



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

DIVISION OF PARKS & RECREATION

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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FREDERICK COUNTY DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Cancellations, Customer Withdraws and Refund Policy

PURPOSE:

The Division of Parks and Recreation (DPR) is committed to delivering exceptional programs, services, and facilities. As part of our dedication to excellence, we have established a transparent and equitable policy to guide our staff and customers regarding cancellations and refunds. This policy ensures that issues related to cancellations, customer withdraws, and refunds are addressed promptly and consistently. DPR activities often fill up quickly after enrollment opens. Customer withdraws, especially those that occur closer to the start of the activity, often result in available spaces going unfilled. There are also administrative costs associated with cancellations and transfers. This policy provides equitable access to registration activities by encouraging customers to enroll for only those activities they are certain to participate in, providing opportunities for others to enroll.

POLICY STATEMENT:

In general, an administrative fee of twenty percent (20%) will be charged per customer-initiated refund transaction. There are no refunds for missed activities or for missed recurring activity meeting dates. All customer requests must be submitted through the online form at recreater.com, in writing to parksandrecreation@frederickcountymd.gov, or through calling the central office. Although we still encourage customers to complete the online Withdraw/Refund Request Form, if Admin receives a withdraw request over the phone and it is within the current guidelines, the Admin can process the requested withdraw and refund without a completed Withdraw/Refund Request Form. However, if the request is outside of the policy, the customer is required to submit a Withdraw/Refund Request Form for a refund to be considered. It is not the responsibility of the Admin to complete the form for the customer. Admins must ensure the reason for the cancellation is noted in ActiveNet before processing. DPR may cancel, combine, or reschedule activities due to low enrollment or other unforeseen circumstances. A minimum of three-day notice is typically provided. A full refund will be provided for cancelled activities or if the customer is unable to attend a rescheduled activity. Activities cancelled or facility closures due to weather conditions will be rescheduled when feasible. If rescheduling is not possible, a prorated refund will be issued for reduced recreation activity time; for facility reservations this will be a case-by-case basis. This policy encourages early decisions to minimize impacts to customers and DPR's ability to deliver quality services. To qualify for a refund, a customer must have previously made a payment to the Division by check, credit card, cash, or money order.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Activity** – recreation or park-based activity that a customer enrolls to participate in; often referred to as “program” or “class”
2. **ACTIVENet** – the software used to manage DPR's activity enrollment, facility reservations and other services and fees

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3. **Administrative Fee** – the fee charged to the customer based on the percentage DPR pays for the transactions in ACTIVENet
4. **Business day** – any day in which normal business operations are conducted; excludes weekends and county holidays
5. **Cancellation** – DPR cancels an activity or facility reservation due to special circumstances
6. **Credits** – an amount of funds added to a customer account (only used for organizational accounts or in specific situations for individuals)
7. **Customer** – any individual that enrolls in an activity or reserves a facility or service
8. **DPR** – Division of Parks & Recreation
9. **Enrollment** – customer submits information and pays fee(s) to participate in an activity
10. **FlexReg** – a module in ACTIVENet that allows the customer autonomy in choosing activities (Fitness only, otherwise known as “FitnessFlex”)
11. **Program Status Phone Line** – automated phone messaging system used to alert customers/public of activity cancellations and/or facility closures (typically inclement weather related)
12. **Refund** – a return of fees paid by a customer
13. **Snow Emergency Plan** - The Maryland State Police (MSP) declares snow emergencies with input from MD State Highway Administration and local public safety agencies. Once a snow emergency is declared, the law requires certain precautions.
14. **Transfer** – move a customer from participation in one activity to another or from reserving one facility to another
15. **Withdraw** – customer takes action to remove themselves from participation in an activity they were enrolled in or from a facility reservation permit

PROCEDURES:

DPR INITIATED CANCELLATIONS

1. Recreation program cancellation/refund/credit actions are initiated through the *Program Update process. *See SOP “Program Update Process for Recreation Programs”.
2. Cancellation actions will be noted in the Program Update form and in ACTIVENet, by the initiating staff person, with information that includes the reason (*low enrollment, inclement weather, instructor illness, etc.*) for the cancellation and the information that Administrative Specialists need for refund/credit processing, if applicable.
3. There are no administrative fees applied when the cancellation is initiated by DPR.
4. Refunds will be provided in the form of cash (as available), check or credit on a debit/charge card, depending upon the customer’s method of payment for the original transaction.
5. Credits are only used for organizational accounts for athletic field and facility reservations and FlexReg/FitnessFlex accounts. *Credits may not be applied to an individual/family customer’s account unless authorized by DPR Superintendents.
6. Approved refunds will be processed back to the appropriate payer and payment method:
 - a. Cash refunds are subject to the availability of funds at the Central Office (*Bourne Bldg, 355 Montevue Lane*).
 - b. Check refunds can take approximately thirty (30) to sixty (60) calendar days to be received.
 - c. Credit card refunds typically post in 2-3 business days.

- d. *Credits on account may be used in special situations and as approved by the Director, Deputy Director, Recreation Superintendent, Parks Superintendent, or the Administrative Planning Superintendent.
- 7. Swim Programs – Full refunds are provided if the participant fails a required eligibility test.

CUSTOMER INITIATED WITHDRAW - or - TRANSFER REQUESTS

1. Recreation “Recreator” Activities/Classes/Programs:

- a) Withdraw requests must be submitted through the [online form at recreation.com](https://recreation.com), or in writing to parksandrecreation@frederickcountymd.gov
- b) Withdraw requests received prior to the activity start time will be honored, less deposits, administrative fees (20%), and certain program fees (*e.g. – sports uniform costs*).
 - i. Customers will have the option to transfer to a different activity if the request is one (1) or more business days in advance of the start date of the receiving activity. Ideally, a transfer of the service to another available date and/or DPR site that offers a similar service. After transfer if there is a balance remaining it must be paid in full at the time of transfer. **There is no transfer fee for recreation activities.*
 - ii. To be eligible for a refund, the customer must submit the withdraw request prior to the start of the 2nd activity meeting date for a recurring activity and prior to the start of a one-day activity. The following fees will apply to refunds: 1) administrative fee of 20%; 2) any non-refundable fees (*e.g. –t-shirts/jersey, camp deposits, late pick-up, certain program supply fees, returned check fees, etc.*); and 3) any prorate from previous activity meetings (*if a recurring activity*).
- c) For one day activities, if a withdraw request is not received prior to the start of the activity the customer is responsible for the full price of the activity. For an activity with recurring meetings, the withdraw request must be made prior to the start of the second (2nd) activity meeting date.

2. Camp Deposits for Full-Day Summer Camps (COMAR regulations):

- a. A twenty-five-dollar (\$25) non-refundable deposit is accepted per camper, per week for full-day (6+ hours of childcare) camps. Camp deposits are transferable. Camp deposits received go toward the total fee. Examples of camps accepting deposits at time of enrollment:
 - i. *Outdoor Teen Camp*
 - ii. *Catoctin Creek Nature Camp*
 - iii. *Fountain Rock Nature Camp*
 - iv. *History Camp*
 - v. *Monocacy Day Camp*
- b. Deposits will be paid in full at advertised camp deposit deadline or customer enrollment will be forfeited.

- c. Camp participation/enrollment fee(s) will be paid at advertised deadline or customer will forfeit the deposit and enrollment.
- d. Non-Refundable fees include camp deposits, administrative processing fees such as returned check, late pick-up, and certain activity supply fees.
- e. Camp deposits are transferable if the customer pays the full amount due of the camp at the time of transfer request. The deposit can be put toward the total fee of that camp.

3. Drop-In Participant, Walk-in Visitor, FlexReg:

- a. These activities are not eligible for a refund unless entry was denied or closed, or the service was not provided by DPR.
- b. Flex Registration (FlexReg/FitnessFlex)
 - i. FlexReg allows for customer autonomy when registering for activities. Due to the nature of activities in the FlexReg offering, customer changes can be accepted up until the start of the activity.
 - ii. Withdraw requests that are received zero (0) business days in advance of an activity start date will be honored in full, less deposits or registration fees (customer may choose):
 - a. Refund - minus twenty percent (20%) administrative fee per refund transaction.
 - b. Credit Account - Credit full program amount to customer account.
 - c. Transfer to another FlexReg program. If there is a difference in registration fee:
 - i. Take payment for additional amount due - *or* -;
 - ii. Refund difference, note there is no transfer fee for FlexReg activities.

4. Park Facilities - Park Shelters, Ballenger Creek Community Building, Browning Building

- a. **Ballenger Creek Community Building & Browning Building** – Withdraw requests received thirty (30) business days or more prior to the reservation date will receive a refund of fees paid minus an administrative fee (20%). Withdraw requests received after the thirty (30) business days in advance but prior to the reservation date will not receive a refund but may receive:
 - i. A transfer of the service to another available date and/or DPR site that offers a similar service. Transfer fee of \$10 applies.
- b. **Park Shelters** – Withdraw requests received ten (10) business days or more prior to the reservation date will receive a refund minus administrative fee (20%). Withdraw requests received after the ten (10) business days in advance but prior to the reservation date will be honored in the following manner (*customer may choose*):
 - iii. A transfer of the service to another available date and/or DPR site that offers a similar service. Transfer fee of \$10 applies.

- c. All permit fees (sales, alcohol) associated with shelter reservations are non-refundable.
- d. Inclement Weather – Reservations are considered “rain or shine” events. Reservations are not rescheduled or refunded based on the weather forecast.
- e. If an entire park, section of a park, or shelter is closed due to unsafe conditions, unforeseen circumstances, and/or weather conditions the customer is notified as early as possible and
 - i. rescheduled or
 - ii. a full refund is issued

5. Children’s Birthday Parties at Nature Centers, Rose Hill Manor, Park-Schools, and Scott Key Community Center

- a. Withdraw requests received ten (10) business days or more prior to the event date will be charged a twenty percent (20%) administrative fee.
- b. Withdraw requests for a birthday party reservation that is received less than ten (10) business days prior to the event/reservation date will not be honored.
- c. Cancellations made by DPR, where a make-up date cannot be arranged, will be refunded in full.
- d. All permit fees associated with reservations are non-refundable.
- e. Payment is due at the time of the reservation however the customer has one (1) business day prior to their party date to modify the number of persons in their party reservation. After that, if they want to add to the size of the group, they must pay extra fees at the door.

6. Outdoor Athletic Field Reservations

This section pertains to permitted reservations on all Natural Grass fields and Synthetic Turf fields. Permitted reservations may include daily use, seasonal use, tournaments, or other athletic events. Withdraw requests may be sent directly to the Recreation Analyst-Field Scheduler in addition to the parksandrecreation@frederickcountymd.gov email address.

a. Natural Grass Fields

- i. All requests for cancellation must be submitted a minimum of twenty (20) business days prior to the reservation date for the customer to receive a credit or refund. Any credit or refund requests for a reservation that are received less than twenty (20) business days prior to the event will not be honored.
- ii. A twenty percent (20%) administrative fee will be charged per refund transaction. Alternately, a full credit may be applied to the organizational account.
- iii. If a natural grass field reservation is cancelled due to inclement weather, the organization’s Designated Representative should notify DPR the within one (1) calendar day following your reservation to receive a refund or credit of field use. Rescheduling of reservation dates is at DPR’s discretion.

- iv. Should DPR cancel the reservation, the organization will receive a full credit or refund for the portion of the time not used.

b. Synthetic Turf Fields

- i. All requests for cancellation must be submitted a minimum of twenty (20) business days prior to the reservation date for the customer to receive a credit or refund. Any credit or refund requests for a reservation that are received less than twenty (20) business days prior to the event will not be honored.
- ii. A twenty percent (20%) administrative fee will be charged per refund transaction. Alternately, a full credit may be applied to account.
- iii. The synthetic turf fields are considered year-round facilities and are open during rainy conditions. No credit or refunds will be issued for unused time.
- iv. The field may be closed at DPR's discretion when inclement weather or snow ice cover the playing surface. Should DPR cancel the reservation, you will receive an automatic full credit or refund for the portion of the time not used.

7. Tournaments and Special Use Athletic Events

- a. All tournaments and athletic events follow the same natural grass and synthetic turf field policies for withdraw and cancellation.
- b. When natural grass fields may not be used during inclement weather, synthetic turf fields may be able to continue as scheduled.
- c. If a natural grass field reservation is cancelled due to inclement weather, the organization's Designated Representative should notify FCPR the first business day following your reservation to reschedule the field use, dependent on availability.
- d. Events that cannot be rescheduled may be credited or refunded when cancelled by inclement weather.
- e. Cancellation requests may be sent directly to the Recreation Department Staff member in addition to the parksandrecreation@frederickcountymd.gov email address.

8. Park-School Facilities (Recreation Centers shared with Frederick County Public Schools)

- a. Refunds or Credits will be granted for rental dates that are not used by the applicant when a refund or credit request is made at least ten (10) business days prior to the date(s) in question.
- b. A twenty percent (20%) administrative fee will be charged per refund transaction - or - a credit may be applied to the organization's account for future use.
- c. Any refund or credit requests for a facility rental that are received less than ten (10) business days prior to the event will not be honored.

- d. In the event of inclement weather, Frederick County Division Parks and Recreation may cancel a reservation/close the facility when the safety of the participants or staff is in question. DPR initiated closures will result in full credit or refund for the portion of the reservations that are unable to be used.
- e. Rental dates cancelled by the Frederick County Division of Parks and Recreation are automatically issued full credit, and refunds may be requested if make-up date cannot be arranged. Please allow at least three (3) weeks for refunds to be processed.
- f. DPR cancellation decisions are separate from Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) cancellations (even though the park-schools share facilities with the school).
- g. No refunds or credits will be issued for unused time in an open recreation center.
- h. Cancellation requests may be sent directly to the Recreation Department Staff member in addition to the parksandrecreation@frederickcountymd.gov email address.

INCLEMENT WEATHER CANCELLATIONS

1. **Factors Affecting Decisions:** Our decision to open or close recreation facilities in inclement weather is based on an analysis of factors such as, but not limited to:
 - a. Information on road conditions from transportation staff, highway patrol and county roads departments. Consideration is made for the entire county roadway system. Even if your street or road looks clear, travel elsewhere in the county may be dangerous.
 - b. Any of the following becoming effective: Winter Weather/Tornado Advisories/Warnings, Snow Emergency Plan, State of Emergency.
 - c. The overall safety of, and driving time needed for, staff and participants headed to the facilities.
 - d. The amount of snow and ice accumulated, predicted duration of any precipitation, and temperature and wind chill.
 - e. Facility and parking lot/sidewalk conditions. We confirm that we have heat, electricity, and water, and confer with maintenance staff members who are responsible for clearing and treating school parking lots and sidewalks.
 - f. The availability of DPR to prepare parking lots and sidewalks for patron automobile and foot traffic.
 - g. The decision(s) regarding facilities/activities of Frederick County Government (Office of the County Executive) and Frederick County Public Schools (Central Office).

2. Snow Emergency Plan:

- a. If the snow emergency plan is declared in Frederick County, facilities will close, and programs and rentals will be cancelled.
- b. If the Snow Emergency Plan goes into effect and a cancellation decision has been reached during a program or rental, that program/rental may be allowed to finish or run to a certain time (this will be decided on a case-by-case basis).
- c. Once the snow emergency plan has been lifted, facilities may still need to be closed for programs and rentals if the parking lots and walkways are not clear and safe.

3. DPR Park-School Facilities vs. Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS):

- a. DPR cancellation decisions are separate from Public Schools cancellations (even though the park-schools are shared facilities with FCPS).
- b. Participants should check with their instructor about make-up dates for cancelled sessions.
- c. Rental dates cancelled by the DPR are issued a full credit if a make-up date cannot be arranged.

4. Thunder, Lightning & Heavy Rain:

- a. Upon the first sound of thunder or sight of lightning, activities should be suspended immediately.
- b. All activities will be suspended until thirty (30) minutes after the last sound of thunder or sight of lightning. This thirty (30) minute clock restarts for each thunder or lightning flash detected.
- c. DPR may decide to close certain fields once they take heavy amounts of rain, which will result in cancellations of a day or multiple days after the rain occurred.

5. Swimming Programs:

- a. Frederick County law states that the pool deck must be cleared during thunder and lightning storms.
- b. At the first sight of lightning or sound of thunder, the pool will be immediately evacuated.
- c. Swimmers will not be allowed to return to the pool until thirty (30) minutes after the last occurrence of thunder or lightning.

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- d. Every attempt will be made to continue through the scheduled practice when the weather clears.

6. Program Status Phone Line:

- a. In the event of inclement weather, Recreation staff may cancel a program and/or close a facility when the safety of the participants or staff is in question.
- b. When the determination is made to cancel specific programs or rentals, Parks & Recreation will inform the public of all cancellations by updating the Program Status Phone Line.
- c. Updating this line is managed by the Recreation Superintendent's designee or his/her designee
 - i. The Program Status Phone Line is 301-600-6291 (select option 2).
 - ii. This line will be updated no later than an hour prior to the program/rental start time. If no cancellations are listed within an hour of the start time, the program/rental is running as scheduled.
- d. If the County Government closes, all facilities will close, and programs and rentals will be cancelled.

7. **Parental Discretion:** Parents and guardians are encouraged to use their own discretion whether to allow their child to participate under questionable weather-related conditions. *"When in doubt, sit it out."*

EXCLUSIONS

- 1. Extenuating circumstances may cause an exception to any of the above, as recommended by DPR personnel and approved by the DPR Director.
- 2. If DPR is unable to provide adequate service, staff, and/or facilities, the DPR will issue a prorated or up to a full refund.

RECREATION ACTIVITIES (exception – Children’s Birthday Parties, see pg. 4)

Type of Cancellation/Withdrawal	Options	Fee Assessed	Description/Notes
DPR Cancels Activity	1) Refund	1) No fee (100% of the fee is returned to the customer)	1) DPR may cancel programs for various reasons as stated in the policy summary.
Customer initiates withdrawal/transfer PRIOR to the start of the activity’s first meeting date	1) Refund 2) Transfer	1) 20% fee , (80% of the activity fee is returned to the customer) 2) No transfer fee.	1) Withdraw request must be received in advance of the first activity meeting time. 2) After transfer if there is a balance remaining it must be paid in full at the time of transfer. 2) If the fee of the original activity is greater than the fee for the activity receiving the transfer, then customer has option to receive refund of balance difference.
Customer initiates withdraw AFTER the start of the activity’s first meeting date has started	1) Refund	1) 20% fee + prorated cost of one activity session/meeting. For one-day activities, the fee is forfeited.	1) The refund option pertains to customers that attend the activity’s first meeting and choose to discontinue attending a recurring activity. Withdrawal requests must be received before the start of the 2 nd activity session. For one-day activities, the fee is non-refundable.
Customer initiates withdrawal After the activity’s second meeting date has started	No options	100% of the fee is retained (0% is returned to the customer)	No refund is given

BALLENGER CREEK COMMUNITY BUILDING & BROWNING BUILDING

Type of Cancellation/Withdrawal	Options	Fee Assessed	Description/Notes
DPR Cancels Reservation	1) Refund 2) Transfer	1) No fee (100% of the fee is returned to the customer) 2) No fee	DPR may close facilities for various reasons as stated in the policy summary.
Customer initiates withdraw from permit <u>30+ Business Days prior</u>	1) Refund 2) Transfer	1) 20% fee , (80% of the reservation fee is returned to the customer) 2) \$10 fee in addition to any fee difference between reservation fees	1) Withdraw request must be received 30+ business days in advance of reservation date. 2) After transfer if there is a balance remaining it must be paid in full at the time of transfer. 2) If the fee of the original permit is greater than the fee for the new permit receiving the transfer, then customer has option to receive refund of balance difference minus \$10 transfer fee.
Customer initiates withdraw from permit <u>0-29 Business Days prior</u>	1) Transfer	1) \$10 fee if there is a fee difference between fees	1) Withdraw requests must be received between 0-29 business days prior to reservation date.
Customer initiates withdraw <u>after the reservation date on permit</u>	No options	100% of the fee is retained (0% is returned to the customer)	No refund is given

PARK SHELTERS

Type of Cancellation/Withdrawal	Options	Fee Assessed	Description/Notes
DPR Cancels Reservation	1) Refund 2) Transfer	1) No fee (100% of the fee is returned to the customer) 2) No fee	DPR may close facilities for various reasons as stated in the policy summary.
Customer initiates withdraw from permit <u>10+ Business Days prior</u>	1) Refund 2) Transfer	1) 20% fee , (80% of the reservation fee is returned to the customer) 2) \$10 fee	1) Withdraw request must be received 10+ business days in advance of reservation date. 2) After transfer if there is a balance remaining it must be paid in full at the time of transfer. 2) If the fee of the original reservation is greater than the fee for the transfer reservation, then customer has option to receive refund minus \$10 transfer fee.
Customer initiates withdraw from permit <u>0-9 Business Days prior</u>	1) Transfer	1) \$10 fee	Withdraw requests must be received between 0-9 business days prior to reservation date.
Customer initiates withdraw from permit <u>after the reservation date on permit</u>	No options	100% of the fee is retained (0% is returned to the customer)	No refund is given