

# The Golf Rules Review

An Intermittent Communique by the WWGA Golf Rules Maven

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## Ask the Golf Rules Maven - Questions from our WWGA Members

### Ball Lands on Cart Path

*I was playing MV hole #6 and my drive went right and stopped in the middle of the cart path. One player said "Because the ball is in the middle, you have the option of taking relief on either side of the cart path" a second player said "No, you don't have a choice, you have to take the nearest point of relief". Who is right and where is the nearest point of relief?*

When your ball lands in the cart path, you may play the ball as it lies from the cart path or take "free relief" based on one club length from the nearest point of relief no closer to the hole. Theoretically, there is only one point that can be the "nearest point of relief". The person who said you have an option of taking relief on either side of the cart path was incorrect. In fact, taking relief on the wrong side is a 2 stroke penalty (loss of hole in match play) for playing from the wrong place.



### Here is how to determine which side of the cart path to take relief.

1. Take your stance on the right side of the cart path where the cart path does not interfere with your swing and you are not closer to the hole.
2. Put a tee where your club head ends (yellow arrow). This yellow arrow is the nearest point of relief on the right side of the cart path.
3. Now do the same thing on the left side of the cart path... take your stance and put a tee (blue arrow) where your club head ends. This blue arrow is the nearest point of relief on the left side of the car path. We can see that the club head right of the cart path was much farther away from the ball than when we used the left side of the cart path. So the nearest point of relief must be on the left side of the cart path.



4. Now measure one club length from the tee on the left from where your club head is and you may drop your ball anywhere within the one club length measurement, no closer to the hole. Now drop (don't toss) your ball from knee high within the 1 club length area and then hit!

## Hitting a Provisional Ball When Hitting Over Water

*I was on MV hole #9 and I struck my tee shot well but it went up in the air heading way left of the green. The trees left of the tee box prevent us from seeing the ball. We just couldn't tell if my ball was over or not. Could I hit a provisional ball, even though you aren't allowed to when your ball is in a penalty area (e.g. the water hazard)?*

Yes you can, but only because you weren't certain whether your ball is in the water hazard or not. It is only when you are virtually certain your ball is in a penalty hazard that you can't hit a provisional ball.

Here is where this player's ball first landed... safe to the far left of the green but near a manhole cover. At this point, even if her provisional ball went in the hole, the player cannot use it and must play her first shot. Similar to the ball on the cart path, the player does not have to stand on the cover to hit her ball. If she takes relief, she must take full relief so the cover doesn't interfere with her stance or swing.



The player took her stance on both sides of the cover to determine which side was the nearest point of relief. Like the example in the first question, the nearest point of relief was on the left side, but it was close. Note: in the middle photo it looks like she may have been able to stand slightly closer to the manhole cover but the cover was raised higher in the right side which also interfered with her stance.



The bottom photo just shows the 1 club length used for her drop.



In the 2 examples presented in these questions, we can see it is not unusual that relief may be on the left side for a right handed player. This is because when the player takes their stance on the right side, the distance to get to the nearest point of relief includes their body plus the distance to their club head. So the take away from this Golf Rules Review is, don't assume the nearest point of relief for a man-made obstruction is always the same side the ball is on.