



ARMY

ARMY FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION
Founded 1888

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GUIDANCE FOR THE ASSURANCE OF FOOTBALL IN THE ARMY

Reference A. Army Sport Control Board Directive
Reference B. AGAI Volume 1 Chapter 5 Sport
Reference C. Army FA Generic Sport Risk Assessment

INTRODUCTION

1. Reference A, set out the direction for the conduct and delivery of sport in the Army and including the assurance, compliance and governance of Sport in accordance with Reference B. In regard to safety, the Chairman of Army Football is tasked with the following:
 - a. To ensure the delivery of the Football, through the Secretary of Army Football, is in accordance with National Governing Body (NGB) policy and guidelines and the Army's Frago on Risk to Life Sport and Adventure Training.
 - b. To ensure the Sport has in place an effective assurance mechanism to provide a safe environment.

COVID-19 UPDATE

Representative Football within the Army has been authorised to resume 18th Sept 20 under strict direction, guidance and protocols from the Army (via the ASCB) and the FA. Every representative fixture must be authorised by the ASCB before it can take place. The main source of information is the Army FA Generic Sport Risk Assessment (Reference C) which has been updated to include specific direction and guidance for Army Football in response to the COVID-19 situation. This contains the necessary direction and guidance to facilitate a safe return to Football at all levels (both for training and matches) within the Army. Those involved with, and responsible for, the planning and delivery of Football within the Army (Committee Members, Managers, Coaches and Trustees) at **all** levels of Football (Army, Corps and Units) are to ensure that they comply fully with this SSMP and pay particular attention to the COVID-19 specific direction contained in Reference C. A copy of the SSMP, which includes the detailed Risk Assessment is enclosed. These documents should reassure Commanding Officers that every reasonable measure is being taken to ensure the

safety of their personnel during these challenging times. Any unanswered concerns or questions should be addressed to the Army FA (Chairman, Secretary or Team Managers).

SPORTS SAFETY MANAGEMENT PLAN (SSMP)

2. This document sets out the development of a SSMP for Football in the Army and identifies key roles, responsibilities and boundaries for all personnel involved in the delivery of Football, within their organisation and its assurance and governance.

UNIT LEVEL FOOTBALL

3. All Units Major/Minor and sub units are to be affiliated with the Army Football Association.

4. The Chairman for Army Football is not accountable for the conduct of Unit level Football, however Army Football will provide within this document the SMEs for the safe delivery and conduct of Football and will also provide advice and guidance. Army Football will also ensure that any Football safety direction from the NGB, the FA is cascaded down the Chain of Command through RC PD Branches and within the sport itself, in order to assist the Chain of Command who remains accountable for the safety of their personnel playing Football at Unit level.

RISK ASSESSMENT

5. All Football activity is to be Risk Assessed and recorded by the nominated/appointed person managing the activity and the appropriate control measures implemented before any activity takes place utilising JSP 375.Vol 1, Ch 40. A Risk Assessment looks at what could cause harm to people, in order to assess whether enough precautions have been taken in order to prevent harm. Risk Assessments do not need to be complicated, and provided a few simple steps are followed, are easy to complete.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

6. The following personnel must be present at each home match:

- a. One COVID Officer to act as the single point of communication.
- b. At least one qualified emergency first aider.
- c. Ensure all fixtures and overseas visits are authorised by ACOS ASCB, the Commanding Officer and organised in accordance with JSP 660.

CHAIRMANS SAFETY COMMITMENT

7. The Chairman of Army Football will, on an annual basis, account for safety performance, measured against JSP 815 (Defence Health, Safety and Environmental Protection – HS&EP) criteria which, as well as underpinning all safety activities such as meetings and assurance visits, also forms the basis for Army Football following safety commitments:

- a. To prevent fatalities and to minimise injury to personnel playing Football in authorised Army Football events.
- b. To manage the Army Football SMP.
- c. To comply with higher-level safety regulations from Defence and the FA.

- d. To supervise and control Army Football safety activities.
- e. To investigate and learn from any incidents and accidents.

SAFETY ASSURANCE

8. Our commitment is to strive continually to improve our safety performance and to minimise our contribution to the risk of an accident as far as is reasonably practicable.

There are two elements to how Army Football organises and delivers its business:

- a. Planning for matches. Team Managers are responsible for planning and arranging 'on-duty' Football fixtures and assuring that the appropriate safety measures are in place for the event to proceed. All fixtures are to be authorised by either the Assistant Chief of Staff (ACOS) Army Sports Control Board (ASCB) or The Commanding Officer.
- b. Delivering and executing. Team Managers, or Head Coach where appropriate, are responsible for the safe delivery of the event. Where the match is played at a non-military establishment the Team Manager is to ensure that appropriate Health and Safety measures are discussed with the host and put in place. During the match the Team Manager is responsible for managing and addressing any potential safety issues at the earliest opportunity.

9. Army Football will conduct 1st party sports safety assurance by completing a Self-Assessment Questionnaire on at least an annual basis, or as directed by the ASCB. The Self-Assessment Questionnaire will be reviewed yearly by the Army Football Management Board.

NGB INSURANCE LIABILITY

10. The FA, as our NGB, do not provide any insurance, but have mandated that all Adult 11 a-side teams have both Personal Accident Insurance and Public Liability Insurance of no less than £10M. However, due to the MoD compensation scheme Service Units, players and referees are covered and therefore Army Football is exempt from this regulation.

MANAGING RISK

11. Army Football will use the following five steps to assess risks prevalent whilst conducting on-duty Football activities:

- a. Identify the hazards.
- b. Decide who might be harmed and how.
- c. Evaluate the risks and decide whether existing control measures are adequate or whether more should be done.
- d. Record the findings.
- e. Review the assessment and revise it if necessary.

12. While the generic Risk to Life (RtL), for Football activities is low, there is ONE HIGH risk within Football; that risk being Significant Injury to a competitor. To address this particular risk we need to ensure that:

- a. All activities are fully risk assessed.
- b. Appropriate medical facilities and cover is in place.
- c. All referees inspect the playing surface reducing the possibility of that being the cause of the injury but not removing it.
- d. Players act within the rules of the game and do not cause injury to others due to reckless behaviours.

ARMY FOOTBALL SAFETY MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

13. The Chairman Army Football is responsible for the formulation and management of the SSMP. Specifically, he is to:

- a. Ensure that all personnel involved in the organisation, management and participation of Army Football sponsored events conform to the HSAW and this SSMP.
- b. Not permit any activity to take place that is graded very high risk unless it is personally authorised by the Chairman, or in his absence the Vice Chairman.
- c. Ensure a review of all dynamic Risk assessments and post-accident reporting is undertaken at least annually.

EVENT ORGANISER

14. Event organisers are to ensure that a venue specific Risk assessment has been completed.

- a. Brief all participants using the venue specific Risk assessment alongside any additional hazards identified in the Risk assessment.
- d. Ensure communications are available for contact with emergency services and first aid equipment is at hand commensurate with the activity being undertaken.

COVID-19 Risk Assessment – Points to Consider

Pre-Event Planning	<i>Risk Assessment</i>	Each team should undertake its own COVID-19 risk assessment and devise its own COVID-19 operational standards that takes into account the facility and its activities.
	<i>Numbers of Players and Staff</i>	Social distancing guidelines must be maintained. This should include assessing the maximum numbers of players, officials and staff that can safely operate in each training space/area. There should be a sufficient number of staff to help ensure and maintain social distancing during sessions. Depending on player and/or staff numbers eligible to attend a session, staggered arrival/exit time slots for groups may need to be considered to minimise players, officials and staff interaction.
	<i>Training Sessions</i>	The type, duration, layout, and location of the training activity should be considered. Sessions should be designed and pre-planned in advance to ensure that social distancing can be maintained and structured to enable adherence to the risk assessment at all times.
	<i>High Risk or Vulnerable Players of Staff</i>	Limit staff and players with underlying conditions from attending or working the session.
Communication	Communicate information to all staff, volunteers, players, and officials	Information should be given regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The COVID19 risk and symptoms, and the practices that should be undertaken to mitigate risks. • Awareness that although COVID19 infection risks can be minimised through adherence to the unit's policies and procedures, they cannot be eliminated and risks remain for at-risk populations, their families, and the potential for unintended transmission. • The club's approach, standards, and policies to mitigate the risks.
Use and availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and sanitary products	<i>Hand Sanitiser and wipes</i>	Both teams should provide all players with hand sanitiser for use between play periods, as well as antibacterial wipes for disinfecting player provided equipment. Both teams should provide staff and officials with hand sanitiser and wipes for frequent use and antibacterial wipes for disinfecting hard surfaces and shared equipment.
	<i>Masks and Gloves</i>	These should be provided by the club or by staff where the risk assessment deems these items necessary, e.g. bagging up of rubbish, whilst cleaning surfaces, etc.

Symptom Checking	Conduct pre-event observation and/or questioning of all players and staff about	<p>The existence of any COVID19 symptoms in the last 7 days, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New cough. • Fever/temperature. • Unusually short of breath during exercise or at rest. • Loss of smell. • Red eyes or sticky eyes. • New abdominal pain or diarrhoea. • New blocked/runny nose. • New unusual fatigue with muscle and joint pains. • Headache. • Feeling generally unwell in any other way. <p>That they have not been in contact with a COVID19 confirmed or suspected case in the 14 days, and that no one in the same household is unwell.</p> <p>Consider a health declaration form signed by player or staff member.</p>
Food & Drink	Water Bottles	<p>Players, officials and staff should bring their own personalised water bottles to all team activities to help reduce the transmission risk. Individuals should take their own water bottles home for cleaning and sanitisation.</p> <p>Consider storage/holding area for any bags maintaining adequate spacing.</p>
	Food	<p>Ideally, food should not be consumed on site.</p>
Arrival Pitch Side	Parking Arrangements	<p>Awareness and prevention must be considered from arrival. Where possible arrange social distancing in relation to car park spaces.</p>
	Pre Training Groups	<p>Players and team staff should observe social distancing throughout and should not congregate; ideally staying in cars until just before the start of the session.</p>
	Hygiene	<p>When arriving at team seating or side line areas, team staff should disinfect all hard surfaces, such as benches, railings, and equipment racks.</p> <p>Brief all players and staff on appropriate cleaning and disinfection, hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette.</p> <p>Staff and players should ensure that hand hygiene/sanitisation is being undertaken upon arrival, during and leaving the facility.</p>
Equipment	Limit team shared equipment and sanitise regularly	<p>Only equipment deemed as essential should be used during training. Any equipment used by a player should be thoroughly cleaned/sanitised before it can be used again.</p> <p>The use of team shared equipment, (e.g. protective gear, balls, cones, etc.) should be limited whenever possible to one group of players at a time and sanitised between uses.</p> <p>Clothes should be taken home by players and staff and laundered after all workouts.</p>

<i>Player Conduct</i>	Players and staff must refrain from spitting and the use of chewing gum	Ensure instruction is clearly delivered to players and staff.
	No handshakes and celebrations	Players and staff should refrain from physical contact, including handshakes, high fives, chest bumps, group celebrations, etc.
<i>Spectators</i>	Discourage	Maintain social distancing away from the session.
Reopening closed premises for access to and use of toilets	Hygiene	Consider how the building will need to be sanitised including within the toilets, (e.g. taps, basins, surfaces, door handles etc.) Paper towels and soap provision. Hand sanitiser at building entry.
	Legionella	When reopening a building that has stood empty, a robust recommissioning process to use the water system safely may need to be implemented. Check with Unit personnel (if applicable). In addition to the legionella risk, drinking water within buildings may no longer be potable following a period of prolonged stagnation. Buildings that have remained empty with static water systems, or those that have been subject to limited or no flushing, may require recommissioning. Advice should be sought from your local water authority.
	Toilet Distancing	Consider social distancing within toilets. The numbers of people using the toilets may need to be controlled and consideration will need to be given to access and egress arrangements to support social distancing measures and to minimise the risk of transmission.
First Aid Provision	First Aider PPE	Consider the first aid provision and arrangements for first aiders. Formulate a plan of the steps to be taken in the event that a player is injured, and, or requires first aid treatment/attention. Record accident iaw Army FA SMP.
Post Event	Cleaning	Team staff should clean and dispose of all rubbish from player seating or side line areas when departing sessions using dedicated PPE and refuse sacks.
	No Congregation	Players and team staff should quickly exit the session location after the event and go directly to their cars without congregating with other players.

ACCIDENT INCIDENT REPORTING

15. Following a reportable occurrence, the activity OIC or senior member of the sport is to conduct the following actions:

SPORTING ACCIDENTS AND NEAR MISSES

- a. In accordance with Chap 10 of [ACSO 3216](#) all serious incidents, occurrences/accidents or near misses related to sports fixtures or events are to be reported to the Army Incident Notification Cell (AINC) using Army Form 510 (AF 510)
- b. Report any injuries that occur during a sports event to JCCC and upon their direction the OIC is to then inform AOINC if required.
- c. OIC is responsible for informing JCCC using the contact details directed in JSP 751 or by telephone.
- d. OIC is to confirm if the injury does not warrant JCCC notification they inform AINC as a matter of urgency and also generate an AF 510 in accordance with [ACSO 3216](#). Only in exceptional circumstances should the responsibility to report an injury be delegated to the injured party to complete and submit an AF 510 when they return to their unit.

NOTIFICATION

The authorities who are to be notified of a serious incident, occurrence/accident or a near miss related to sports fixtures are listed below:

- Secretary Person - Respective Army Sport who is to inform the Chair
- Unit CoC - All injured personnel
- JCCC - As per [JSP 751 Chap 2](#)
- AINC - As per [ACSO 3216](#) (Ch 10 details)
- DAIB - As per [ACSO 3216](#)
- ASCB Ops Offr - All serious incident, occurrences/accident or near misses

INDIVIDUAL COMPETITORS

16. All individuals participating in Army Football have a responsibility towards the maintenance of their own personal safety and that of their fellow competitors and the general public. Although steps will be taken by event organisers to mitigate the associated risk there will always remain a residual risk to life or serious injury. Specifically, individuals are to comply with the following:

- a. **Personal Fitness and Medical Conditions.** Personnel with pre-existing injuries or medical conditions that may impact on their ability to take part in the training or match must declare that condition to the event organiser.
- b. **Personal Equipment.** All equipment and clothing worn by personnel undertaking Football authorised events is classed as personal equipment

regardless of whether the association supplied it originally or not. Personnel are responsible for ensuring that personal equipment is fit for purpose.

17. To ensure that Football activity is carried out safely is a significant responsibility. Army Football looks towards all teams playing their part in delivering a safe environment, both on and off the field of play. Ultimately, safety is not about prohibiting enjoyment of the game but about enhancing it. The direction contained within this letter is to be introduced with immediate effect and should be utilised for all training camps overseas visits and matches.

Original signed for

W T E Thomson
Maj (Ret'd)
Secretary Army FA