

2I Dropping Zones

(1) When to Use Dropping Zones

A dropping zone is a special relief area that may be provided by the Committee. When taking relief in a dropping zone, the player must drop the ball in, and have it come to rest in, the dropping zone. The Committee should add a Local Rule stating under what circumstances the dropping zone may be used (see [Model Local Rule E-1](#)).

Dropping zones should be considered when there may be practical problems with players using the normal relief options under a Rule, such as:

- [Rule 13.1f](#) – Wrong Green.
- [Rule 16.1](#) – Abnormal Course Conditions (Including Immovable Obstructions).
- [Rule 16.2](#) – Dangerous Animal Condition.
- [Rule 17](#) – Penalty Area.
- [Rule 19](#) – Unplayable Ball.
- [Model Local Rule E-5](#) – Alternative to Stroke and Distance for Lost Ball or Ball Out of Bounds or [F-23](#),
- [Model Local Rule F-23](#) – Temporary Immovable Obstructions.

Dropping zones should normally be used to give the player an extra relief option. But the Committee may also require use of a dropping zone as the player's only relief option under a Rule, other than stroke and distance. When the Committee does make the use of a dropping zone mandatory, the use of the dropping zone replaces any other relief options provided by the relevant Rule and this should be made clear to players.

(2) Where to Position Dropping Zones

The Committee should attempt to place a dropping zone so that the architectural challenge of the hole is maintained, and it is typically not closer to the hole than where the player would be dropping the ball when using one of the options under the relevant Rule. For example, when situating the dropping zone for a penalty area, it should be set in a position where the player would still need to negotiate the penalty area rather than being located on the putting green side of the penalty area.

Dropping zones can be marked in many ways (such as by painted lines on the ground, markers such as tee-markers, or a stake or a sign), and can be any shape, such as a circle or a square. The size of the dropping zone may depend on how often it is likely to be used and where it is located, but the size would normally be expected to have about a one club-length radius or smaller. When marked with paint, a sign or painted marking on the ground should be used to let players know its status.

If a dropping zone is likely to be used frequently, the Committee may wish to consider marking the dropping zone by defining the area in the Local Rules. For example, the dropping zone may be defined as being within one club-length of a physical object such as a sign or a stake. This allows for the object to be moved as needed to ensure the dropping zone remains in good condition.