**The Women’s Championship (“WC”) Ground Regulations**

THIS DOCUMENT SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE FA WOMENS CHAMPIONSHIP CLUB LICENCE, AND THE BROADCAST, COMMERCIAL, AND PERFORMANCE REGULATIONS AND THE COMPETITION RULES

Any clubs seeking promotion to the Women’s Super League (**“WSL”**), should also read the WSL ground regulations.

Any Clubs seeking to enter the UEFA Women’s Champions League, should also read the latest rules, regulations, guidance, licence documentation or other materials published by UEFA relating to ground requirements (including the UEFA Stadium Infrastructure Regulations and UEFA Women’s Champions League Regulations) (the **“UEFA Rules”**). It is the responsibility of each Club to be aware of and comply with UEFA Rules, where applicable. The FA takes no responsibility for the accuracy of, and accepts no liability relating to, any references made in these regulations to UEFA Rules

It is the responsibility of each Club to be aware of the requirements under these regulations and to comply with them in respect of all home Matches. Where a Club is either not the owner or the operator of a Ground, the Club must procure that the owner or operator (as appropriate) complies with these regulations and the Club shall remain primarily liable at all times for their compliance. Appendix A of these regulations sets out further details in this regard.

Clubs should note these regulations set out the minimum requirements and Clubs should aspire to exceed all criteria.

All ground improvements should be shared with the WC league facility lead ahead of implementation.

Unless otherwise defined, all capitalised terms shall have the same meaning as defined in the WSL and Women’s Championship Competition Rules.

For the purposes of these regulations:

**FIFA Quality Certificate** means the certificate provided by FIFA to serve as proof that the surface fulfils the requirements to be granted FIFA Quality status.

**FIFA Quality Pro Certificate** means the certificate provided by FIFA to serve as proof that the surface fulfils the requirements to be granted FIFA Quality Pro status.

**FIFA Quality Programme** means the FIFA Quality Programme for Football Turf (October 2015) which provides the framework for the installation and use of high-quality 3G Football Turf playing surfaces for football competitions and training sites.

**Pitch Test** means the test(s) conducted by a FIFA accredited field test institute or UKAS accredited test institute in accordance with the requirements of the FIFA Quality Programme or IATS/IMS.

**FIFA Recommended Two-Star Certificate** means the certificate provided by FIFA to serve as proof that the surface fulfils the requirements to be granted FIFA Two Star status, as defined in the FIFA Quality Concept.

**FIFA Recommended One Star Certificate** means the certificate provided by FIFA to serve as proof that the surface fulfils the requirements to be granted FIFA “One Star” status, as defined in the FIFA Quality Concept.

**FIFA Quality Concept** means the predecessor to the FIFA Quality Programme.

**Ground** means both the Primary Home Ground and Secondary Home Ground, as defined in the WC Club Licence.

**IATS** means International Artificial Turf Standard.

**IMS** means International Match Standard.

01. GROUND

The Ground must give an overall appearance and impression of being a football ground that would be of suitable quality for the highest levels of the Women’s Pyramid of Football in England.

It must be possible for spectators to view the match, either standing or seated, for the full length of at least 3 sides of the playing area. Where one side is designated as spectator-free, measures must be in place to ensure there is no unauthorised access.

The location of the Ground, in so far as its relation to the conurbation whose name the Club bears, or is traditionally associated with, must obtain the approval of both The Football Association (**“The FA”**) and The FA WSL and FA WC Board or the Executive Operational Committee of which it is in membership.

The Club must disclose plans and details of any proposed future move to a new stadium to both the league of which it is in membership and The FA.

**1.1 Security of Tenure**

Where a Club does not own the freehold of their Ground then evidence of adequate security of tenure in accordance with any relevant WC Club Licence must be provided.

**1.2 Boundary of Ground**

The ground must be enclosed by a permanent boundary, which will prevent individuals from viewing the game from outside the Ground. The boundary must be of sound construction, such as cast concrete, brick, breezeblock or metal cladding with steel or concrete posts and be of a minimum height of 1.83 metres as measured from outside the Ground.

Lapped timber, latch panel wood fences and wire mesh fences with wooden posts may be acceptable. Hedges, shrubs and/or trees will not normally be accepted, unless planning has dictated this.

Where any side of the Ground is bounded by private land/property, the fixed boundary of that private land / property may be acceptable as the boundary of the Ground.

**1.3 Capacity**

The Ground must have a minimum safe capacity of 1,350 calculated by a competent person in accordance with the guidance given in the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds. There must also be potential to increase the capacity in the future in line with the league ambitions. For the avoidance of doubt, where the Ground is temporarily required to operate at a reduced capacity as a result of legislation or government guidance (for example, due to COVID-19 and/or social distancing measures), and provided that those restrictions have been imposed through no fault of the Ground nor the Club, the Club will not be considered to be in breach of this paragraph.

**1.4 Club House**

There must be a clubhouse facility either on or adjacent to the Ground and which should be open on match days to provide refreshments to spectators and visiting Players, Officials and Match Officials, unless provided for elsewhere in the Ground.

**1.5 Car Parking**

There should be adequate car parking facilities on or near-by to the Ground. Car parking within the boundary of the Ground may not be acceptable.

**1.6 Pitch Perimeter Barrier**

Subject to the provisions detailed below, there must be a permanent fixed barrier ideally 1.1 m high as measured from the spectator side, of sound construction (e.g. concrete and steel) and free from all sharp edges, surrounding the pitch on all sides that may be occupied by spectators. Existing barriers/rails not at 1.1m high may be acceptable, provided they meet the requirements set out in this paragraph.

Any barriers installed at new grounds should be purposed designed, with integrated infill panels as required and be made from UPVC or coated metal. The barrier, if other than solid wall type of construction, must be infilled so that the ball cannot pass through or under it. Plastic multi-purpose hi-vis fencing is not considered suitable for infill.

A barrier need not be erected on any side not open to the public.

Immediately in front of an area of seated accommodation the boundary of the playing area may be indicated by means other than a permanent fixed barrier, provided that the Club is able to provide assurances that no spectator will be allowed to stand in this area to watch the match.

Where there is a walkway in front of a standing terrace which is itself fronted by a crush barrier that has been subject to an annual risk assessment and, if necessary, tested, an alternative to a fixed barrier (e.g. A-frames) may be used, provided no spectators are allowed to stand in this area to watch the match. The Club must implement a safety management system to ensure this and also to protect the integrity of the playing area.

It is important to distinguish between a pitch perimeter barrier/rail, which exists to separate spectators from the playing area and a crush barrier, which has been constructed and tested according to the requirements of the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds. Where the structure cannot be designated as a crush barrier, e.g. its height exceeds 1.1m, the maximum depth of standing behind it is limited to 1.5m and this must be borne in mind in any capacity calculations.

It is recognised that the above may not be an issue for normal attendances but, when a larger crowd is anticipated, the Club should be mindful of the associated management issues and, if necessary, take professional advice.

Whatever system is employed, a Club should be mindful of its responsibility to ensure spectator safety and minimise the possibility of unauthorised incursions on to the playing area. Where A-frames are utilised instead of a fixed barrier, they must be continuous.

**1.7 Pitch Standards**

The playing surface will be grass, unless otherwise authorised by the Executive Operational Committee, and must be of a high standard. Grounds should meet, as a minimum, the criteria set out in these regulations.

It must be level and free from surface depressions and excessive undulations.

The maximum slope allowable shall not exceed an even gradient of vertical to horizontal 1 : 41 in any direction.

The playing surface must be maintained to the highest possible standards.

Please note that in order to meet the required standards PQS it is recommended that a pitch should not accommodate more than 60 games per calendar year.

Clubs and asset owners are required to undertake three pitch performance tests throughout the season to understand the performance characteristics of the pitch and identify any remedial works required in order to continue to meet the required standards shown below.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **WSL** | | **Women’s Championship** | |
|  |  | **2022-2023** | | **2022-2023** | |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Metric** |  | **July - September** | **December - March** | **July - September** | **December - March** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Grass Height** |  | 24-27mm | 24-27mm | 24-27mm | 24-27mm |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Thatch depth** |  | <1 | <5 | <3 | <7 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | % | % | % | % |
| **Grass Cover (Turf Density) - Central** |  | 85> | 70> | 85> | 70> |
| **NDVI** |  | 0.8> | 0.7> | 0.8> | 0.7> |
| **Grass Cover (turf Density) - Wings** |  | 90> | 80% | 90> | 80% |
| **NDVI** |  | 0.8> | 0.75> | 0.8> | 0.75> |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Firmness (clegg)** |  | 65> - <90 | 65> - <90 | 60> - <100 | 50> - <100 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Rotational Traction** |  | 35> & <50 | 30> & <50 | 30> & <50 | 25> & <50 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Vertical Shear Strength** |  | 55> | 40> | 55> | 40> |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Infiltration** |  | 120mm> | 80mm> | 90mm> | 40mm> |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Pitch evenness (3m straight edge maximum)** |  | <5 | <10 | <10 | <15 |
| **Pitch evenness (300mm straight edge)** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Line marking use PQS** |  |  |  |  |  |

3G Football Turf pitches will be permitted, with the prior consent of the Executive Operational Committee, provided that the artificial turf meets the following conditions:

*Artificial Pitches*

Where a 3G Football Turf Pitch, that is not used by a club competing in the Premier League or the EFL Leagues, is to be used for a Competition Match, it must have been awarded a FIFA Quality Certificate or IMS accreditation (or the previous FIFA Recommended One-Star Certificate or an equivalent IATS accreditation) and in either case conform to the requirements of Law 1 of the Laws of the Game and have satisfied the performance and construction requirements at the time of its most recent annual assessment.

The 3G Football Turf Pitch, including run-offs, shall be one continuous playing surface and a least one metre from the outer edge of the touchline and goal line.

The 3G Football Turf Pitch must be listed on The FA’s register of 3G Football TurfPitches by no later than the 31 May prior to the commencement of the Competition.

Where an 3G Football Turf Pitch is not yet listed on The FA’s register of 3G Football Turf Pitches (for example, if it is a newly installed 3G Football Turf Pitch) the Club must obtain a FIFA Quality Pro Certificate or a FIFA Quality Certificate or IMS accreditation and submit it to The FA by the 31 July prior to the commencement of the Competition.

The League reserves the right to instruct a Club to:

* undertake a Pitch Test  (at the Club’s expense);
* procure that the FIFA accredited field test institute undertaking any Pitch Test provides to the league compliance manager a copy of their official reports to FIFA immediately following completion of the Pitch Test; and
* provide it with any information or documentation required in order to measure the performance of the3G Football Turf Pitch.

Where the 3G Football Turf Pitch fails a Pitch Test, the League may order a Competition Match to be played at an alternative venue.

Where 3G Football Turf Pitch is to be used for a Competition Match, the home Club shall allow the away Club to train, at no extra cost to the away Club, two hours prior to the kick-off. There must not be another Match or event on the Pitch following the training period. If the home Club intends to water the Pitch before the Competition Match, this shall be carried out prior to the training period.

At least 10 days before the Competition Match, the home Club shall advise the away Club of any limitations or recommendations on the types of boot  or stud that may be used on the 3G Football Turf Pitch .

**1.8 Playing Area**

The playing area to be a minimum of 100 metres by 64 metres (110 yards x 70 yards) and should conform to the requirements of the Laws of the Game.

Goal posts and goal net supports should be of professional manufacture and conform to the current safety requirements and to the requirements of the Laws of the Game. Where a Competition Match is to be played on a Grass Pitch and home Clubs have portable goals of 24ft x 8ft size, the home Club must provide them to each team before the warm up to carry out goalkeeping drills.

Reference should be made to the Goalpost Safety information published by The FA and, in particular, it should be noted that the use of metal cup hooks is prohibited.

Reference should be made to the UEFA Rules which may impose additional requirements, such as the inclusion of a 'run off' behind the goal of specific dimensions.

**1.9 Technical Area**

Two covered trainers’ boxes clearly marked “Home” and “Away or Visitors” must be provided unless adequate provision is made in a seated stand. They must be on the same side of the pitch ideally either side of the halfway line, ideally both equidistant from it and ideally a minimum of 3 metres apart and provide an unobstructed view of the playing area.

Each box must be able to accommodate 8 persons (FA WSL requires 11) under cover on fixed seats or benches. Where bench seating is provided, a minimum of 0.5m must be allowed for each person (i.e. 8 persons require a minimum of 4 metres).

Portable trainers’ boxes are permitted and must be securely fixed when in use.

A Technical Area, as defined within the Laws of the Game should be marked out round each trainer’s box.

When new boxes are being constructed or installed, they must be able to accommodate a minimum of 11 persons, must be on each side of the half way line, equidistant from it and a minimum of 3 metres apart.

**1.10 Secure Walkway**

There must be a safe, unimpeded passage for players and match officials between the dressing rooms and the pitch.

The use of protection designed products such as permanent structures or retractable tunnels to separate spectators and players/officials is recommended.

The design of the safe walkway will inevitably differ from ground to ground and it will rarely guarantee the safe passage of players and match officials unless supplemented by stewards. Clubs should implement procedures appropriate to the particular structure and be ready to respond to on the field situations that might affect spectator behaviour.

**1.11 Floodlighting and Lighting**

Floodlights must be provided to an average lux reading of at least 250. No single reading can be less than one quarter of the highest reading so as to ensure an even spread of light.

Readings shall be on a grid of 88 markings (8 across, 11 down) evenly spaced with the outside readings falling on the pitch boundary line. The average of all the readings is taken to be the average illumination level in lux of the floodlighting installation.

The lux values must be tested every two years in accordance with current guidelines by an approved independent contractor. Floodlights must be retested after any significant alterations. Existing certification will be accepted provided that the test was carried out within the last two years unless work has been carried out at the ground, which may have affected previous readings.

An “approved” contractor is one that is in possession of the NICEIC (National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting) Approved Contractors’ award or ISO 9000/ BS 5750 (International Standards Organisation/British Standard) or is a member of the Electrical Contractors’ Association.

The contractor must, when detailing the lux values, give confirmation in writing of the date when the illumination test equipment used was last calibrated.

When new or improved installations are being planned, an average lux reading of at least 250 must be provided, with enough electrical capacity and the ability to increase to 500 lux if the Club were promoted to the WSL.

Clubs are reminded that they have a responsibility to ensure the safety of spectators entering, leaving and moving about the Ground and, if a Ground is used in non-daylight hours, adequate artificial lighting should be provided. Further, consideration must be given by a Club to its procedures in the event of a power failure.

It is also recommended that at the same time as testing the lights, Clubs also test the electrical supply within the Ground to ensure that the system complies with current electrical standards and request a visual inspection of the columns for signs of corrosion, fatigue and overloading.

Clubs should measure the illuminance of their floodlights every two years and submit those measurements to the League.

**1.12 Public Address System**

A public address system must be provided with adequate output to convey information to all spectator areas.

**1.13 Entrances**

There should be at least 3 spectator entrances (to control the ingress of spectators. These must be controlled by fully operational turnstiles of the revolving type and must be suitably housed and lit. Adequate protection and security for the turnstile operator must be incorporated. These entrances should be placed in appropriate positions around the boundary of the Ground and take into account the requirements of segregation.

It must be possible to gain access to the spectator viewing areas from the turnstiles via a bound surface to a minimum width of 0.9 metres.

Clubs seeking to be promoted to the FA WSL should aim to have 8 spectator entrances by the 2024/25 Playing Season.

**1.14 Exits**

The location and number of ground exits must be approved by a competent person and comply with the requirements of the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds.

There must be access via a bound surface to all exits from the nearest spectator viewing areas.

All exits must be clearly signed, ideally with “running man” signs, and are to be kept clear and free from obstructions.

**1.15 Emergency Access**

Access must be provided for the emergency services and maintained free from obstruction.

**1.16 Broadcasting Requirements**.

These broadcasting requirements apply to television and radio.

Notwithstanding the broadcasting requirements listed below, broadcaster requirements are subject to further review and change. Clubs are required to comply with any further requirements agreed between the broadcaster and The FA.

Clubs shall be required to provide access to the Ground to The FA or the broadcaster (or third party suppliers engaged by The FA or the broadcaster) for any works necessary to comply with these regulations, or any bespoke requirements of the broadcaster. Unless otherwise specified, access will be required at least the day before the Match to allow sufficient set up time.

As stated further above, these requirements should be read alongside The FA’s Broadcasting Regulations.

In the event that either The FA or a broadcast partner incurs costs as a result of the Club or the owner or operator of the Ground (as appropriate) failing to comply with the broadcasting requirements listed below, the Club shall be liable for such costs and shall reimburse The FA or the relevant broadcast partner (as appropriate) accordingly.

**1.16.1 Gantry**

A camera gantry should be in place and tagged. Clubs should ensure that the gantry is checked and tagged ahead of every home Match, to ensure that it meets all health and safety requirements.

If the Ground does not have an adequate camera gantry (or an alternative filming location agreed with The FA), there should be a permanent scaffold tower built for broadcast purposes, in a location specifically agreed with The FA and/or the Broadcaster (as appropriate) for the specific Ground following site surveys and provided that it offers a reasonably similar level of access to the broadcaster.

*Minimum gantry requirements*

The minimum gantry requirements for the 2022/23 Playing Season onwards which shall, unless specified otherwise further below, apply for all WC Clubs will be as follows:

* Gantry to accommodate one broadcast camera and one tactical footage camera (see also paragraph 1.17.1 below in respect of the tactical footage camera).
* Minimum dimensions of Depth 1.8m x Width 4m x Height 4.2m (Height inclusive of roof, 6.5m). For Clubs seeking to accommodate analysts for the home Club and the away Club on the gantry, the width should be increased to 8m. (If additional Club cameras need to be accommodated, then the minimum dimensions set out above should be increased appropriately.)
* Gantry position to be set back from the touchline by at least 5 metres.
* Gantry position to allow easy access for heavy equipment travelling by flatbed trolley from compound/vehicle parking (no stairs etc on the route).
* Gantry to be positioned so Camera 1 can sit directly on the half way line.
* Hoist arm with pulley for hoisting equipment to be installed on the rear of gantry platform, to avoid obscuring coverage. (A hoist is a rope and pulley system for lifting equipment from floor level to working height).
* Appropriate means of access.
* A minimum of one camera pod, as agreed by the relevant broadcaster for the camera 1 position. (Camera pods are a pair of scaffolding tubes fixed (at an equal distance apart) to the front of the camera position to support a camera mount).
* Adequate mains power supply.

Whilst not mandatory, it is preferable that the gantry be covered.

*Minimum gantry requirements for matches selected for broadcast by a broadcast partner*

For matches selected for broadcast by a broadcaster partner, unless otherwise specified Clubs are required to provide a main gantry which complies with the minimum requirements set out above, save for that the minimum dimensions of the gantry must be extended to allow for up to seven persons, consisting of (i) up to four production personnel from the broadcast partner (including their cameras) and (ii) three commentators.

The FA reserves the right to require Clubs to provide bespoke gantry location and specifications as may be required by The FA and/or the relevant broadcaster following Ground site surveys, including access to power facilities, scaffolding and rigging and de-rigging equipment as reasonably required by the broadcaster.

**1.16.2 Camera positions**

Depending on the broadcast arrangements for a match, Clubs may be required to provide the camera positions listed below. These positions may be either camera 1 only, cameras 1-4, all 8 cameras or an enhanced production involving up to 10 cameras. The positions listed below may also differ depending on what channel the match is being broadcast or streamed on.

The positions for which all Clubs should be prepared for if required are:

* Camera 1 on main gantry
* Camera 2 on main gantry
* Camera 3 pitch side on halfway line – same side as gantry
* Camera 4 position pitch side behind the goal
* Camera 5 positioned behind the other goal, as high as possible and as central as possible
* Camera 6 & 7 – 18 yard cameras positioned as high up as possible and on the same side as the gantry
* Camera 8 Steadicam on the pitch pre & post match, as well as on the sideline during a match

Cameras 5, 6 and 7 in most cases will need scaffold positions built, unless they are already in place. These positions can be of a temporary nature, provided that they offer a reasonably similar level of access to the broadcaster to record and broadcast the footage.

Paragraph 1.17.1 below sets out what is required in respect of the tactical footage camera.Where a Match is selected for broadcast by a broadcast partner, the broadcast partner shall be given priority over any other third party to select the position of the cameras.

**1.16.3 Commentator Provision**

For matches selected for broadcast by a broadcast partner, unless otherwise specified Clubs must make provision for three commentators. It is preferred that commentators be accommodated in the Club’s main gantry, and Clubs shall ensure that they are able to provide for three commentators in the main gantry, in accordance with paragraph 1.16.1 above. However, prior to each home Match, Clubs must liaise with the rigging crew and relevant broadcaster to provide the optimum location for the commentators.

Where a Match is selected for broadcast by a broadcast partner, the broadcast partner shall be given priority over any other third party to specify where its commentators will be seated.

**1.16.4 Outside broadcasting compound**

Where a match has been selected for broadcast by a broadcast partner, Clubs are required to provide the broadcast partner with:

* an outside broadcasting compound with minimum dimensions of width 20m x height 20m; and
* at least 20 free car parking spaces positioned as close as possible to the outside broadcast compound.

The broadcast partner shall be given first choice of available parking.

**1.16.5 Data connection**

Clubs are required to install a dual diverse circuit of at least 1 Gigabit connection speed, and which may be connected to as necessary by the broadcaster.

**1.16.6 ISDN Lines or IP connection**

A minimum of one Integrated Services Digital Network (**“ISDN”**) line should be installed for radio broadcasters. The ISDN line should go to the press area, go to the press area, be connected to a sufficient number of desks and have an adequate power supply. As an alternative to ISDN lines, Clubs can provide 3 ethernet ports for an IP connection with a minimum 1Mb upload and download speed.

**1.16.7 General** **media and broadcast requirements**

In addition to the above, Clubs must:

* allow broadcasters access to the Ground as is necessary for the purposes of them reporting on the Match.
* provide an appropriate number of telephone lines (voice, facsimile and data), broadband internet access with wireless access points and photocopying facilities.
* provide a room which:

1. has a mains power supply which is sufficient for the broadcaster’s needs and to which the broadcaster has priority access;
2. as close to the players’ changing rooms as possible; and
3. is suitable for flash interviews to accommodate at least (a) an interviewer & interviewee, (b) a camera operator, (c) a camera with tripod, (d) a light with a stand, and (e) the Interview Backdrop (as defined in the Club’s Licence).

* ensure that any floodlights that have been used during the Match remain on in full until all post match interviews are finished and equipment is derigged and safely removed from the Ground.
* provide a room for the broadcasters to use as a make-up/dressing room.
* provide an area pitch side, or in the stand, for the broadcasters to present from (if required by the broadcasters).

Where a Match is selected for broadcast by a broadcast partner, Clubs shall also ensure that the broadcast partner has at the Match:

* exclusive access, unless otherwise agreed with The FA, to all areas inside and outside of the Ground, including any adjoining areas normally used by broadcasters, for the purposes of exercising their rights as a broadcast partner;
* priority access to a power supply that is sufficient for its broadcasting needs; and
* first choice of available seat kills.

**1.17 Analysis**

**1.17.1 Tactical footage**

Clubs are required to provide access to the Ground to any third party specified by The FA to record Match footage, including tactical footage. Clubs will provide a location in the Ground for such footage to be recorded that is (i) as close as possible to the half way line, and (ii) on the main gantry or, if this is not possible because of the broadcaster’s requirements, near to the main gantry. When selecting the position, priority should be given to the relevant broadcast partner and any requirements which they may stipulate, or are as otherwise set out in these regulations.

**1.17.2 Analysts position**

Clubs are required to provide a desk space for an analyst from the home and away Clubs, with appropriate power supply for laptops. The desk spaces provided must be proximal to the footage capture position detailed in paragraph 1.17.1 above to ensure that overground wiring is as limited as possible and so not to compromise the safe movement of any persons around the Ground.

02. SPECTATOR FACILITIES

**2.1 Spectator Accommodation**

Development, in addition to hard standing, must be on more than one side of the Ground.

Covered accommodation, which should preferably be on 2 sides of the Ground, must be of sound construction of timber/steel/brick/concrete or any combination of these materials. Existing timber stands are only acceptable subject to a fire risk assessment conducted by a competent person.

The minimum covered accommodation must be 300, of which at least 150 must be seated. These 150 seats, in not more than 2 stands, may be inclusive of Directors/Committee and press seating. No stand may have less than 100 seats.

Individual tip up seats with backrests are preferred. Whilst individual seats are preferred, existing bench seating may be permitted provided that it is in good repair and that individual spaces (min 500mm) are clearly marked.

All seating must afford a good view of the pitch and be clean, functional and in good condition.

There must be a minimum of 24 seats provided for Directors/Committee and guests with a minimum of 12 seats provided for the visiting club. These seats must be clearly marked “Home” and “Away Directors” and should enjoy a prime position in the main stand.

Additional seating may be provided in other areas of the ground. However, these seats are not to be classed as being “in lieu” of the number shown above.

Standing spectators are not allowed in or near a seated spectator stand where they can obstruct views. Areas where no spectators are permitted to stand must be clearly marked with yellow-hatched markings.

Hard standing to a minimum width of 0.9 metre, measured from the spectator side of the pitch perimeter barrier, must be provided on all 4 sides of the Ground, unless a different configuration exists (see paragraph 1). The surface must be of a bound material.

**2.2 Press Seating**

A minimum of 8 (note that the FA WSL will require 12) seats must be provided with lighting and writing facilities for use by the press and other media. The press seating must have a clear view of the field of play. A minimum of 4 power points must be accessible.

**2.3 Terracing**

Where terracing is provided, it must comply with the requirements of the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds. All terracing must be in a sound condition. Terracing that is crumbling, has grass / weeds growing through it or has broken or loose concrete will not be accepted.

Any level surface within the Ground should ideally be hard standing, such as tarmac, concrete, concrete paving or other approved materials which create a bound surface. However, flat and well maintained grassed areas may be accepted, provided the width between the hard standing (when measured from the edge farther away from the perimeter barrier) and the boundary fence does not exceed 20 metres.

Spectator access must be denied to any grass banking so that it cannot be used for viewing the match.

**2.4 Toilets**

Toilets must be located within the Ground and must be accessible both to male and to female spectators. Such toilets need not be in a dedicated toilet block, provided access from the Ground is immediate and they cannot be accessed for the duration of the match by persons using the clubhouse or any adjacent facility. (On no account may access be through licensed premises.)

The following minimum toilet facilities must be provided in total, excluding those located in any clubhouse:

* Male: 2 urinals or equivalent and 1 WC
* Female: 2 WCs
* Baby changing facilities: 1

In addition, wash hand basins with running water, warm air hand driers and/or paper towel dispenser with towels and waste paper bins must be provided in each toilet area. Whilst replaceable linen roller towels in a cabinet are acceptable, individual hand towels are not permitted.

All toilet areas must be in working order, with a roof and operational lighting, supplied with toilet paper and maintained to a high level of cleanliness.

These facilities may be of the temporary or mobile type but must be connected to the mains supply. They must be fully accessible with permanent access.

The location of all toilet facilities must be indicated with appropriate signage.

Clubs and venue owners and operators should review their toilet facilities to ensure that they adequately provide for the demographic and number of spectators in attendance at Matches. Clubs should use the following guidance:

* 1 female WC for every 125 female spectators
* 1 male WC for every 250 male spectators
* 1 urinal for every 125 male spectators
* 1 wheelchair accessible WC for every 15 wheelchair users

**2.5 Refreshment Facilities**

**2.5.1 Directors/Committee/Guests**

A separate room must be made available in which refreshments for Directors/ Committee and guests can be served. This area must be able to accommodate a minimum of 24 persons with nearby toilet facilities.

**2.5.2 Ground Refreshment Facilities**

Refreshment facilities must be provided in each separate area of the Ground. These facilities may be of a temporary or mobile type.

**2.6 Disabled Facilities**

A Club must take full account of the needs of disabled spectators and be mindful of its obligations under the provisions of the Equality Act 2010. Reference may be made to the publications / data sheets issued by the Football Foundation.

No specific requirement is currently included in the ground grading criteria but The FA strongly recommends that access is provided to both a covered viewing area and toilet and refreshment facilities.

**2.7 Segregation**

When segregation is in operation, there must be adequate toilet facilities and refreshment facilities in each segregated area in addition to the appropriate means of egress and exit.

03. DRESSING ROOM FACILITIES

All dressing room areas must be maintained to a high standard of cleanliness and be heated, well ventilated, free from damp and secure on match days.

**3.1 Players**

Separate dressing rooms must be provided for both teams within the enclosed area of the Ground. The dressing rooms must be of sound construction and be of a permanent nature. Existing dressing room dimensions will be acceptable provided they are a minimum of 18 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas. Where clubs are planning to build new dressing rooms these must be a minimum size of 18 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas.

Each dressing room must have the following:

* A shower area comprising of at least 4 showerheads.
* 1 wash hand basin located outside the shower area .
* (All of the above must have hot and cold running water).
* At least 1 WC in a cubicle (when building new facilities, consideration should be given to the number of WCs provided).
* There must be a treatment table which is clean and in good condition in each room.

**3.2 Match Officials**

The size of the match officials’ dressing room must be a minimum of 4 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas. When new dressing rooms are being constructed the match officials’ room should be a minimum of 6 square metres in size, excluding shower and toilet areas.

Each match officials’ dressing room must have the following:

* At least 1 shower and 1 wash hand basin (both with hot and cold running water).
* At least 1 WC in a cubicle (when building new facilities, consideration should be given to the number of WCs provided).

Provision should be made for separate dressing rooms for male and female match officials.

Where new dressing rooms are being constructed or existing ones are being re-designed, separate purpose built facilities for male and female match officials must be provided.

There must be an audible electronic warning device (bell or buzzer) in working order located in the match officials’ dressing room and which is linked to the players’ dressing rooms.

04. DOPING CONTROL AND MEDICAL

There must be a separate area which can be used for doping control. This must provide a private waiting/processing area for officials and players and a separate, private toilet which should be secure and not be shared with any other areas.

There must be a suitably equipped medical treatment room located in the vicinity of the players’ dressing rooms for the use of both players and spectators. Access to this room must not be via the home or away dressing room.

The designated room must contain a bed and/or comfortable seating, with cold and, ideally, hot water, together with paper towels. Reusable individual towels are not permitted.

At least one stretcher must be provided for the removal of injured players from the field of play.

There must be a nominated and suitably qualified person in attendance to assist with spectator problems unless the St John Ambulance Brigade, Red Cross Society or other capable agency are in attendance. The requirements of the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds are for one first aider per 1,000 anticipated spectators, with a minimum of two.

If a crowd of less than 2,000 is anticipated, known and practiced arrangements should be in place to summon either a doctor or NHS ambulance alternative. For crowds of over 2,000, an experienced crowd doctor should be in attendance.

The above in no way purports to be a comprehensive list of Health and Safety issues which it is the responsibility of a Club to address. Clubs are recommended to arrange regular safety audits conducted by persons with the appropriate expertise.

**Appendix A**

**Clubs hosting Matches in Main Stadia**

Where a Club is hosting a Match as the home Club at main stadia that is not its Ground then, in addition to meeting all requirements set out under these regulations, Clubs should use the following infrastructure or equipment where it is already in place or available:

* *LED perimeter boards*
* *Score boards*
* *CCTV and control rooms*
* *Broadcast gantries*

Consultation with the local authority and stakeholders regarding travel arrangements should also be factored into these Matches.

As stated within the body of these regulations, where a Club is either not the owner or the operator of the Ground, the Club must procure that the owner or operator (as appropriate) complies with these regulations and the Club shall remain primarily liable at all times for their compliance.