15 RULES EVERY GOLFER SHOULD KNOW

The USGA and The R&A Rules of Golf, effective January 1, 2019.

BALL MOVED

1 Ball Moved During Search

- If you move any player's ball (even your own) while searching for it, there is **no penalty**, **just replace the ball**.

2 Ball Moved on Putting Green

- If you accidentally move any player's ball (even your own) on the putting green, there is **no penalty**, **just replace the ball**.
- Once you have lifted and replaced your ball on the putting green, **your ball owns that spot**. If it then moves, you will always replace your ball no matter what caused the movement, including wind or gravity.

PUTTING GREEN

3 Repairing Damage

- **You can repair almost any damage** on the putting green, including:
  - Spike marks
  - Animal damage
  - Any damage from a person or a ball

4 Touching Line of Play

- You are **allowed to touch your line of play** for any reason (including on the putting green).

5 Flagstick

- If your ball hits an unattended flagstick in the hole, there is **no penalty**.

BUNKERS AND PENALTY AREAS

6 Relaxed Restrictions in Bunkers

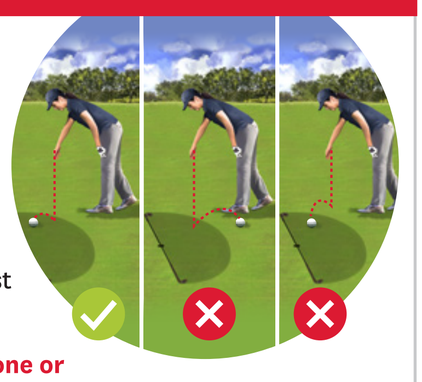
- You **can touch or move** loose impediments in a bunker, but be careful you don't move your ball when doing so or you'll get one penalty stroke.
- You **cannot touch** the sand with your club next to your ball, or during the backswing for your stroke.
- You also **cannot touch** the sand anywhere to test its condition or when making a practice swing.

7 Actions Allowed in Penalty Areas

- **You are allowed to:**
  - Ground your club
  - Take practice swings
  - Take penalty area relief
  - Touch water
  - Remove loose impediments

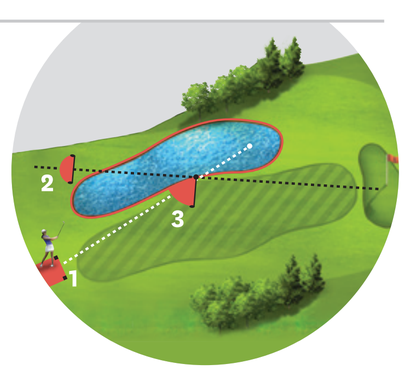
TAKING RELIEF

8 Dropping and Measuring Relief Area



- **Drop** your ball **from knee height** so that it lands in and comes to rest in the relief area.
- Your relief area is **either one or two club-lengths**, measured from the reference point (based on the Rule you are taking relief under).
- Measure club-lengths using **the longest club in your bag** other than your putter.

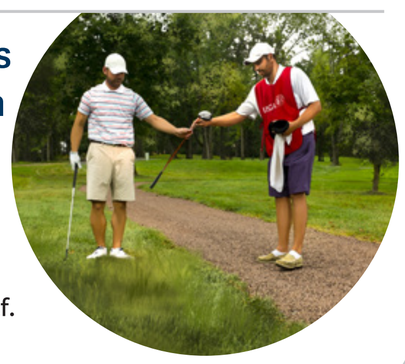
9 Penalty Area Relief



- For one penalty stroke, you have **two** relief options from a yellow penalty area and **three** relief options from a red penalty area.

1. **Stroke-and-Distance (red or yellow)**
   Play from the relief area based on where your previous stroke was made.
2. **Back-On-the-Line (red or yellow)**
   Drop a ball within one club-length to either side of a straight line from the hole through the point where your ball last crossed the edge of the penalty area, going back as far as you'd like.
3. **Lateral Relief (red only)**
   Drop a ball within a two club-length relief area measured from where your ball last crossed the edge of the penalty area, and no closer to the hole than that point.

10 Changing Balls Allowed When Taking Relief



- You can use **your original ball** or **another ball** when taking either free relief or penalty relief.

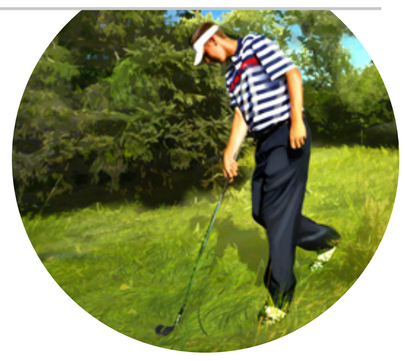
PLAYING A BALL

11 Accidental Deflections

- There is **no penalty** if your ball in motion is accidentally deflected, including by:
  - You
  - Your equipment
  - Your partner
  - Your caddie
  - A double hit

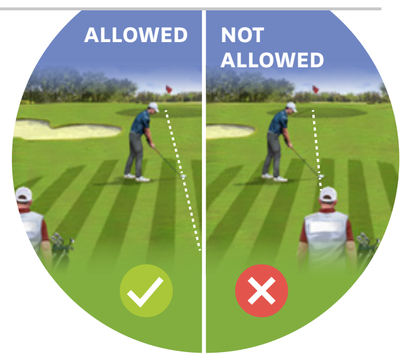
- Generally, your ball will be played from **where it comes to rest**.

12 Search Time



- You have **three minutes** to find your ball before it is lost.

13 Help with Alignment



- Your caddie or partner is **not allowed** to stand on or close to a line behind your ball while you are taking your stance and until your stroke is made.
- If you begin taking your stance with your caddie or partner behind your ball, you can **back away and start over** without penalty.

EQUIPMENT

14 Club Damage

- You **cannot replace** any club that you damage during the round.
- Check to see **if Model Local Rule G-9 is in effect**, which would allow you to replace a broken or significantly damaged club.

15 Yardage Books

- There are **limits on the size and scale** of green-reading materials that you are allowed to use.
- This **applies to all materials**, including yardage books, but only when you use them to read the green when you're playing from it, or when using a putter from anywhere else.
- If you have questions, you should **ask the Committee** prior to your round.

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