



## **GOLF CLUB & OTHER EQUIPMENT SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

### **I. Introduction**

The purpose of this document is to provide key policies and procedures that should be followed when submitting models of golf clubs and other equipment to the USGA for conformance evaluation. A model of club is defined as one in which all of the individual samples have been designed and manufactured to be identical, within reasonable manufacturing tolerances, including the external markings and appearance of the club, except that there may be a variety of lofts and bounces.

If the design, manufacture or construction of a club or other equipment is changed or updated such that the new version is different in appearance, may perform differently from previously-submitted samples, or is marked differently, a sample of that club or other equipment should be re-submitted as a different model which is distinguishable from the previous version by an identification marking (for clubs, see Section VII below on Clubhead Markings).

While many of the following procedures will be familiar to previous submitters, we ask that you review the entire document so that you are aware of the most up-to-date submission information. This will help to ensure that processing of equipment submitted to the USGA for conformance evaluation is performed in an accurate and timely manner. As a reminder, several golf club testing protocols are available at the following link:

<http://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/equipment-standards/test-protocols-for-equipment-9df6d04f.html>

Also, please note that with the publication of the 2019 Rules of Golf, the Equipment Rules have been created as a stand-alone publication and are available at the following link:

<http://www.usga.org/equipment-standards/equipment-rules-for-2019.html#!rule-14606>

### **II. What to Submit**

The preamble to the Equipment Rules states that “A manufacturer should submit to the USGA a sample of the equipment to be manufactured for a ruling . . . If a manufacturer fails to submit a sample, or, having submitted a sample, fails to await a ruling before manufacturing and/or marketing the equipment, the manufacturer assumes the risk of a ruling that the equipment does not conform to the Equipment Rules.”

The above indicates that submissions of new equipment to the USGA for conformance evaluation are strongly recommended, but not mandatory. The USGA’s general advice to manufacturers regarding what to submit is as follows:

- (i) All drivers which are intended for use at the elite level of play (i.e., professional and elite amateur-level competitions that adopt Model Local Rule G-1 regarding the List of Conforming Driver Heads) and which, therefore, must be included on the List to be played (see Section V below).
- (ii) Any products which have the potential to be played at the elite level. This is particularly important for irons, wedges, fairway woods and hybrids manufactured on or after January 1, 2010 which are required to meet the Impact Area Markings specifications effective from

January 1, 2010 (i.e., where Model Local Rule G-2 has been adopted).

- (iii) Any products that the manufacturer has any doubt as to whether it conforms to the Rules of Golf and the Equipment Rules.
- (iv) Any unique, innovative designs which incorporate new material(s) and/or feature(s). Manufacturers are encouraged to submit such product early in the development cycle to avoid unnecessary costs and/or production delays (early submissions may be in the form of drawings, diagrams, descriptions, etc.).
- (v) Any products that the manufacturer wishes to state “Conforms with the Rules of Golf” in advertising, marketing, instructional and other material associated with the product (such materials should be provided with the submission). Permission to make a statement regarding the Rules of Golf is only granted through the official conformance evaluation process.

### **III. Where to Submit**

The USGA and R&A jointly govern the Rules of Golf. However, each organization makes independent decisions regarding equipment submitted for evaluation of its conformance to the Rules of Golf and the Equipment Rules. Therefore, as a general rule, golf equipment covered by this guideline should be submitted to the USGA if the manufacturer is based in the United States, its territories and/or Mexico. Additionally, if a manufacturer is based outside of those areas, the manufacturer should submit product to The R&A, unless the product is intended primarily for markets within those areas.

Submission information for the USGA is available at the following link:

<http://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/equipment-standards/getting-equipment-tested-146a0d1e.html>

### **IV. General Product Submission Information**

**Woods and Hybrids** - We consider each loft of each model to be separate. As a result, a sample head of each loft within a particular model line should be submitted. In addition, right-handed and left-handed heads are considered separate models. It is not necessary to submit a completely assembled club for each loft (see submission guidance below on shaft and grip components).

**Irons** - In order to obtain an official conformance decision for the set, the full set of irons must be submitted for evaluation. Like woods and hybrids, we consider right-handed and left-handed heads, as well as different finishes, to be separate models. When submitting a set of irons, one sample should be submitted in its assembled form (e.g., with a shaft and grip). The remainder of the set should be heads only.

**Wedges** – Wedges which are manufactured in a different finish are considered to be separate models and every loft within each finish is considered to be a separate club for submission purposes. An official decision can only be issued for a specific loft and finish combination if a sample has been submitted. While we do not require evaluation of every bounce or grind, if applicable, we would encourage manufacturers to submit a cross-section of bounces and grinds. However, if an official decision has been rendered on a specific loft/finish, the conformance decision would apply to all bounces for that loft/finish. Finally, to reduce the

submission cost, we combine wedge submissions received at the same time in groups of up to ten (10) and charge them at the same rate as a set of irons.

**Putters** - To obtain an official decision, we require submission of an assembled putter (i.e., head, shaft and grip). Generally, it is not necessary to submit a right-handed and left-handed putter of identical construction. Also, we consider standard-length, mid-length and long putters to be distinct models, requiring separate submission.

**Shafts** - Shafts are evaluated for bending and twisting, as well as other potential conformance issues. If you have previously submitted a particular shaft intended to be used with a particular wood, hybrid, iron or wedge submission, you may refer to that shaft on the submission form and note the previous submission number. Additionally, if stock shafts are installed, there is no need to send a sample to the USGA unless there are markings specific to your company/product (though you should ensure that the shaft selected is conforming). If submitting a shaft, a sample of each flex is necessary for evaluation and should not be part of an assembly.

**Grips** - Grips are treated in a similar fashion to shafts with respect to submission procedures. If you have previously submitted a particular grip, you may refer to that grip on the submission form and note the previous submission number. If not, submit one non-shafted grip sample and one shafted grip sample (the shaft of the shafted sample need only be slightly longer than the grip).

**Other Equipment** – One sample of a tee (different tee lengths are considered separate models), glove, device or other equipment is required. Submissions of distance-measuring devices should be accompanied with a clear description of all features installed on the device and their operation.

#### V. **Other Submission Details**

Submissions should be sent to the address noted in the upper right-hand corner of the submission form. All submissions must be accompanied by a completed Submission Form, an editable PDF of which can be downloaded from the following link on the USGA website:

<https://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/equipment-standards/how-to-submit-equipment-for-testing.html>

Samples may be submitted in mock-up, prototype, first article or final production form (a 'first article' sample is essentially a pre-production sample, which may not be fully developed in terms of markings or finish). As previously noted, a manufacturer may submit drawings, images and design descriptions for provision of an informal conformance opinion.

Effective January 1, 2020, in addition to the testing fee applicable to all submissions of final production models, there will be a testing fee associated with mock-up, prototype and first article submissions as well (see Section X below). These submissions receive full conformance evaluation and are given an "in principle" or informal opinion. Such opinions are not binding and are subject to change upon further consideration and/or receipt of additional information.

*Note: If an item of equipment is designed to be adjustable, this should be clearly stated on the Submission Form and a sample of the adjustment tool must be submitted along with all other interchangeable components (e.g., alternative weights screws or cartridges, hosel pieces, face inserts, etc.). Where a club has an interchangeable shaft/hosel mechanism, please ensure that a hosel piece, without shaft, is installed with each of the heads submitted.*

#### VI. **Test Service**

Before making a formal submission of a new product, manufacturers may make use of our testing facilities to obtain specific measurement results on certain features or to perhaps gauge production variation. Any sample submitted for Test Service is returned to the manufacturer.

Effective January 1, 2020, there will be a testing/evaluation fee applied to such submissions (see

Section X below). While detailed test data is provided, no conformance determination is made.

## **VII. Clubhead Markings**

Given the importance of the clubhead markings when identifying a clubhead, and, just as importantly, distinguishing it from a clubhead which has been determined to be non-conforming, the following guidelines must be observed:

- A. Markings which distinguish one model or version from another should be permanent in nature and should include letters, symbols or logos which are easy to identify and describe in words. Information appearing on stick-on labels will not be recognized as an identifying marking.
- B. Distinguishing markings must be clear, unambiguous and not easily replicated. Additionally, the use of lines, punch marks, dots, dashes and/or similar marks is generally not sufficient.
- C. Changing the color, font or size of any marking on the clubhead or changing the color of part or all of the head is not an acceptable method of distinguishing one model or version of a clubhead from another. However, the customization of an individual driver head with a player's name or initials and/or logo would ordinarily not mean that the club is a different model or version requiring submission for evaluation.
- D. The change in number of weight ports on a clubhead would constitute a change of marking from a previous version of a club.

All markings on each clubhead will be recorded from left to right. This applies to Left-Handed clubs also, however, the actual order that markings are noted is not sufficient to differentiate one submission or version from a previous submission or version.

Clubs which do not meet the above policy on markings may not be accepted for evaluation. We highly recommend that a manufacturer wishing to make two versions of the same model or distinguish a non-conforming model contact the USGA, prior to producing tooling and/or going into production, to ensure that the marking distinction is acceptable. Further information regarding guidance for markings may be found in Appendix III of this document.

In cases of doubt, manufacturers are encouraged to submit proposed markings for review prior to using them on models submitted for testing. This will help to avoid any inconvenient delays.

## **VIII. The List of Conforming Driver Heads and the Informational Club Database**

When a manufacturer submits a production model of a driver, fairway wood, hybrid, iron or wedge to the USGA for evaluation which is intended for the marketplace and/or elite level play, if that sample is evaluated to conform to the Rules of Golf and the Equipment Rules, its details may be included on the List of Conforming Driver Heads or the Informational Club Database.

To prevent the details of a product from being published prematurely (i.e., in conflict with launch dates and/or marketing campaigns), the Golf Club Submission Form provides manufacturers with the opportunity to specify the appropriate time for the details of each club to be included on the List or in the Database.

However, manufacturers must be aware that if a driver is to be used in elite level competitive play prior to public launch and/or marketing (e.g., a prototype club), the details of this club must usually be included on the List of Conforming Driver Heads – otherwise players will not be able to use it. This is because, as you may know, most professional tours and elite level amateur competitions adopt Model Local Rule G-1 requiring players to use only drivers which incorporate a head and loft included on the List. For the purpose of the List, a driving club is defined as a club that is primarily designed for use when hitting from the teeing ground. Club design features

such as loft, head size, face dimensions, head weight and club length are considered, as well as any apparent or declared intent of the design.

The List of Conforming Driver Heads and the Informational Club Database are updated on the first Monday of each week.

**IX. Iron Sets**

The USGA has developed special guidelines for iron set submissions as a result of the additional impact area specifications adopted effective from January 1, 2010.

Basically, if one or more club samples within an iron set submission fails any of the standards for groove width, depth, separation, sharpness or area over pitch, additional samples may be requested prior to issuing an Official ruling. A similar policy is applied for irons which display issues with groove geometry, and in this situation, we will begin our investigation by requesting a diagram of the groove design.

The flowchart contained within Appendix I sets forth the guidelines on the requirement for additional samples.

**X. Fee Structure**

The fee structure for golf club and other equipment submissions is as follows:

**Conformance Decisions (Production Sample)**

Woods	\$200 each
Hybrids	\$200 each
Iron Sets	\$700 per set
Individual Iron/Wedge	\$200 each
Wedges (groups of 10 or less)	\$700 per group
Putters	\$100 each
Others (tee, gloves, shoes, device, etc.)	\$100 each

**Preliminary Conformance Assessment (Mock-Ups, Prototypes and First Articles)**

Woods	\$100 each
Hybrids	\$100 each
Iron Cross-Section (e.g., 3, 6 and 9)	\$200 per sample set
Iron Sets	\$350 per set
Individual Iron/Wedge	\$75 each
Wedges (groups of 4 or less)	\$200 per group
Wedges (groups of 5 to 10)	\$350 per group
Putters	\$50 each
Others (tee, gloves, shoes, device, etc.)	\$50 each

**Test Service**

Woods	\$100 each
Hybrids	\$100 each
Iron Sets	\$350 per set
Individual Iron/Wedge	\$100 each
Wedges	\$350 per group

## **Expedite Requests**

Expedites are possible and may be granted upon request. If available, the typical turnaround time will be 10 calendar days or less, with an additional charge of 25% of your testing fee.

## **XI. Notification Procedure**

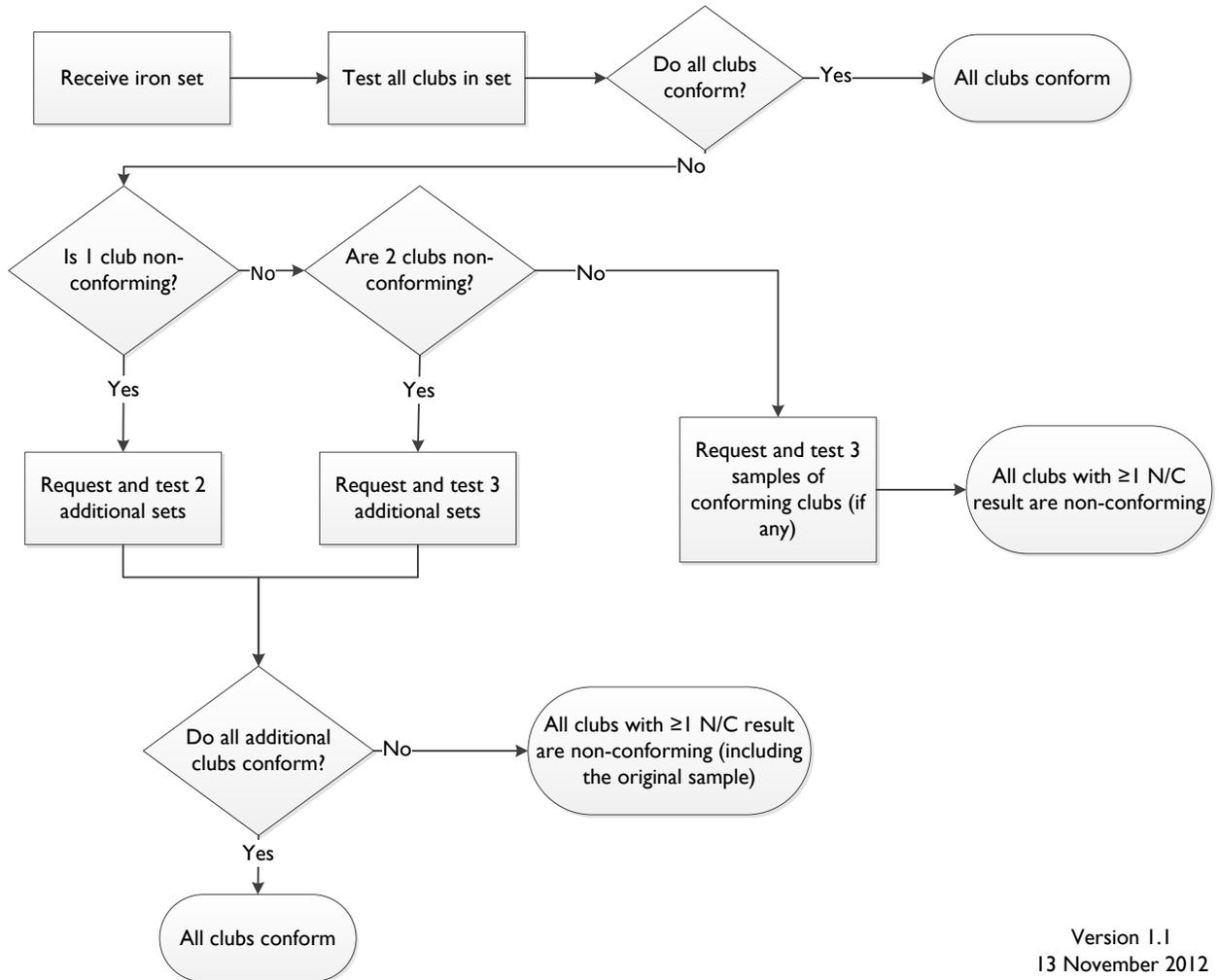
The USGA issues an official decision notification (i.e., a certificate) indicating the conformance determination of all golf clubs and other equipment submitted for evaluation. The notification specifies the language that a submitter may use in representing the product with respect to the USGA and the Rules of Golf. The submitter is not permitted to make any statement regarding the USGA and/or conformance to the Rules of Golf until a submission has been made and the submitter has received the official notification. The USGA continuously improves its processes to ensure that submissions are turned around as quickly as possible. Samples of all submissions are retained for reference purposes.

Note: The USGA reserves the right to perform check tests on clubs which have been deemed conforming to the Rules of Golf. As a result, the USGA may perform such tests as necessary to ensure the integrity of its conformance decision. However, the USGA will not reverse a previously issued conformance decision prior to consultation with the manufacturer and, if necessary, evaluation of a sufficient sample of the product by the USGA (please refer to Appendix II regarding the USGA's sampling plan).

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact Carter Rich, Senior Director of Equipment Rules and Conformance or, Shannon Kane, Coordinator, Club Conformance at (908) 234-2300.

## Appendix I

Convention for the request of additional samples – Applicable to iron sets only



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## Appendix II

### Golf Club Marketplace Sampling Procedure

Based on samples submitted to the USGA during the conformance testing process, information obtained regarding golf clubs in the marketplace or information obtained from other sources, the USGA may perform check tests on clubs which have been previously deemed conforming to the Rules of Golf.

It's important to note that the USGA does not plan to perform random check testing of product in the retail marketplace. The purpose of the Sampling Procedure is to communicate the formal process for obtaining clubs if and when it is necessary to determine conformance of equipment in the marketplace that has already been submitted to the USGA and officially determined to conform to the Rules of Golf. Please note that all aspects of conformity are subject to the Sampling Procedure.

For all clubs, Phase II of the sampling procedure is currently active.

#### **CLUB SAMPLING PROCEDURE**

If a situation should arise where the conformance of a club that the USGA has previously deemed conforming to the Rules of Golf and is already being sold or marketed comes into question, the USGA may deem it necessary to obtain samples from the marketplace and test them for conformance to the Rules of Golf.

1. The USGA will obtain club samples from retail sources of its choosing. These samples will be measured for conformance at the USGA Research and Test Center.
2. For the club sampling procedure, the conformance of the club will be determined by the sampling plans referenced below. Two different sampling plans will be used, both of which have been published by the International Standards Organization (ISO). Details of both sampling plans are attached (Phase I and Phase 2).
3. If a club model is determined by the USGA to exceed the terms of the sampling plan, the USGA will take the following actions:
  - a. The manufacturer of the club will be informed by the USGA that samples of the product have been tested and found to be non-conforming. The manufacturer will have a reasonable amount of time to review the findings and discuss the matter with the USGA.
  - b. After the manufacturer has completed their review and discussions with the USGA, a non-conforming ruling will be issued for the club unless the manufacturer provides information to the USGA which warrants additional consideration.
  - c. If a non-conforming ruling is issued, the USGA will provide the manufacturer with an opportunity to inform its customers of the change in conformance status of the particular club and to submit a conforming version of the club. This will require some permanent identifying markings distinguishing this version from the non-conforming version.

#### **SAMPLING PLAN DETAILS**

##### **Phase I: ISO 2859-1, Table 10-E-2, Double sampling plan, AQL 10.0**

- A. Measure 8 samples. Accept on 1 defect, reject on 3 defects.
- B. If 2 defects are found in the first 8 samples, measure an additional 8 samples.
- C. Accept on 4 total defects (out of 16), reject on 5 total defects.

**Phase II: ISO 2859-1, Table 10-E-2, Double sampling plan, AQL 4.0**

- A. Measure 8 samples. Accept on 0 defects, reject on 2 defects
- B. If 1 defect is found in the first 8 samples, measure an additional 8 samples.
- C. Accept on 1 total defects (out of 16), reject on 2 total defects

Those familiar with quality control methods may recognize these as MIL-STD inspection sampling plans. These are now known as ISO sampling plans. Further information about these sampling plans can be obtained from the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). [www.iso.org](http://www.iso.org), or the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). <http://webstore.ansi.org>.

Note: For driving clubs, the Phase II sampling plan was in effect for several years prior to expanding the sampling plan to other clubs. For other clubs, the Phase I sampling plan was employed by the USGA when obtaining samples from retail locations until January 1, 2015. Since January 1, 2015, the Phase II sampling plan, which is a more stringent plan, has been employed for all clubs. The phase-in for other clubs was intended to provide manufacturers the opportunity to consider incorporating greater tolerances when designing clubs, other than driving clubs, and instituting tighter inspections during their manufacturing processes.

## Appendix III

### Acceptable Clubhead Markings

<u>Acceptable Markings</u>	<u>Noted Markings</u>	<u>Agnostic Markings</u>
Text	Upper/Lower case	Upper/Lower case
Numbers	Numerical number	
Characters	“β” i.e. (Beta character)	
Logos		
Indicators	Orientation and/or Loft Indicators	
Location (permissible, must be clearly different)		
Shapes		

**General** – this section refers to how the markings on each item are defined and logged:

- , - used to indicate a break in text, line or a feature;
- ( ) - used to indicate an item on its own (e.g., a (logo), (club number/letter) (on plate/medallion in cavity)).

**Text (i.e. modern alphabet)** –clubheads are submitted with varying degrees of text, mixing of lower- and upper-case letters including:

- Caps and Lower case, each are noted (though not considered as a distinguishing marking);
- Spacing will be used in between words.

**Numbers** – club submissions may have many types of numbers on each of them, with the most common being – loft, bounce, club number:

- Club number, loft and bounce are recorded within brackets as – (club number/letter) (loft) (bounce);
- All other numbers will be recorded as markings.

**Weight Ports** – many drivers and other types of clubs may have weight ports on them, with some having several. Some weights can be permanently mounted within the port, and some adjustable:

- These will be recorded as (weight port) and where there are multiple weight ports, (e.g., two or three, these will be noted as (two weight ports) or (three weight ports).

**Characters** – the global presence of manufacturers will result in several using characters unique to their region. Where these can be described in the English language, they will be described in such a manner:

- The use of different types of characters (e.g., Kanji, Greek, etc.) will not be recorded as the actual character and will be noted as text (e.g., (beta character) or (kanji character)). Where multiples are used, they will be noted as such (e.g., (beta characters) or (kanji characters)).

**Logo** - logos will be noted as (logo) in the markings. Should the logo be easily identifiable (e.g., an “A” or a “lion”, this is will be noted as (A logo) or (Lion logo).

**Shapes** - some manufacturers use shapes as markings. Where these can be described in the English language, they will be described in such a manner.

**Multiples**

- Where a club has many of the same marking/design (e.g., “flowers”, “stars”, etc.), these will be noted as (flowers) or (stars) unless these are part of other text and markings within the clubhead.

**Serial numbers**

- These will not be recorded.

**Indicators**

- Where there are markings on hosels which note the orientation and/or loft, these will be logged as (orientation indicators) or (loft indicators).

**Alignment marks** - many crowns, particularly on drivers, fairway woods and hybrids, have alignment marks. These can be in the form of many shapes and will be noted as (alignment mark). Further detail will apply where the alignment mark is a distinct shape (e.g., (arrow alignment mark) or (triangle alignment mark).

**Inserts** - where a club has one or more inserts, these will be noted as markings. If they have specific shapes, these will also be noted (e.g., (diamond insert), (logo on insert), etc.).

**Rings and Ribbons**

- Such markings on hosels will not be recorded, as these would be deemed as cosmetic as opposed to a changeable marking