

# Astro Turf Sports Pitch

## MAINTENANCE RECOMMENDATIONS



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VAT Registration No 703 2820 72

# **MAINTENANCE INSTRUCTIONS FOR ARTIFICIAL GRASS SPORTS PITCHES & Multi Use Games Area's**

This information has been written for outdoor Artificial Grass Sports Surfaces. It is based on the experience gained by SSP. Specialised Sports Products Ltd only.

Any synthetic or artificial grass sports surface requires maintenance on a regular basis in order to preserve the best possible playing characteristics of the system. It is important that guidelines are followed carefully so that the surface is not neglected.

Failure to implement adequate maintenance regimes may result in the premature ageing and damage of the surface and may affect warranties and guarantees offered by the manufacturer.

Maintaining an artificial grass surface requires close cooperation between the manager of the surface, the players and the maintenance contractor. We therefore recommend:

- Regular Maintenance is carried out by the managers and/or users
- Specialist Maintenance is carried out by trained operators annually

Upon hand over of the Artificial Grass Sports Surface it is important that the owner/manager clearly understands any maintenance requirement and if any queries arise clarification should be sought from the installer in writing

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## 1 General

An astro turf surface is designed to be a synthetic alternative to the natural grass surface although it is not designed to replicate the playing characteristics of natural grass. A system is produced by a number of manufacturers with rubber filled, sand filled and sand dressed surfaces being the most popular. There are various pile heights and pile densities available and the specification on the surface installed should be kept.



### **Construction**

In our opinion the best systems use a loose laid synthetic grass carpet which is normally installed over shockpad which in turn is installed over a porous macadam base in the UK. The artificial grass carpet is filled with either a sports grade kiln dried sand or a rubber granule.

## 2 Settlement Period

The surface can be used immediately after hand over. During the first month after hand over the infill may be slightly higher than required by the specification. Once used and subjected to the elements the infill will settle within the artificial grass carpet. After this period it will be necessary to check the infill levels and apply top up material if required. Often the artificial grass carpet will spread as the infill settles. The contractor should allow for trimming the edges after a settlement period.



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## 3 Regular Maintenance

### 3.1 Weekly

Given that the synthetic grass is filled to within 1-2mm of the carpet pile tip it is possible that there will be some infill migration especially in the high play areas, during play. Similarly there will be some folding of the upper tip of the carpet pile. It is therefore important to drag the surface regularly to evenly redistribute the upper levels of the infill back over the system, lift up the upper tip of carpet fibre, and keep the upper levels of infill decompacted and free moving. This action will also help reduce the ability of moss and algal spores to establish themselves in less trafficked areas. Drag brushing is less effective during the winter months.

**Handy Tip:** Use an old tractor lawn mower or similar as a pulling vehicle and attach up turned mats made out of artificial grass as a drag mat. Add more layers of artificial grass to achieve a greater weight and more purchase.

Like any sports surface debris will collect on the surface, especially to the perimeter. It is important to collect debris on a regular basis and remove seasonal debris build up such as leaves.

Common sense should prevail for general use with smoking or any activity that may damage the surface prohibited. Rubbish should be collected regularly and a foot wipe provided to prevent infill being carried off the surface and foreign debris being carried on. Glass, chewing gum and other foreign debris should be kept off the surface.

The main requirement is to drag the surface to keep the infill mobile and evenly distributed. If neglected the surface will become less even, compacted and slower draining, with greater risk of moss and algal growth.



**Handy Tip:** Drag the surface in elliptical motion across the surface gradually progressing across the pitch. This will help move displaced material from the outside to in.

Weekly Routine	
Drag Surface	Check
Brush Play Lines	Check
Check Infill Levels	Check
Check For Any Damage	Check
Check Entrance Mats	Check
Collect Litter	Check



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## 3.2 Monthly

More rigorous brushing should be carried out using a towable triangular brush (pulled behind a mini tractor or similar). This action helps keep the infill mobile and evenly distributed, if neglected the surface will become less even, compacted and slower draining.



Infill will migrate to the perimeter of the court enclosure. The infill can be collected, recycled and re-introduced to the main playing area. At the same time the perimeters should be cleaned and cleared of vegetation, leaves, twigs etc

**Handy Tip:** Use a Wheel Barrow Sieve to extract debris and simply tip cleaned fill back into main court area to use again. A leaf blower can be used to remove leaves from the perimeter fence

The entrance mats should be lifted and cleaned of debris and the access pathways should be swept and cleared of migrated infill from the court. This prevents unsightly migration of infill toward other facilities and prevents debris being transported onto the court surface.

Monthly Routine	
Towed Drag Brush	Check
Perimeter Clearance	Check
Perimeter Infill Collection & Re-introduction	Check
Entrance Mat Cleaning	Check
Access Path Sweep and clearance	Check



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### 3.3 Annually

The surface should have a moss and algal chemical applied to it to kill off any live spores and help prevent the establishment of such spores. Depending on the pitch location, especially in regard to shade, airflow and surrounding vegetation, this application should be done at least once but if there are areas subject to poor sunlight and airflow a secondary application may prove beneficial.



The surface should be cleaned thoroughly at least once per annum but **preferably twice**. The cleaning process will decompact the infill, lift it, extract a degree of contamination such as tennis ball fluff, dead moss and algae, and other foreign debris, prior to returning it to the system. Infill that has migrated away from the main playing area is picked up and re-introduced to the main playing area prior to the entire area having its infill evenly redistributed. The infill levels are then checked and any areas that are low on infill are topped up.

The cleaning process is usually carried out by specialist cleaning machinery at times when the upper levels of fill are dry. SSP Ltd are able to carry out such works and are able to offer contracts for such works.

**Handy Tip:** Use an Independent Specialist Contractor to carry out Monthly and Annual Maintenance

Annual Routine	
Fully Decompact Infill	Check
Redistribute Infill Evenly Over Stability Mat	Check
Extract Contamination ( Worn Carpet Fibre, Foreign Debris etc) From Infill	Check
Check Infill Levels	Check
Apply Moss & Algal Chemical Killer	Check



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## **4 Specialist Maintenance**

Specialist maintenance should be carried out by trained operatives using specifically designed machinery on an annual basis. The maintenance should be carried out by an approved contractor using approved machinery. This type of machinery is best used during dry weather.

The surface should have an approved chemical applied to them each year to help kill off any moss and algal spores that may try to establish themselves within the system. If any doubts are raised regarding the type of chemical that should be used please consult the installation contractor.

## **5 Contractual Maintenance Services**

SSP Ltd are able to offer both Annual Cleaning Services and monthly Maintenance and Cleaning Services. Our Maintenance and Cleaning Services are based on annual, three year or five year agreements unless specified otherwise; the three year agreement simply guarantees the quotation price for the agreement period.

### **5.1 Annual Cleaning Agreements**

Annual Cleaning agreements can be for either one visit or two visits per annum. The visits require the upper levels of the infill to be dry and that any live moss or algae to be dead prior to the process commencing. Surfaces are generally available for play from 4.00p.m. onwards.

The process consists of the infill being decompacted throughout the entire area. Areas where infill has migrated to such as the perimeter of the enclosure have the excess infill lifted and moved to more high play areas. The infill is then lifted and the fibres of the stabilization mat are opened up. A degree of contamination held within the infill is extracted from it by a specifically designed vacuum unit prior to the infill being filtered back onto the surface. The infill is evenly redistributed over the surface. The infill levels are checked and any top up infill is applied to areas requiring top up\*. The surface is checked for any damage and an annual report is forwarded to the client.

The amount of times an artificial grass pitch requires cleaning within a calendar year does depend on the amount of use the surface is subjected to and the degree of regular maintenance carried out.



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## 5.2 Annual Maintenance and Cleaning Agreements

Annual Maintenance and Cleaning agreements are designed for owners of synthetic grass courts who do not have the time or opportunity to carry out the desired maintenance regimes for their surface. SSP Ltd are able to carry out monthly or bi-monthly maintenance visits incorporating an annual cleaning service to ensure the surface is kept in the best possible condition.

Maintenance visits include the mechanical drag brushing of the surface to help keep the infill free moving and spread evenly over the area. The infill levels are checked with any perimeter build up moved back to the main playing area and any areas lacking in the required levels are topped up\*. The artificial grass carpet is groomed and checked for any faults. This service can be carried out monthly or bi-monthly dependent on the use of the surface, its location and the time of the year. The monthly maintenance service keeps the courts out of action for as short as time as possible and every effort is made to cause as little inconvenience as possible to players. The application of a moss and algal chemical to kill off any live spores and help prevent the establishment of such spores is carried out at least once during one of these visits\*\*.

Incorporated into the annual maintenance is a cleaning visit. The cleaning process consists of the infill being decompacted throughout the entire area. Areas where infill has migrated to such as the perimeter of the enclosure or areas along the net line have the excess infill lifted and moved to more high play areas. The infill is then lifted and the fibres of the stabilization mat are opened up. A degree of contamination held within the infill is extracted from it by a specifically designed vacuum unit prior to the infill being filtered back onto the surface. The infill is evenly redistributed over the surface. The infill levels are checked and any top up infill is applied to areas requiring top up\*. The surface is checked for any damage and an annual report is forwarded to the client. The amount of times a synthetic clay court requires cleaning within a calendar year does depend on the amount of use the surface is subjected to and the degree of regular maintenance carried out.

Footnote: Annual Maintenance and Cleaning Agreements are site specific and governed by the facilities location and use. The packages are designed specifically for each individual site and offered to clients under separate quotation.

\* Top up infill is supplied at an extra cost but applied free of charge if undertaken during other works.

\*\* The application of a moss and algal chemical killer is governed by strict material safety data sheets and guidelines and it may be that the courts will be unable to be used for a 24 hour period after application.



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## 6 Maintenance Equipment

Drag Brush



Mini Tractor



Pedestrian Power Brush



Towable Sweeper/Collector



Towable Zig Zag Brush



3G Rake



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## **7 Snow and Poor Weather**

Always take care not to play on a slippery surface. If a light frost is predicted it is recommended that the surface is lightly dragged before the predicted light frost to ensure the infill is even. Dragging after a light frost is not as effective.

**In the interests of safety avoid playing on the surface if frozen.**

Snow – the bulk of snow can be removed using a rubber bladed or plastic bladed shovel or squeegee provided care is taken to avoid damaging the stability mat and dragging off any infill material. Avoid compacting the snow as this can reduce the snow to ice and increase thawing time.

Do not apply and chemicals or thawing agents to the surface to increase the thawing time or to prevent the effects of frost.

## **8 Training and Practical Demonstration**

Further advice or training courses on maintenance can be organised.

## **9 Annual Inspection**

In order to maintain the quality and playing properties of a synthetic grass pitch it is advised that an annual inspection of the surface takes place. During the inspection the following points will be examined:

- The existing condition of the surface
- Implementation of maintenance regimes by the client/manager/user
- Appraisal of current maintenance regimes and suggested improvements if required
- Enclosure inspection for existing fencing, goals, drains etc

A full report will be issued to the manager after each inspection which should be added to the maintenance log.

## **10 Maintenance Log**

The carrying out of regular maintenance is crucial to keep the surface in prime condition during the guarantee period and beyond. It is suggested that a Surface Log Book is used to record the maintenance of the surface and note the hours of play.

## **11 Maintenance Pricing**

Quotations are offered by SSP Ltd to each specific site/club for both specialist annual maintenance and contractual annual cleaning and maintenance. These services are offered on an annual, three year or five year fixed price agreement period



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