

# Artificial Turf

## Minimum Requirements and SWMM Design Applicability – Artificial Turf



### Artificial Turf Definitions

Artificial turf shall include artificial grass used for landscaping and artificial turf used for sports fields. Artificial turf may or may not have underdrain systems. Artificial turf is considered a lawn area per the SWMM definition of lawn areas.

*Lawn areas – An area of land planted with grasses or other durable plants which are maintained at a short height and used for aesthetic and/or recreational purposes. The definition also includes turf surfaces, artificial lawn surfaces, and artificial turf surfaces.*

Artificial turf is also considered a pollution-generating pervious surface (PGPS) per the SWMM definition of PGPS.

*PGPS – Any non-impervious area subject to:*

- Vehicular use
- Industrial activities
- Storage of erodible or leachable materials, wastes, or chemicals, and which receive direct rainfall or the runoff or blow in of rainfall;
- Use of pesticides and fertilizers; or
- Loss of soil
- Typical PGPS include lawns and landscaped areas including: golf courses, parks, cemeteries, and sports fields (natural and artificial turf).

### Minimum Requirement Applicability – Minimum Requirements #1-5

For new development and redevelopment projects, Minimum Requirements #1-5 apply to:

- Land disturbing activities of 7,000 square feet or greater.

Land disturbing activities exist when installing artificial turf. Compliance with Minimum Requirements #1-5 will apply. Minimum Requirement #5 for pervious areas typically requires the use of BMP L613: Post Construction Soil Quality and Depth. However, the City will not require the use of BMP L613 for artificial turf installation, as it is not practical.

### Minimum Requirement Applicability – Minimum Requirements #1-9

For new development and redevelopment projects, Minimum Requirements #1-9 apply to projects:

- Converting  $\frac{3}{4}$  acres, or more, of vegetation to lawn or landscaped areas

Vegetation is defined in the SWMM as:

*Native vegetation, pasture, scrub/shrub, uncultivated vegetation, or unmaintained non-native vegetation.*

### Example – Replacing Natural Grass Areas with Artificial Turf

- Projects proposing to replace an existing natural grass sports field or landscaped area with a new artificial grass or artificial turf field do not meet the definition of a converted vegetation area. Since the installation of artificial turf in this example is not considered a converted vegetation area, MR#6-9 is not triggered for this area.
- Sometimes replacing natural grass areas with artificial turf is part of a larger project. The project as a whole may trigger Minimum Requirements #1-9 for the new and replaced hard surfaces and other converted vegetation areas, but Minimum Requirements #6-9 will likely not apply to the artificial turf area.
- The above example also applies to replacing a hard surface with artificial turf.



**Note: This Tip Sheet does not substitute for codes and regulations.**

**The applicant is responsible for compliance with all codes and regulations, whether or not described in this document.**

**More information: City of Tacoma, Planning and Development Services | [www.tacomapermits.org](http://www.tacomapermits.org) (253) 591-5030**

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## Example – Converting Vegetation to Artificial Turf

- Projects proposing to convert existing vegetation to artificial turf are converting vegetation to lawn or landscaped areas. If the project as a whole triggers MR#1-9 those Minimum Requirements apply to the new and replaced hard surfaces and converted vegetation areas.

## **Artificial Turf with Underdrains**

If artificial turf fields have underdrains that connect to stormwater facilities and/or conveyance systems, those facilities and conveyance systems must be sized to accommodate for all flows including those from underdrains. Reference the 2021 Stormwater Management Manual: Volume 4 – Section 2.2.1 and Volume 4- Section 2.3.1.



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