

# Golf Etiquette

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Golf etiquette is an important part of the game of golf. The following suggestions are offered. In addition, information is available at [www.usga.org/playing/etiquette/etiquette.html](http://www.usga.org/playing/etiquette/etiquette.html)

## Safety

- Ψ Don't take practice swings toward another person
- Ψ If a greens person is working in the area, be sure they are aware you are about to hit in their direction

## Quiet

Golf requires lots of concentration, and even if the people in your immediate group don't seem to be bothered, there are other groups all around you.

- Ψ So keep your voice down
- Ψ Keep cell phones and other electronic devices on silent – if you must take or make a call, be considerate of your surroundings and don't let the call interfere with pace of play

## Pace of Play

- Ψ Take only one practice swing for each shot, then hit the ball
- Ψ Plan your shot before it's your turn (be ready in advance)
- Ψ As you approach the green determine in which direction the next tee is located and leave your clubs (or park your cart) on that side of the green
- Ψ When playing from a motorized cart, if one player is on one side of the fairway and the other player on the opposite side, drop one player off at his or her ball with a choice of a few clubs, then drive to the next player's ball and meet farther down the fairway, after both have hit their shots.
- Ψ Mark your scorecard on the tee of the next hole rather than lingering around the green.
- Ψ Keep up with the group ahead of you. Don't worry about how far ahead you are of the group behind you; focus on staying a reasonable distance from the group ahead.

## Hitting Into the Group Ahead of You

If your ball was to hit one of the players in that group it could be very tragic, so be careful that all golfers are out of range before you hit.

- Ψ It is never acceptable to try to speed up a group ahead of you by hitting a ball at them to send them a message that you are getting tired of waiting. If you are tired of waiting, walk ahead to their group and ask them to speed up play, but never hit into them.

## "Playing Through"

- Ψ Be sure there is room for you to properly play through before you ask permission.
- Ψ Be courteous and quick as you hit your shots in playing through.
- Ψ If you are playing slowly (more than a hole between you and the group ahead of you) and you think the group behind might want to play through, invite them to do so.

## Play Ready Golf Whenever It's Appropriate

If you are not playing golf in an actual tournament, or other sanctioned event, it is okay to play "ready golf."

## Golf Carts

Always, under all circumstances, keep all carts, motorized or pull-carts away from the greens and off the teeing ground. Often the course will post signs giving directions as to where they want you to park your cart; follow the directions.

## On the Teeing Ground

- Ψ When you are on the tee the most important thing to keep in mind is to respect the person hitting. Someone who is trying to concentrate on hitting a straight shot down the fairway or reaching the green in one does not appreciate any unnecessary movements or noises. Movement in the peripheral vision of the one hitting can easily cause that person to mis-hit a shot.
- Ψ Stand behind the player who is hitting or, when it is not possible to be behind, at least be out of the peripheral vision of the one who is hitting. Be sure you are out of range of the golf club.
- Ψ Watch the shots of everyone in your group. Sometimes people end up hitting straight into the sun or for some other reason they will be unable to see where their ball landed. If you are courteous enough to watch the flight of each golfer's shot they will be very grateful for the help in finding their ball. It will also save a lot of time since you will lose far fewer balls by pro-actively watching where they went.
- Ψ Remember to be quiet -- don't talk, or giggle about their bad swing, or rattle through your bag for your clubs, or crumple up a bag of potato chips.
- Ψ Keep all carts (pull carts and motorized carts), off the tee area. Golf carts on the tee can make ruts in the ground that is difficult for the grounds crew to repair.
- Ψ Do not yell out following a shot. Even if boisterous behavior doesn't bother your playing partners, there are other people on the course who may be within earshot.

## Divots

- Ψ Replace divots back into the place from which they were hit so they have a chance of growing back without leaving a trace.

It should be noted that not ALL types of grass will benefit from replacing divots. Some of the Bermuda grasses, often planted in warmer climates, are bred to spread and grow quickly. The preferred method of repairing a divot with that type of grass is to place a mixture of seed and sand in the divot and press it down. You will find that material supplied by the course in a container on your golf cart. So, if you are unfamiliar with the type of grass on the course, ask before you begin your round what the course prefers you do with divots. They will be grateful for your concern.)

## Losing a Ball

Don't hold up the entire course because you lost a ball. Being courteous to those behind you is especially required if you, or someone else in your group has already lost a ball in that round. Good golf etiquette sometimes means putting your own interests second to those around you.

## Bunkers

- Ψ Enter the bunker from the low side of the bunker nearest your ball (don't climb down the wall of the bunker – it is hard to repair them)
- Ψ When you are finished with your shot (or shots) from the bunker, use the rake provided by the course to rake out all evidence of your ball, your shot and your footprints
- Ψ Leave the rake outside the bunker with the rake handle running parallel to the fairway

If you have properly raked the bunker, there will be no trace of your presence there after you have left. The reason that good golfers are so careful to rake the bunkers properly is so that no golfer coming after them will have their ball land in a footprint or a club mark left by you. It is difficult enough to get out of a bunker without being further hindered by an inconsiderate golfer who went before you.

## On the Green

The first thing to realize when you walk onto the green is that the grass is very delicate and even your very footprints can be damaging to the green. So, if you wear spikes on your shoes, be sure to wear soft spikes to protect the greens and keep them rolling true!

- Ψ Notice as soon as you step out onto the green is the location of everyone's ball so you don't step on the path on which someone else will momentarily putt.
- Ψ Repair your ball marks so that golfers behind you have a smooth surface. If you have time while waiting for the others to putt you may want to fix one or two others that less considerate golfers have failed to repair
- Ψ Mark your ball in exactly the same spot when you are done cleaning it - avoid marking in front of your ball as you may put an indentation in the ground in front of your ball.
- Ψ If your ball is in the direct path of another golfer's shot, you may move your mark up to a club length to either side.
- Ψ Be aware of your shadow on the putting green. Don't stand in a place that causes your shadow to be cast across another player or that player's putting line.
- Ψ After you have cleaned your ball, if your spot on the green is closer to the hole than any other golfers in your group hang onto your ball until it is your turn. Meanwhile, without disturbing anyone who is putting, you can be evaluating your putt from your ball marker.
- Ψ To remove the flagstick from the hole, simply pick it straight up to avoid bashing it against the rim of the hole and damaging the edge. Take the flagstick to the edge of the green and gently lay it down so the knob on the end is off the green. If you just drop it on the green it may leave a big gash on the surface of the green.
- Ψ Tending the flagstick is a courtesy you extend to the other golfers in your group whenever they need that service, and if you do it properly they will quickly see that you are well schooled in the art of golf etiquette.
  - Stand to the side of the cup, left or right, depending on which side your shadow falls (be sure your shadow does not fall over the cup or across the line the golfer is putting on);

- Stand about arm's length distance from the cup with your feet away from the hole (to avoid damaging the cup), and be sure you are not standing on anyone else's putting line in the process;
  - With your arm nearest the flagstick reach out and hold the flag against the flagstick to keep it from flapping in the breeze
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- Ψ Don't fidget, talk, wiggle, waggle, drop your club, or point to the bald eagle that just flew overhead
  - Ψ When trying to "go to school" on another's putt, you may not choose a vantage point that is within the peripheral vision of the golfer who is putting or, that will be, in any way, distracting to the putter.
  - Ψ When your group is finished putting out, carefully replace the flagstick without damaging the sides of the hole, move off the green and proceed to the next tee
  - Ψ Mark your scores on the next tee, not on the green -- this will allow the next group to begin their shots to the green as soon as you are done
  - Ψ To allow for the greatest efficiency when leaving the green, be careful to place your clubs off the green and on the shortest route from the green to the next tee.
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Practice is a very important part of the game of golf -- just as it's an important part of any game. Lot's of people go to driving ranges and putting greens to practice their swing and putting technique.

Remember that good golf etiquette is required at the practice area as well as on the course. At the practice area golfers are concentrating on improving and correcting their swings and that can only be done where there is a minimum of distraction. Demonstrate that you understand and appreciate good golf etiquette even when you are at the practice areas.