

# Do I Get to Drop Out of a Bunker that's Filled with Water?

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Golf Expert



If you hit your ball into a bunker that has water in it - as this golfer did - where do you get to drop the ball? And is it a free drop, or is there a penalty?

The scenario is this: You're playing golf on a course that has some water on it - after a rain, or after the sprinkler system busted. Whatever. There's water. You play a stroke and, whoops, your ball winds up in a [bunker](#). So you trudge up to the bunker to play a sand shot, only to discover that the bunker has water in it. Do you get to drop outside of that bunker?

Only if you're willing to take a 1-stroke penalty.

If your ball comes to rest in [casual water](#) within a bunker, you may drop without penalty at the nearest point of relief *within* the bunker, no nearer the hole. That applies no matter what the condition is of the rest of the bunker.

If the rest of the bunker is dry, great. But *even if the entire bunker contains water*, the same rule applies - if you drop, you must drop within that bunker to avoid penalty.

So if the bunker is completely filled with water, your only option to improve the situation without penalty is this, according to the USGA Web site: "... the player may drop the ball in the bunker at a point that provides maximum available relief (i.e., in 1 inch of water rather than 5 inches)."

If no relief is available inside the bunker, then you can assess yourself a 1-stroke penalty and drop outside the bunker, keeping the point where the ball lay directly between the hole and the spot on which the ball is dropped, with no limit to how far behind the bunker the ball may be dropped.

In the rulebook, see [Rule 25-1](#).

## **Brent Kelley – Experience**

Brent has been a sports journalist since 1986, serving as editor and writer at both newspapers and Web sites. He has produced special sections on golf for newspapers, and served as a newspaper golf columnist. He has also published numerous articles as a freelance writer for newspapers and magazines. Brent has been the About.com Golf Guide since November 2002.