

Advice on use of distance measuring devices for clubs & golfers

The use of electronic distance measuring devices (DMDs) remains contrary to the Rules of Golf unless they are permitted by virtue of the applicable local rule (see the note to Rule 14-3 and Appendix 1, Part B, Paragraph 9 on page 136 of the Rules of Golf 2012 - 2015).

It is a very important proviso that even when the DMD local rule is in effect, the device must be limited to measuring distance only.

Features that would render use of the device contrary to the local rule include, but are not limited to:

- the gauging or measuring of slope;
- the gauging or measuring of other conditions that might affect play (e.g. wind speed or direction, or other climate-based information such as temperature, humidity, etc.);
- recommendations that might assist the player in making a stroke or in his play (e.g. club selection, type of shot to be played, green reading or any other advice related matter); or
- calculating the effective distance between two points based on slope or other conditions affecting shot distance.

Such non-conforming features render use of the device contrary to the rules, irrespective of whether or not:

- the features can be switched off or disengaged; and
- the features are switched off or disengaged

A multi-functional device, such as a smartphone or PDA, may be used as a distance measuring device provided it contains a distance measuring application that meets all of the above limitations (i.e. it must measure distance only).

PLEASE NOTE – if a smartphone or PDA has any application or feature that can supply any non-conforming data (e.g. wind speed, temperature, compass, directions etc.) the device must not be used to measure distances whether or not the non-conforming application is used. In light of this and to protect players from the risk of disqualification, the SGU **strongly recommends** that mobile phones are **not** used as a DMD.

In 2012 the DMD local rule will be in effect in all SGU Championships/Events i.e. the use of DMDs, subject to the above guidance, will be permitted.

However the SGU's decision does not preclude individual clubs and organising committees from not invoking the DMD local rule i.e. it is at the discretion of each organising committee to decide.

For example, the DMD local rule will not be in effect in championships run under the auspices of The R&A, USGA, LGU, SLGA and other governing bodies. **With this in mind players competing in any event, outwith those directly organised by the SGU, should check with the event organisers prior to competing whether the DMD local rule is in place or not.**

If an organising committee wishes to adopt the DMD local rule then the following wording is recommended:

“(Specify as appropriate, e.g. In this competition, or for all play at this course, etc.), a player may obtain distance information by using a device that measures distance only. If, during a stipulated round, a player uses a distance-measuring device that is designed to gauge or measure other conditions that might affect his play (e.g. gradient, windspeed, temperature, etc.), the player is in breach of Rule 14-3, for which the penalty is disqualification, regardless of whether any such additional function is actually used.”

[For a further information please refer to the R&A / USGA joint statement on electronic devices, including distance-measuring devices.](#) Alternatively refer to appendix IV, page 162 in the Rules of Golf 2012 – 2015.

The R&A / USGA joint statement includes reference to multi functional devices such as iPhones, Blackberries and electric caddie cars with built in distance measuring technology.