

Quick Rules for Golf

I almost called this a "cheat sheet" before thinking better of it. This page lists some of the most common infractions and their penalties under the Rules of Golf.

Golf Rules Let You Play the Game

Here is a quick rundown of the most important basic rules you should know as a beginning golfer. After all, you don't want to add any penalty strokes to your score for breaking them! Obviously, this won't be a big issue when you're playing a friendly round with friends, but when you enter a tournament, you should be aware that the #1 of golf rules is: know the rules!

Rules about your equipment

- You can have maximum 14 clubs in your bag.
- If one of your clubs gets damaged during the "normal course of play", you can fix it or replace it, but if you broke it because you threw it, you're finishing the round without it!

Rules about your responsibilities as a player

- Be on time for your match, stay with your group and keep up the pace of play.
- Record a correct score and sign your score card.
- Don't ask for or give advise to competitors (again, not so much an issue when playing a friendly round).

Rules about your ball

- Hit the correct ball: yours!
- Play your ball "as it lies", without improving its position.
- When your ball is lost or no longer fit to play, you can replace it with a new one; otherwise you have to finish the hole with the same ball.

Rules about the different parts of the course

- On the tee box: tee up your ball between or behind the tee markers. If your ball falls or is knocked off the tee before you took a swing at it, you can re-tee it.
- On the putting green: you can mark, pick up and clean your ball and repair pitch marks. When putting, your ball may not touch the flag stick, whether it's still standing in the hole or laying down on the green.

- In a hazard (water or sand trap): your club may not touch the ground before you actually hit the ball.

Grounding the Club in a Hazard ([Rule 13-4](#)) Grounding the club in a hazard is not allowed. Anyone who does it must assess themselves (or have assessed) a 2-stroke penalty (or loss of hole in match play).

Hitting an Unattended Flagstick with a Putt ([Rule 17-3](#))

The flagstick is in the hole, unattended, and your putt strikes it. That's a 2-stroke penalty in stroke play (ball subsequently played as it lies) and loss of hole in match play

Ball Moves after Address ([Rule 18-2b](#))

If your ball moves once you've taken your address, it's a 1-stroke penalty. The ball is replaced on its original spot.

Ball Out of Bounds ([Rule 27-1](#))

Add 2 strokes and hit from original spot.