13. In the case of frost, are parts of the ground sheltered and covered from sunlight leaving sections of the pitch hard and unplayable?
14. Once you have made your decision it's important to communicate it with the home and the away team.
15. At some point it is important to also tell the competition, league or County depending on the game you are refereeing