

ASGA Rules Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Send your questions to rules@austinsga.org

Note: ASGA local rules are shown in **blue**; USGA rules are in plain text.

First, a point of etiquette: Misunderstandings can often be avoided if you simply tell your playing competitors how you intend to proceed in a rules situation.

1. **Is it OK to improve my lie?**

Yes, but with certain exceptions. **You may not improve your lie if your ball is in a hazard.** This rule may not be used to get relief from boundary fences or trees except by moving a maximum of either 6 inches or 1 club length, depending on the tournament format. **You may not use this rule to move your ball from the fringe to the green or from the rough to the fairway.**

Case 1: Select Shot tournaments: you may lift, clean and place or otherwise move your ball within **1 club length** of the original position, but **no closer to the hole.**

Case 2: All other tournament formats: you may lift, clean and place or otherwise move your ball within **6 inches** of the original position, but **no closer to the hole.**

2. **What are my options if my ball is in a water hazard (yellow stakes or line)?**

- a. Play the ball where it lies in the hazard.
No penalty unless you ground your club or improve your lie, in which case there is a 2-stroke penalty.
- b. Play the ball as near as possible to the previous position (the place from which you hit the previous shot.)
1 stroke penalty
- c. **Play the ball within two club lengths of the point at which the ball last entered the hazard but no closer to the hole.**
1 stroke penalty
- d. Drop a ball behind the water hazard, keeping the point at which the original ball last crossed the margin of the water hazard directly between the hole and the spot on which the ball is dropped, with no limit to how far behind the water hazard the ball may be dropped.
1 stroke penalty

3. **What are my options if my ball is in a lateral hazard (red stakes or line)?**

- a. Play the ball where it lies in the hazard.
No penalty unless you ground your club or improve your lie, in which case there is a 2-stroke penalty.
- b. Play the ball as near as possible to the previous position (the place from which you hit the previous shot.)
1 stroke penalty
- c. Play the ball within two club lengths of the point at which the ball last entered the hazard but no closer to the hole.

- d. 1 stroke penalty
Place the ball as far back along the line of flight as you wish **but no closer to the hole.**
1 stroke penalty

4. **What are my options if my ball goes out of bounds?**

- a. Play the ball as near as possible to the previous position (the place from which you hit the previous shot.)
1 stroke penalty
- b. Place the ball within two club lengths of the point at which the ball went out of bounds but no closer to the hole.
1 stroke penalty
- c. Place the ball as far back along the line of flight as you wish **but no closer to the hole.**
1 stroke penalty

5. **What are my options if my ball is lost?**

Note: You may search for your ball for a maximum of 5 minutes from the time the search begins after which the ball is declared lost.

- a. Play the ball as near as possible to the previous position (the place from which you hit the previous shot.)
1 stroke penalty
- b. Place the ball at the point where you last saw it.
1 stroke penalty
- c. Place the ball as far back along the line of flight as you wish, **but no closer to the hole.**
1 stroke penalty

6. **What are my options if my ball is on roots or rocks?**

- a. Place the ball within 2 club lengths of the original position no closer to the hole.
No penalty
- b. Place the ball on the nearest grassy area outside 2 club lengths, but no closer to the hole.
1 stroke penalty.

7. **What are my options in the case that I have an unplayable lie?**

- a. Play the ball as near as possible to the previous position (the place from which you hit the previous shot.)
1 stroke penalty
- b. Play the ball within two club lengths of the unplayable lie position of the ball but no closer to the hole.
1 stroke penalty
- c. Place the ball as far back along the line of flight as you wish, **but no closer to the hole.**
1 stroke penalty

8. **What is the procedure for taking relief from casual water or cart path?**

- First:** Determine the point where you can place the ball so that you have complete relief from either the casual water or cart path. That is called the point of nearest relief.
- Second:** Place the ball within 1 club length from the point of nearest relief but no closer to the hole.
No penalty

9. **What should I keep in mind when my ball is in a sand trap?**

- a. If you ground your club or improve your lie--
2 stroke penalty
- b. If you move or remove a loose obstruction (natural object)
2 stroke penalty
- c. If you carry a rake into the trap with you and place near the ball--
No penalty
- d. If you move or remove a man-made object from the trap prior to your shot--
No penalty
- e. In select shot format, the second ball may be placed, rather than dropped, within 1 club length of the first ball within the bunker and no closer to the hole--
No penalty

10. **Is it really necessary to putt out on every hole?**

- a. If you pick up your ball before you have holed your putt without first marking it, it must be replaced and putted until the ball is in the hole.
1 stroke penalty
- b. If another player picks up your ball and concedes the putt to you--
1 stroke penalty to the player who conceded the putt.
No penalty to you as long as you replace the ball and putt the ball in the hole.

11. **What happens if my putt from a position on the green hits another player's ball on the green?**

You must play your ball from where it lies.
2 stroke penalty
The player whose ball was hit, must replace his ball to its original position
No penalty

12. **What happens if my putt from a position on the green strikes the flagstick?**

You must play your ball from where it lies.
2 stroke penalty

13. **To whom and how should rules infractions be reported?**

According to the ASGA bylaws, the **Tournament Director** has responsibility for making determinations on rules and penalties. The **Tournament Director** will make the determination after talking to all parties involved. In difficult cases, the **Tournament Director** reserves the

right to consult with the people who know or can direct him to the proper rules before making the ruling. Rules infraction issues can be communicated by telephone to the **Tournament Director** or by email at rules@austinsga.org. It is important for the players involved to be as concise and complete about the issue as possible.

13. **What should happen if Player 1 thinks he sees Player 2 break a rule or about to break a rule?**

First: Player 1 must proceed in a non-confrontational way

Second: Player 1 should explain to Player 2 why he thinks there is a rules infraction and what he thinks is the result of that infraction.

14. **What should happen if Player 2 disputes the explanation of Player 1 about a possible rules infraction?**

Player 1 should explain to Player 2 that he has the option of playing two balls from that point on for that hole. One ball should be played according to the opinion of Player 2 and another played according to the opinion of Player 1. When the round is over, the dispute should be settled by the Tournament Director and the score of the correctly-played ball recorded.

15. **For Hole No. 1 at Lions Municipal, what are my options if my ball goes over the green and is either lost or unplayable?**

a. Play the ball as near as possible to the previous position (the place from which you hit the previous shot.)

1 stroke penalty

b. Play the ball within two club lengths of the original position of the ball but no closer to the hole.

1 stroke penalty

c. Place the ball as far back along the line of flight as you wish, **but no closer to the hole**. In this unique situation, you are allowed to place the ball in front of the No. 1 green, along the line of flight, **but never closer to the hole**.

1 stroke penalty

16. **There seems to be some misunderstanding about relief, if any, from the net fencing along holes 2 and 14 along Lake Austin Blvd. on the Lions course. What is the Association's ruling in this situation?**

New local rule effective 1 January 2009:

Boundary fences & large rocks: Ball may be moved to the nearest point of relief plus one club length, no closer to the hole. Applies to all courses, all boundary fences and large rocks. **No penalty.**