

Athletic Field Fencing 101

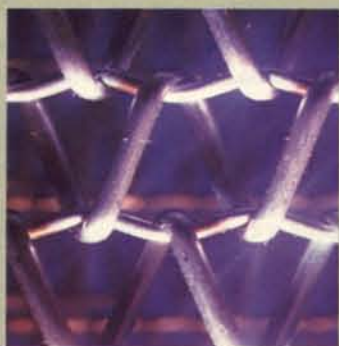
Though many readers may be familiar with safety regulations for athletic field fences, others may not. Here we present some standards for those readers to consider when putting together a new field or renovating an existing facility. Failure to keep pace with standards changes could ultimately put you in a no-win situation in event of accidents and litigation.

The entire field must be fenced. Fence height ranges from 4 ft. for youth fields to 8 ft. for scholastic and adult fields to prevent those leaping for balls from going headfirst over the fence. Six-foot fences are acceptable but not ideal.

Fences should be sturdy enough to withstand an athlete's weight as well as serve as a windscreen. For baseball fields, the fence should start at 8 ft. as it leaves the backstop and goes around the circumference of the field, including in front of the dugouts.

The top of the fence should be covered with a colorful vinyl tube to protect players from injury and to serve as a reference point. The fencing should be attached on the field side of the poles, with all attachments and prongs on the outside of the fence.

The fence should be stretched down from the top to the tension rail on the bottom. It should be no closer than 25 feet to the sidelines or foul lines, but preferably 50-75 feet. The fence is there to protect both players and spectators.



Baseball specifics

If chain link is used both the top and bottom of the mesh must be knuckled (and preferably covered). If plastic fabric with bendable vertical supports is used, must not have any protrusions. No solid wood or metal signs or plates should be fastened to the inside.

If the fence is a solid material, mount a pad on it!

The overhang should be big enough to contain foul balls that would impact surrounding areas in use. If an overhang will not be effective, use netting. The backstop must be constructed of 1-in. mesh to prevent climbing. The sideline fence must extend from the backstop at least 20 feet beyond first and third bases. **ST**

This material provided by Dr. Arthur H. Mittelstaedt, Jr., and the Recreation Safety Institute, Ronkonkoma, NY.



CHAIN LINK FENCE GUARDS

Fence Guard™ protective covers for chain link fencing from Partac Peat Corp. are now available in six colors—safety yellow, dark green, red, white, blue, and orange—as well as two grades—premium and standard. These UV-resistant, polyethylene covers protect players from injuries and provide a distinctive look to your fencing.

Fence Guard comes in cartons of ten 8-ft. sections with fifty 8-in. UV-resistant ties for securing every 2 feet to fence. A 5-year manufacturer's limited warranty is offered.

For safety and uniform appearance, you should remove crowns from the tops of fence posts so that the entire fence top is covered; ends can be butted or overlapped, and the product is easy to cut, says the manufacturer.

Bottom Guard™, which serves the same safety and appearance purpose, also reduces erosion and eases weed cutting.

PARTAC/BEAM CLAY

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COLOR BARRICADES

Barco Products' durable, polypropylene Color-Cades are suitable for sporting events and other crowd control applications. Weighing less than 30 lbs. each, they nest for easy storage. Color-Cades are available in 6 colors—red, orange, yellow, green, blue and white—and are 78" L x 39" H x 19.5" W. Prices start at \$148.85 and decrease per unit in bulk.

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