



SAFETY DIRECTOR BULLETIN



PICKLEBALL BEST PRACTICES

Pickleball is sweeping across New Jersey and growing in popularity nationwide. [USA Pickleball](#) says pickleball is fun, social, and easy to learn. But it can develop into a fast-paced and competitive game. The paddle-and-ball sport combines the elements of tennis, badminton, and ping-pong on a badminton-sized court and a slightly lower tennis net. The game can be enjoyed by all ages and skill levels.

Pickleball is a low-impact sport, but persons who have [significant cardiovascular or pulmonary conditions](#) that limit their ability to exert themselves should consult with their physicians before playing the game. Injuries while playing pickleball are similar to other racket sports. They include:

- Falls from sudden turning, pivoting, or backpedaling. Wrist injuries from outstretched hands are possible.
- Ankle, knee, and lower extremity sprains
- Shoulder injuries are less frequent than with tennis due to much of the game is played underhanded.

As members struggle to meet the growing demand for Pickleball courts, the following offers guidance and best practices.

If building a new pickleball facility, use a reputable recreation construction company. One agency is converting a vacant commercial property for indoor courts. The governing body should adopt a resolution or ordinance approving the design and construction of the facility.

There are two paths to converting existing tennis courts into pickleball courts:

1. The simplest way is to lower the net and repaint or reline the court.
2. A standard tennis court pad is 60' x 120'. The minimum recommended size for a pickleball court is 30' x 60'. That is one-fourth the size of a standard tennis court pad. Therefore, it is possible to put up to [four](#) pickleball courts in the space of a tennis court.

Additionally, Pickleball Central has a blog, [How to Convert Tennis Courts to Pickleball Courts](#).

Pickleball is noisier than tennis. The wood paddle and wiffle-like plastic ball can create noise that reaches [70 decibels](#). This can anger nearby residents. In the 1970s and 1980's, two-court tennis pods embedded in neighborhoods were popular. Converting them to pickleball courts can be challenging. Consider:

- Adding tall shrubs to deaden sound.
- Not lighting the courts to limit play to daylight hours.
- Post the hours of play or lock the courts at a specified time.
- If necessary, enact a noise ordinance.

A comprehensive periodic inspection and maintenance program should be instituted. Consider adding a water fountain, an AED, and an emergency phone at the court(s) site.

The governing body should adopt a resolution or ordinance requiring the posting of signs at the facility. Signs should provide the following information:

- Hours of play.
- Advising users to inspect the court before play and report concerns. Provide a contact phone number.
- Do not play on wet courts.
- Consult your physician before playing any sport, including pickleball.
- Wear proper footwear. Safety goggles are recommended.