



Frequently Asked Questions on Artificial Turf

Q. What does a club need to play competitive games on Artificial turf?

A. To play competitive matches on an artificial turf pitch it must be tested to a standard that meets the FAI's approval.

Q. What standards will meet FAI approval to play competitive football?

A. For a pitch to be approved by the FAI for competitive play it should be tested to meet one of the following standards depending on what level a club is playing at;

- FIFA 2 Star
- FIFA 1 Star or the equivalent International Artificial Turf Standard (IATS)
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For further information please see P.16 of FAI Guidance notes for artificial turf Version 2.0

Q. What regulations in the FAI Rule book cover artificial turf?

A. The playing of games on artificial turf is covered in Rule 50 (b) of the FAI Rule book which currently reads as below but is due to change in the summer of 2009 (See below).

RULE 50. ARTIFICIAL LIGHTING & ARTIFICIAL TURF.

b) Artificial Turf

Matches under the jurisdiction of the Football Association of Ireland can be played on an artificial turf surface only where the surface has been certified in accordance with the FIFA/IATS (International Artificial Turf Standard) or FAI Standards appropriate to the relevant competition.

Q. I have a new artificial pitch. How can I get it tested?

A. If it has not been built into your original contract then you must appoint a FIFA approved test house to have your pitch tested.



Q. Who can test our pitch to certify it?

A. Only an independent FIFA approved test house laboratory can carry out the test on an artificial turf pitch. Please contact the FAI Facility Development Unit to get a list of these test houses.

Q I have a small sided artificial turf pitch, do I have to get it tested?

A. Only pitches that fall within the dimensions of FIFA laws of the game can be tested for FIFA Standards. These dimensions are as follows;
90m to 110m in length and 45m-90m in width. These dimensions are measured within playing markings.

Q What standard does my pitch have to meet to play in my league ?

A. The table below has been extracted from the FAI Guidance notes on artificial turf. Each level of domestic competition should be covered

Table 1 – appropriate standards for intended use			
Intended use	Frequency of use over eight year period	Standard	
FAI League of Ireland clubs wishing to hold UEFA competition matches on their artificial grass pitch	Low to moderate*	FIFA Quality Concept Two Star category **	
FAI League of Ireland competitions and FAI Senior Cup	Moderate to high	Pitches constructed prior to 01/01/2010	FIFA Quality Concept One Star category) / IATS (re-tests to be in accordance with 2009 edition)**
		Pitches constructed post 01/01/2010	FIFA Quality Concept One Star category / IATS (2009 edition)**



All other FAI affiliated league and cup competitions	High	Pitches constructed prior 01/01/2010 to	IS EN 15330-1 (re-test ball roll \leq 12m)
		Pitches constructed post 01/01/2010	FIFA Quality Concept One Star category (2009 edition) / IATS (2009 edition)***

Q. Who has the responsibility of appointing a company to test our pitch?

A. Depending on the details of the contract agreement with the respective contractor; it can be either the client or the contractor who has the responsibility for appointing the FIFA approved test house.

Q. How much will it cost to get our pitch tested?

A. The cost of a test can vary depending on a few factors but generally it will cost between €2750 and €3000 for the initial test although this cost may vary depending on travel costs etc. However, when putting together your contract with the supplier the cost of the initial test at a minimum should be built into the contract.

Q. How often do we have to test our pitch?

A. As per Artificial turf guidelines Version .2.0 (November 2009), to qualify for use in FAI League of Ireland Competitions or the FAI Senior Cup, the pitch must be **fully tested annually** to FIFA One Star Standard and be certified by the FAI as meeting the appropriate standard before play is allowed. To qualify for use in all other FAI league and cup competitions the pitch must be inspected in accordance with FAI requirements annually and be tested once every three years.

Q. How long after a pitch is installed can it be tested?

A. A Contractor may tell you that a 3 month period of regular use should pass before a pitch is tested, however a pitch should be in a position to be tested immediately on completion.



Q. Can we plan competitive games on our pitch before it has been tested?

A. The FAI have put in place a process whereby the relevant contractor involved in the installation shall indemnify the pitch in the interim period between its date of completion and the testing date.

Q. Can a team refuse to play on an artificial turf pitch?

A. If the pitch has been tested to the required standard and approved by the FAI then a team cannot refuse to play a fixture in an FAI affiliated competition.

Q. Do you have to put fencing around an artificial turf pitch?

A. No.

Q. Do I need a shockpad on my pitch?

A. You do not require a shock pad for a football pitch to play competitive football matches.

Q. Are there advantages to having a shockpad?

A. It is argued by many that a field will maintain better playing conditions for a longer period if a shockpad is included.

Q. Do I need a shock-pad if the pitch is to be used for other sports?

A. (i) **Rugby:** If a pitch is being used for competitive Rugby a shockpad is required. This is due to the Critical Fall Heights (CFH) in Rugby and therefore related Health and Safety issues that necessitate a shockpad to be incorporated. This is covered under **Rule 22** of IRB rule book. This may vary in different levels of competition.

(ii) **Gaelic Games:** An artificial pitch does not require a shockpad to host competitive games under the auspices of GAA.

Q. What do I have to do to maintain my artificial turf pitch?



- A.** If yours is an **existing pitch** and the contractor has not issued you with recommended maintenance guidelines specific to your carpet then please refer to the maintenance guidelines on the website at a general guide. It is also recommended that you contact the manufacturer of your carpet to get guidelines specific to that product.

If you have a **new pitch developed since 2008** then the contractor is obliged by FIFA's Quality Concept Manual to provide you with recommended guidelines for maintenance and the contractor should also supply or recommend the suitable machinery and equipment to carry it out specific to your carpet.

Q. Can any footwear be worn on an artificial turf football pitch?

- A.** The advice of carpet manufacturers and yarn suppliers is that boots with aluminium studs should NOT be used on artificial grass pitches; failure to follow this advice may invalidate a manufacturer's warranty. Plastic screw-in and moulded studs are normally considered acceptable, although their ability to provide satisfactory traction and grip varies and research is ongoing as to what forms of studs are the most suitable for artificial grass surfaces, with the development of new profiles being envisaged.

The use of trainers/astro-turf trainers should be strongly discouraged as they flatten the blade/pile of the carpet