

9. STADIA SAFETY & SECURITY

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9.1 THE PREVENTION OF FOOTBALL-RELATED VIOLENCE

The problem of violent behaviour in and around football stadia is one that, unfortunately, we have been dealing with in this country for many years. The problem has not totally disappeared, but a combination of the measures introduced by football, the Government and the police has helped to bring it under control. The atmosphere at matches nowadays is far removed from the scenes of serious disorder witnessed at matches in the 1970s and early 1980s.

Football has introduced segregated areas and CCTV cameras in all grounds, helping to significantly reduce spectator misbehaviour inside stadia.

Since the 1989 Hillsborough Stadium Disaster and the 1990 Taylor Report on football stadium safety, a massive stadium improvement programme has seen the construction of more than 20 new stadia (including the new St Mary's Stadium at Southampton FC pictured right) and over 200 new stands.

Since 1994 each club in the top two divisions of English football has been required to restrict the admission of spectators to seated accommodation only. This has not only improved spectator behaviour but makes it easier to control and monitor spectators.

Under new safety legislation each football club is required to hold a stadium safety certificate issued by the local authority. Should a stadium subsequently fail to meet the standards set by the achievement of the safety certificate, the local authority may reduce the capacity of the whole stadium or specific areas of the stadium accordingly.

Stadium Safety Officers are responsible for the recruitment and training of stewards (unless supplied under contract by a steward agency). In addition, a national Football Safety Officers' Association has been formed. For more information on stewarding in the game please refer to the following section.

Safety in the stadium is the responsibility of the club management. Police will only take over responsibility within the stadium in the event of a public order situation. Football clubs pay the costs of police officers deployed inside the stadium or on club property under a special services agreement.

Most Premier League clubs' supporters are season ticket holders. Clubs will ban any person who is arrested or ejected from a stadium. Subsequently, supporters are deterred from misbehaving for fear of losing their season ticket.

A number of football clubs operate travel clubs for their away matches and will only issue tickets for an away match to supporters who are members of the travel club. Anyone who misbehaves risks losing their travel club membership and therefore the right to a ticket for away matches.

Police forces across the country have developed a great deal of expertise in dealing with football-related disorder. The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) has produced a best practice document with guidance on the policing of football matches. Training courses and annual conferences are held to further share items of best practice.

Football intelligence officers are assigned to follow each football team at home and away matches to gather intelligence and 'spot' any potential trouble-makers or banned offenders who may turn up at matches.

National legislation has been introduced by the Government to combat hooliganism, outlawing the possession of alcohol on trains and/or coaches when travelling to a football match, entering a stadium when drunk or in possession of alcohol, throwing any object at or towards the pitch or spectator areas, entering the pitch without lawful excuse, indecent or racist chanting and ticket touting.

Under the legislation any person convicted of a football-related offence must receive from the Courts a football banning order. This order prevents the offender from attending any football match at home or abroad for a period of three years. Failure to observe this ban is itself a criminal offence.

The Government has also established a Football Unit within the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) to specialise in the monitoring of football-related disorder and the collation of intelligence to help prevent it.

Recently released Home Office statistics on football-related arrests and banning orders revealed statistical highlights for the 2004/05 season including:

- Arrests for football-related offences down by 11%, to 3,628 – this follows on from a 10% decrease in 2003/04.
- A substantial 21% increase in the number of football banning orders. A total of 3,153 individuals are now prevented from attending domestic and international football matches.
- The highest League attendance for 35 years (29,245,870) saw just 2,725 arrests – an arrest rate of less than 0.01, or one arrest per 10,732 spectators. This is the lowest total number of arrests at League matches since records began.
- 72% increase in arrests for ticket touting – boosted by police operations at clubs repeatedly targeted by touts.

After the ugly scenes that emerged from Euro 2000 in Holland and Belgium, The FA stepped up its campaign against violence in football.

Prior to the tournament a campaign entitled 'Football Yes, Violence No' was run in conjunction with the old England Members' Club and aimed to promote the positive side of English football and its supporters both at home and abroad.

For away games The FA works closely with the National Criminal Intelligence Service in order to identify those who have been involved in football-related violence. These details together with all other FA resources are made available to the relevant authorities abroad. In addition, The FA restricts the sale of tickets for England away matches to members of 'englandfans', the official England supporters' club, all of whom are subject to official vetting.

These developments were recently hailed by The Independent Football Commission as a 'bold strategic shift since Euro 2000', which had ensured that 'The FA had done all it could to contribute to ensuring a positive outcome from the tournament, both for supporters and for the image of English football'.

The FA is aware that, despite our efforts, the battle against these people, whom we would hesitate to call fans, is not yet over. However, it is one that with the support of the Government, NCIS and the real fans of the game we are determined to win.

9.2 STEWARDING

Following the Hillsborough Stadium disaster in 1989, the football authorities in England set out to improve the quality of stewarding. Previous to that stewards did not really have a safety function in the stadium – in those days the police were primarily responsible for the maintenance of public order and safety.

Now, some 15 years on, all of the 92 clubs in the top four divisions in England have a well-trained, well-organised team of stewards and this has led to a significant reduction in the number of police officers required to be deployed inside football grounds.

SAFETY OFFICERS

Each football club has a designated Safety Officer, responsible for the safety management operation at the stadium on match days. He or she is generally responsible for the recruitment and training of stewards.

The Safety Officers have formed their own national organisation – the Football Safety Officers' Association – to share and promote best practice. The FSOA has its own website (www.fsoa.co.uk) which has useful contact details and documents, a forum for exchange of views and a secure section for FSOA members to record statistics from their home matches, which can then be viewed by other FSOA members.

The Safety Officer usually briefs his/her senior stewards before a match and this briefing will then be cascaded down to all stewards on duty before the turnstiles are opened. The briefing will usually follow a standard set of headings, with specific information about the day's event being given under each heading.

All stadia are required, under their safety certificate, to have a control room with radio communications links to steward supervisors and police, CCTV display monitors, access to the public address system and a display monitor linked to the computerised turnstile counting system. With these radio links, the safety officer can immediately contact, or be contacted by, his/her steward supervisors in any part of the ground.

The FSOA has developed a training course for Safety Officers, known as the Event and Match Day Safety Management Course. Further information on this is available from John Rutherford at the FSOA – tel: +44 (0) 1773 520606; email: fsoaoffice@supanet.com

GREEN GUIDE

The Government has for many years produced a set of requirements under the title of the 'Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds', more commonly known as the 'Green Guide'. The Fourth Edition, published in 1997, includes guidance on every technical aspect of safety in sports stadia, with particular relevance to football stadia. There is a separate chapter on stewarding. The Guide can be purchased from The Stationery Office (price £19.95). Further details (including overseas sales) can be found on the TSO web site: <http://www.tso.co.uk/> (enter "Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds" in the search box).

The Green Guide states that the basic duties of stewards (whether directly employed, hired or contracted) should be to enforce the management's safety policy, the requirements of the safety certificate and all ground regulations. The Green Guide also lists the 10 basic duties for stewards.

SAFETY CERTIFICATE

National legislation requires a safety certificate to be issued in respect of the stadium of every club playing in the top four divisions in England and the national stadium. The local government authority is responsible for issuing the safety certificate and for ensuring that the stadium complies with the guidance laid down in the Green Guide.

Each club is required, by its safety certificate, to have stewards trained to a nationally-recognised standard. Stewards are required to keep all aisles, gangways, exits and escape routes clear throughout the event. Perimeter walls are required to have exit gates at regular intervals and stewards are required to man these gates at all times and also to monitor any build-up of crowd pressure in standing areas.

If the local authority is not satisfied with the efficiency of the stewarding, it may reduce the capacity of the stadium accordingly.

SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP

The local authority chairs a Safety Advisory Group, comprising club officials and representatives of the police, fire and ambulance services, which meets on a regular (usually monthly) basis. The Safety Advisory Group can also be called together at short notice to consider any issue arising out of a recent match or any special measures that are proposed for a forthcoming match.

FOOTBALL LICENSING AUTHORITY

The national government has established, since 1991, the Football Licensing Authority (FLA). The FLA is responsible for monitoring the performance of local authorities in the issuing of safety certificates. The FLA has 9 regional inspectors who are responsible for liaising with the clubs/local authorities in their area. The inspectors attend each Safety Advisory Group meeting of the clubs in their area and visit matches at these clubs on a regular basis.

There is a lot of useful information on the FLA website (www.flaweb.org.uk), including advice on briefing/de-briefing, exercise and contingency planning, safety certification, a statement of safety policy for spectators and standing in seated areas.

STEWARDS' TRAINING

Clubs are responsible for the training of their stewards, but The Football Association, FA Premier League and Football League, in conjunction with the Football Safety Officers' Association and the Football Licensing Authority, have produced a "Training Package for Stewarding at Football Grounds", which contains all the Powerpoint presentation slides, in paper format and on CD-Rom, to help provide the training. Clubs can adapt the electronic version to produce their own club-specific training programmes.

The Training Package covers eight modules, plus an induction module and a refresher training module.

Further information on the Training Package and the guide is available from Patricia Brown at The Football League – tel: +44 (0) 870 443 9222; fax +44 (0) 870 442 1188; email: pbrown@football-league.co.uk

THE CERTIFICATE IN EVENT AND MATCHDAY STEWARDING (CEMS)

In 1999, the football authorities also introduced a training and assessment programme for stewards, known as the Football Stewarding Qualification (FSQ). A criticism of the FSQ, however, was that it was an "in-house" system, produced by football for football, and there was no independent accreditation of the qualification. To rectify this, the football authorities have been working with 1st4Sport Qualifications to develop a new qualification, the Certificate in Event and Match Day Stewarding (CEMS), which was accredited by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority on 25th April 2005 and sits at Level 2 on the National Qualifications Framework. The intention was for the CEMS to replace FSQ from the start of the 2005/06 football season.

The CEMS is recognised by the Football Licensing Authority and by local authorities as being to a national standard in steward training and assessment, as required by the Green Guide. The other qualification accepted as being to a national standard is the NVQ Level 2 in Spectator Control.

STEWARDING AGENCIES

Most football clubs in England recruit and train their own stewards, but there are also a number of stewarding agencies who provide stewards. Stewarding agencies should be providing stewards trained to the same standards as in-house club personnel: in other words, they should be trained to the Stewards Training Package and they should have achieved either the CEMS or the NVQ. Football clubs should be asking agencies to provide stewards trained to a national standard.

GROUND REGULATIONS

All clubs in the top four divisions are issued with a standard set of Ground Regulations. These posters are displayed at the entrances to and inside the stadium. The Ground Regulations make it clear that entrance to the ground is subject to acceptance by the visitor of these Ground Regulations. The Regulations specify the list of articles that cannot be brought into the stadium and they give the stewards the right to search any or all spectators.

