20 Must Know Rule Changes for 2019

Drop from knee height (NOT shoulder height)

Measure the area to drop in with the longest club in your bag (except a putter)

You must drop in and play from the relief area

When dropping back-on-the-line, your ball cannot be played from nearer the hole than your chosen reference point

Time to search for a lost ball – 3 minutes (NOT 5 minutes)

If you accidentally move your ball when searching for it, replace it without penalty

No penalty for a double hit – it only counts as one stroke

No penalty if your ball hits you or your equipment accidentally after a stroke

No penalty if your ball strikes the flagstick when you have chosen to leave it in the hole

Spike marks and other shoe damage on the putting green may be repaired

Ball accidentally moved on putting green – no penalty and replace

Ball marked, lifted and replaced on putting green is later moved by natural forces to another position – replace ball on the original spot

Penalty areas replace water hazards, and you can move loose impediments, ground your club and take practice swings in penalty areas without penalty, just as you can on the fairway or in the rough

You can't take relief from a penalty area unless you are at least 95% certain your ball is in the penalty area

In bunkers you can move loose impediments

In bunkers you cannot touch the sand with your club in the area right in front of or right behind your ball, during your backswing or in taking practice swings

Free relief is allowed if your ball is embedded on the fairway or in the rough (but "embedded" means the ball is in its own pitch-mark and that part of your ball is below the level of the ground)

Unplayable ball in bunker – extra option to drop outside the bunker, back-on-the-line, for 2 penalty strokes

You cannot have your caddie or your partner standing behind you once you begin taking your stance for any stroke

Pace of Play – it is recommended that you take no longer than 40 seconds to make a stroke (and usually you should be able to play more quickly than that) and Ready Golf in stroke play is encouraged