Ground inspections are often a bone of contention for all parties. This can be alleviated by referees being pro-active prior to a game. Make contact with the home club if you feel there is a doubt about your game.

Clubs however are to adopt the following procedure;-

For Saturday fixtures, where play is doubtful on the morning of the preceding day arrangements should be made for a pitch inspection to be carried out on the morning of the match, not less than four hours prior to the scheduled kick off time. this will ensure that a decision is made well before the opponents begin their journey.

For midweek fixtures it can often be difficult to obtain a referee to carry out the inspection. If this applies then please make contact with the referee’s appointments Officer, Richard Dowden or Lee Dorling.

For midweek matches it is advisable to carry out any pitch inspection before 4pm but no earlier than 3pm. If the weather has been inclement for some period of time please …. Advise your opponents; match officials the day before that there is a possibility of a postponement and that you are arranging a pitch inspection.

Once the pitch inspection has been done, advise the opponents and the match officials accordingly and the League via the Fixtures Secretary or League Secretary

If play does not become doubtful until the morning of the match, then the same inspection and notification procedures apply as above.

MATCHES CANNOT BE POSTPONED BEFORE THE DAY OF THE GAME WITHOUT THE APPROVAL OF THE LEAGUE SECRETARY.

Only Registered Referees can postpone a fixture unless prior agreement is sought by the League from the Referee’s Appointments Officer or Lee Dorling.

Match referee and referees at level 4 or above or very occasionally a level 5 referee, nominated by the Referee Appointments Officer can be asked but only in exceptional circumstances.

In all cases, contact must be made with the MATCH REFEREE BEFORE a decision is made as to whether the match is to proceed. All pitch inspections must be accompanied by a signed postponement form – available for download on Essex Senior League Fulltime webpages under Useful Downloads.

Any referee called upon to perform a pitch inspection is advised, where possible and if applicable, to seek opinion and guidance from the home groundsman or other suitably qualified home club official. This may be of benefit in determining the potential ground fitness later in the day, however, the referee should not allow his/her judgement to be unduly swayed by an opinion given.

Any referee, other than the match official, called upon to perform a pitch inspection for a game in which he/she is not refereeing, is required to contact the appointed referee to convey his/her opinions in order that the match referee can make a judgement based upon refereeing principles. It is important that this contact is made before any opinion or decision is relayed to the home or away clubs.

In the event of the appointed match referee not being contactable, the Referees Appointments Officer or Lee Dorling should be contacted so that their opinion can be sought.

If a further or later pitch inspection is deemed appropriate, it should be carried out - distance & travel permitting by the appointed match referee. If this is not possible, then the original inspecting referee should where possible re-inspect the pitch.

If a match is postponed, the home club must inform the match officials, opponents and the secretaries for Match Officials, fixtures and Results immediately. In addition, if contact with club official is only made by leaving a message, this should be followed up by calling and speaking to another club official.

**Postponement of fixtures in severe weather.**  
  
When the Met Office issues a severe weather warning for our part of the country, the League will advise you that postponement of fixtures the night / day before is acceptable without the requirement of a pitch inspection at its discretion.