

# Rule Tip of the Week In Dew Course

The serenity and beauty of a golf course is unmatched early in the morning. Anyone who has ever chased after his or her golf ball at that time of day has enjoyed watching the rising sun cast long shadows over glistening landscapes. The only drawbacks to experiencing such idyllic conditions are soaking wet socks and golf shoes from all the dew on the course. This article provides a short course on the “do’s” (or “dew’s”) and “don’t’s” of playing when there is dew on the ground.



What exactly is dew? Dew is liquid water droplets that form when water vapor condenses on grass, spider webs and other objects. It would seem that dew meets the Definition of “Casual Water,” i.e., “... any temporary accumulation of water on the course that is not in a water hazard and is visible before or after the player takes his stance.” However, this Definition points out that, “Dew and [its frozen form] frost are not casual water.” Similarly, the Definition of “Loose Impediments” states, in part, “Dew and frost are not loose impediments.”



About the only thing that dew is good for is to occasionally help you figure out your line of putt based on the track through the dew created by someone else’s putt. Because dew is not a loose impediment, the Rules afford you few opportunities to do anything in the way of removing dew prior to playing a stroke



Thanks to Rule 13-2 [Improving Lie, Area of Intended Stance or Swing, or Line of Play], you are permitted to remove dew from the teeing ground prior to playing a stroke even though such action may improve the position or lie of your ball, the area of your intended stance or swing, your line of play, or the area in which you are to drop or place a ball.

Aside from the absolute right to remove dew on the teeing ground, Rule 13-2 permits the incidental removal of dew elsewhere if it occurs in conjunction with grounding your club lightly when addressing the ball, in fairly taking your stance, in making a stroke or the backward movement of your club for a stroke and the stroke is made, or in removing sand and loose soil or in repairing old hole plugs or ball marks on the putting green. Here’s what Decision 13-2/35 [Removal of Dew or Frost] advises on the subject:

*“Except on the teeing ground, the removal of dew ... from the area immediately behind or to the side of a player’s ball, or from a player’s line of play is a breach of Rule 13-2 if such removal causes a potential advantage (see Decision 13-2/0.5).*

*Additionally, the removal of dew ... from the player’s line of putt is not permitted. Such action is a breach of Rule 16-1a, unless it occurs incidentally to some other action permitted under the Rules, such as in removing loose impediments, repairing ball marks on the putting green or addressing the ball.”*

As for dew on the putting green, Decision 16-1a/3 [Removing Dew or Frost from Line of Putt] indicates that you may not brush away dew from your line of putt. However, Rule 16-1a [Touching Line of Putt] advises that you can touch your line of putt in certain specific situations, i.e., in addressing your ball by placing your club immediately in front of or behind your ball, in measuring, in lifting or replacing your ball, in pressing down a ball-marker, in repairing old hole plugs or ball marks on the putting green, or in removing movable obstructions. So long as you are taking one of these authorized actions, you need not worry if you incidentally remove dew on your line of putt.