

Building Consultancy

Safety at Sports Grounds

Policy Document

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This document has been produced by Acivico (Building Consultancy) Limited and is the agreed policy and procedure for managing Safety at Sports Grounds within Birmingham City Council. Under the Safety at Sports Grounds Act 1975, Birmingham City Council is responsible for issuing and enforcing a safety certificate in respect of sports grounds designated by the Secretary of State. These are sports grounds that have accommodation for more than 10,000 spectators or 5000 in the case of a Premiership or Football League ground in England or Wales. The document also applies to the safety certification of stands regulated by Birmingham City Council under the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987. These are stands that provide covered accommodation for 500 or more standing and/or seated spectators. The function of monitoring compliance has been sub-contracted to Acivico (Building Consultancy) Limited whilst Birmingham City Council retain the responsibility for the issue of the Safety Certificate and any notices that are required to be served under the Safety of Sports Grounds and Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 legislation.

1.2 Purpose of document

The policy document provides an overview of policy and terms of reference for the management of Safety of Sports Grounds within the Authority of Birmingham City Council. It also clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the organisations and agencies involved.

1.3 Policy Aim

The aim of Birmingham City Council's policy, working in conjunction with its partner agencies, is to ensure the reasonable safety of spectators and all persons attending any of the sports grounds within the Authority of Birmingham City Council that fall within the scope of the Safety of Sports Ground Act 1975 and Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987.

1.4 Policy Objectives

Birmingham City Council's policy objectives are:

- To ensure that spectator safety is of the highest attainable standard that is reasonably practical to achieve at all sports grounds, but particularly those which are designated or have regulated stand(s) situated within their boundary.
- To ensure that the safety of all persons is of the highest attainable standard that is reasonably practical to achieve at those sports grounds which are designated or have regulated stand(s) situated within their boundary
- To establish and manage the Safety Advisory Group meeting (S.A.G.) for the designated grounds listed in Appendix A.
- To establish and manage the S.A.G. meetings for those grounds having regulated stand(s) situated within their boundary as listed in Appendix A.
- To establish any ad-hoc S.A.G. meetings required.
- To carry out an annual review of the General Safety Certificate for each of the designated grounds.

- To carry out a review of the Safety Certificate for each of the regulated stand(s) every 2 years unless capacity exceeds 2000 when a review will take place annually.
- To foster, encourage and promote a culture of safety first within sports grounds residing within the boundaries of Birmingham City Council.

1.5 Safety Certificate

The Safety certificate is part of a total, integrated system for managing health and safety at sports ground. While the local authority (Birmingham City Council) is responsible for issuing the safety certificate, safety cannot be achieved by one agency acting in isolation. Birmingham City Council has a statutory responsibility to consult with Police, Fire and Building Control authorities. This duty will be discharged through the Safety Advisory Group (S.A.G.) which is a multi-agency advisory group consisting of:

- i) Birmingham City Councillors,
- ii) Acivico (Building Consultancy) Ltd: Agent for Birmingham City Council Authorising Officer
- iii) Representatives from West Midlands Police,
- iv) Representatives from West Midlands Fire Service,
- v) Representatives from West Midlands Ambulance Service,
- vi) Representatives of first aid providers,
- vii) Representatives from the club concerned (including their safety officer),
- viii) Representative of the Sports Ground Safety Authority (S.G.S.A.) are also invited to attend
- ix) Other interested parties that the chair of the S.A.G. considers appropriate.

The primary function of the S.A.G. is to provide specialist advice to the Local Authority Authorising Officer or their agent.

The safety certificate will contain the terms and conditions that Birmingham City Council considers necessary or expedient to secure the reasonable safety of all persons at sports grounds when it is being used for the activities specified in the certificate. The primary responsibility for the safety of all persons at the sports ground lies at all times with the sports ground management and will not be assumed by the local authority.

1.6 Consultation

This policy document has been consulted on with both the Emergency Services and S.G.S.A.

1.7 Definitions

The Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 defines a sports ground as 'A place where sports or other competitive activities take place in the open air, where accommodation has been provided for spectators, consisting of artificial structures or natural structures artificially modified for the purpose'.

The Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987 define a regulated stands as 'Any covered stand with accommodation for 500 or more spectators whether seating or standing'. The determination calculation for Regulated Stands is outlined in the Home Office circular 97/1988. In brief this is calculated as:

- Number of seats or marked places on bench seats in seated areas
- Number of places available on bench seats allowing 530mm per person
- Number of spectators who can be accommodated on a terraced or sloping viewing area at a rate of 2.7 per square metre after disregarding gangways, stairways and landings, or
- Number of spectators who can be accommodated in the front two metres of a flat standing area at a rate of 2.7 per square metre.

The local authority determines which stands are regulated.

This calculation is to arrive at the 'determination calculation'. This may not be the safe capacity which would be calculated using the current edition of the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (Generally referred to as 'The Green Guide').

2.0 POLICY

2.1 Legislative duty

Birmingham City Council has a statutory duty under:

2.1.1 Safety of Sports Ground Act 1975 (As amended)

- To issue a General Safety Certificate for each designated sports ground within the Authority of Birmingham City Council containing such terms and conditions as Birmingham City Council consider necessary or expedient to secure reasonable safety of all persons at the sports ground.
- To serve a prohibition notice in respect of a sports ground if the authority consider that the admission of spectators to the sports ground involves, or will involve, a high risk to them, so serious that until steps have been taken to reduce the risk to a reasonable level, admission of spectators to the ground or that part of the ground ought to be prohibited or restricted.
- To issue a special safety certificate where appropriate containing such terms and conditions as Birmingham City Council consider necessary or expedient to secure reasonable safety of all persons at the sports ground.

2.1.2 Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987

- To issue a General Safety Certificate for each regulated stand within the Authority of Birmingham City Council containing such terms and conditions as Birmingham City Council consider necessary or expedient to secure the reasonable safety of the stand when it is in use for viewing the specified activity or activities at the ground.

2.2 Designated Officer (Chief Executive)

The Chief Executive of Birmingham City Council is the designated officer for this function. The Chief Executive has delegated their authority to the Council Statutory Functions Officer, Strategic services who will act as lead officer to ensure that the requirements of the Safety of Sports Ground Act 1975 are met. Specifically:

- The Council Statutory Functions Officer, Strategic services will be authorised to issue and amend the General Safety Certificate and/or any Special Safety Certificate as and when required.
- The Council Statutory Functions Officer, Strategic services will be authorised to issue, suspend and withdraw prohibition notices.

For both of the above, West Midlands Police, West Midlands Fire Service and West Midlands Ambulance Service will be advised or consulted as appropriate.

The Council Statutory Functions Officer, Strategic services is also authorised to devolve their authority to those officer(s) both employed by Birmingham City Council, Acivico (Building Consultancy) Ltd and S.A.G. to carry out the functions set out in this policy document.

2.3 Lead Officer (Council Statutory Functions Officer, Strategic services)

The Council Statutory Functions Officer, Strategic services acts as lead officer and has devolved the routine functions to assigned officer of Acivico (Building Consultancy) Ltd who attends all the S.A.G.'s both at designated grounds and those having regulated stands. The assigned officer of Acivico (Building Consultancy) Ltd will provide the secretariat to the S.A.G.'s.

2.4 Consultation

In imposing terms and conditions for all persons safety, Birmingham City Council is required to consult with West Midlands Police, West Midlands Fire Service and West Midlands Ambulance Service and take consideration of any feedback.

2.5 Grounds to which legislation applies

The legislation is applicable at the locations listed in Appendix A.

2.6 Guidance

The Department of Culture, Media and Sports has issued guidance on the subject, 'A guide to Safety of Sports Grounds' (Generally referred to as the 'Green Guide'). Birmingham City Council and its S.A.G. partners will utilise and apply the advice and guidance contained within the Green Guide.

The Sports Ground Safety Authority has issued guidance on the Safety Certification process. This guidance will also be utilised when considering the issuing of a Safety Certificate.

Guidance is also issued from time to time in relation to non-sporting activities taking place in sports grounds such as concerts and mass meetings. The S.A.G.'s will consider such guidance and take advice as appropriate to the circumstances.

2.7 Inspections

The achievement of reasonable safety is a continuous process that requires monitoring and inspections by appropriate members of the S.A.G. The inspection programme is as follows:

- For designated grounds a During Performance Inspection will be undertaken with the aim of conducting at least one a month during the playing season for football and at least three times a year for other sports.
- For regulated stands with a capacity of more than 2000 spectators a During Performance Inspection will be undertaken at least once per year.
- For regulated stands with a capacity of less than 2000 spectators a During Performance Inspection will be undertaken biennially.

Those persons undertaking the inspections should be suitably qualified / experienced and competent to undertake inspections on the Grounds / Safety Management Systems they have been asked to inspect and report on. The During Performance Inspections will be carried out by officers of Acivico (Building Consultancy) Ltd with assistance from West Midlands Fire Service where appropriate. Councillors on the S.A.G. attend one match a year to observe the clubs safety management in action.

Results of the During Performance Inspection will be produced in a written report with the officer carrying out the inspection liaising with the club safety officers / management and/or S.A.G. A copy of the report will be forwarded to the Sports Ground Safety Authority. A sample During Performance Inspection checklist is attached at Appendix B to this policy document.

3.0 INTRODUCTION

3.1 Safety Advisory Groups (S.A.G.)

Birmingham City Council will establish a S.A.G. for each sports ground in accordance with the Hillsborough Stadium Disaster Final Report by Lord Justice Taylor. Final recommendation No 31 to provide specialist advice in relation to safety at sports grounds, including determining the terms and conditions of each General Safety Certificate and monitoring their implementation. These are multi agency groups and are chaired by one of the Councillors assigned to the S.A.G. as its chair for designated sports grounds.

3.2 Terms of reference

The S.A.G. have been established to:

- Advise Birmingham City Council on specialist policies and procedures to be adopted in the implementation of 'the 1975 Act' and associated regulations and guidance.
- Monitor the implementation of General and Special Safety Certificates.
- To receive and consider where applicable, proposals for significant alterations to the designated sports ground and the implications such alterations might have.

A copy of the Constitution for S.A.G.'s is found at Appendix C.

3.3 Safety Advisory Groups Objectives

The S.A.G. will seek to

- Promote a safety first culture within the sports ground.
- Support and advise management or operators of designated sports grounds on measures to maintain and/or improve all aspects of spectator safety.
- Work to ensure that sports grounds are safe for spectators to attend the prescribed activity.

3.4 Membership of Safety Advisory Groups

The S.A.G. will consist of the following core members and invited representatives.

3.4.1 Core Members

The core members are those authorities / parties whom Birmingham City Council considers are appropriate to attend in order to consider all requirements necessary under sports ground and licensing legislation and the Taylor Report i.e.

- Birmingham City Councillor's (one being the Chair)
- Acivico (Building Consultancy) Ltd (Agents for Birmingham City Council on Sports Grounds)
- West Midlands Police
- West Midlands Fire Service
- West Midlands Ambulance Service
- First Aid provider

3.4.2 Invited representatives

Persons invited to S.A.G. meetings to offer advice are not party to the decision making processes of the group:

3.4.2.1 Invited to all meetings

The following are considered to be those organisations that should be invited to all S.A.G. meetings as contributors:

- Sports ground representation – Certificate holder or Safety Officer
- Representative from the Sports Ground Safety Authority
- Event organiser if applicable

3.4.2.2 Invited to S.A.G. meetings as appropriate

The following may be invited to all S.A.G. meetings or as appropriate:

- Emergency Planning Unit
- Primary Care Trust
- Legal Representation
- Local Authority licensing / Environmental Health/Highways
- Local supporters representation
- Counter Terrorism Police Officer

3.5 Meeting frequency

- The Safety Advisory Group for the designated football ground will meet at least four times per year.
- The Safety Advisory Group for the designated cricket ground will meet at least three times per year.

3.6 Main activities of Safety Advisory Group

Within the Constitution outlined at Appendix C, the S.A.G. will:

- Receive and discuss proposals for significant alterations to the sports ground and consider implications of holding activities there other than specified activities as included on the certificate.

- Share experiences following attendance at specified activities.
- Consider aspects of, and possible changes to, the terms and conditions in the General Safety Certificate.
- Inspection of the designated sports ground.
- Discuss all aspects of spectator safety and changing requirements.
- Ensure that appropriate reports are produced and discussed with respect to alterations, inspections and any other issues.

4.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Role of Designated Officer – Chief Executive

- To oversee the lead officer's role in ensuring that Birmingham City Council properly discharges its responsibility under Safety of Sports Ground legislation.
- To ensure that the Elected Members of the Licensing and Public Protection Committee are kept informed of Safety of Sports Ground activities.
- To be the 'Authorising Signatory' for General and Special Safety Certificates.
- In the event of clear division or dispute emerging from a S.A.G. on safety matters, to oversee that any decision reflect the policies of Birmingham City Council.
- To nominate the Strategic Director of Economy to act as his representative in the discharge of the responsibilities outlined in this document.

4.2 Role of the Lead Officer – Statutory Function Officer

- To ensure that Birmingham City Council properly discharges its responsibilities under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975.
- To delegate the management of the day to day activities of Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 to Acivico (Building Consultancy) Ltd for Birmingham City Council.
- To delegate the management of the day to day activities of Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987 to Acivico (Building Consultancy) Ltd for Birmingham City Council
- To ensure the S.A.G. undertakes activities as appropriate to determine the terms and conditions of the General Safety Certificate and Special Safety Certificates, as applicable, are met and monitor their implementation.
- To ensure that decisions taken by the S.A.G. for designated (certified) sports grounds are implemented.
- To ensure that membership of the S.A.G. reflects the interests of all parties as recommended in the Lord Justice Taylor report into the Hillsborough Stadium Disaster in 1989.
- To oversee the issue and amendments of both General and Special Safety Certificates as applicable.
- To advise on safe capacities for sports grounds in liaison with Acivico (Building Consultancy) Ltd and West Midlands Fire Service.
- To draft, issue, suspend and withdraw prohibition notices under section 10 of the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 and as amended by the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987.

- To initiate prosecutions authorised by Birmingham City Council for breach of the conditions of either a General or Special Safety Certificate and for any other offence(s) under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975.
- To act in a coordinating role for all members of the S.A.G. and be responsible for organising meetings and inspections as appropriate.
- To attend on match days as appropriate to observe and understand the operation of the ground or to undertake inspections on aspects that the lead officer is suitably qualified to conduct.
- To keep the designated officer informed of relevant issues.
- To deputise for the designated officer in any of their functions.

4.3 Role of Support Officer – Safety of Sports Ground Officer

This role has been delegated to Acivico (Building Consultancy) Ltd who act as Birmingham City Council agents for 'day to day' matters associated with Safety at Sports Grounds

To deputise for the lead officer as follows:

- To prepare the safety certificate for issue by the Lead Officer
- To attend events (match days) as appropriate to observe and understand the operation of the ground and its management or to undertake inspections on aspects that the lead officer is suitably qualified to conduct.
- To review, on an annual basis for designated grounds and large regulated stands and biennially for smaller regulated stands, the safety certificate to assess its suitability to remain in force.
- To review/assess the sports ground capacity and P & S factors in accordance with the Green Guide principals when reviewing the safety certificates.
- To liaise with the Sports Ground on changes to the physical and managerial aspects of the club to consider the implications of that change and whether the Safety Certificate needs amending
- To attend S.A.G. meetings for designated grounds as directed and ensure that decisions taken by the S.A.G. are implemented.
- To act in a coordinating role for all members of the S.A.G. and be responsible for organising meetings and inspections as appropriate.
- To keep the lead officer informed of relevant issues.
- To advise the lead officer on any response required to interested parties and stakeholders.

- To organise and attend pre and post season inspections of the sports ground and report to the club of any findings as appropriate.
- To organise meetings of S.A.G. as required.
- To coordinate and prepare agenda papers and supporting paperwork for the S.A.G.
- To take minutes and circulate to all members of the S.A.G. and other interested parties.
- To research and collate any information that may assist the S.A.G. chair.
- To ensure accurate documentation of all decisions and actions arising from the S.A.G. and pursue the action owner where necessary.
- To establish and maintain filing systems for S.A.G. documentation.
- To liaise with the Sports Ground Safety Authority on all matters relating to Safety at Sports Grounds and inform the Lead Officer on relevant issues.
- To present a quarterly report to the Lead Officer on Key performance indicators regarding the role

4.4 Role of the Chairman of Safety Advisory Group

- To ensure that Birmingham City Council properly discharges its responsibilities under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975.
- To ensure the S.A.G. undertakes activities as appropriate to determine the terms and conditions of the General Safety Certificate and Special Safety Certificates, as applicable, are met and monitor their implementation.
- To ensure that decisions taken by the S.A.G. for designated sports grounds are implemented.
- To ensure that membership of the S.A.G. reflects the interests of all parties as recommended in the Lord Justice Taylor report into the Hillsborough Stadium Disaster in 1989.
- To oversee the issue and amendment of both General and Special Safety Certificates as applicable.
- To support prosecutions authorised by Birmingham City Council for breach of the conditions of either a General or Special Safety Certificate and for any other offence(s) under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975.
- To act in a coordinating role for all members of the S.A.G. and be responsible for the procedural organisation of the meetings as appropriate.
- To attend on match days as appropriate to observe and understand the operation of the ground.
- To keep the designated officer informed of relevant issues.

4.5 Role of Liaison Officer from West Midlands Fire Service

- To advise S.A.G. and/or Birmingham City Council on fire safety matters referred to in the Green Guide including:
 - Means of ingress and egress to and from sports grounds
 - Width of all routes, staircases, gates and vomitories
 - Positioning of signage
 - Determining the provision of firefighting resources and water supplies
 - Control of flammable materials and storage areas in sports grounds
 - Control of heating installations in sports grounds
 - Control and location of catering and merchandising outlets and other installations and provisions including temporary demountable structures
- Attend meetings of the Safety Advisory Group.
- Attend pre and post season inspections of the sports ground and advise as appropriate.

4.6 Role of Liaison Officer from West Midlands Police

- To attend and advise the Safety Advisory Group for the designated ground.
- To assist the local authority with the content and formulation of the General Safety Certificate.
- To constantly monitor by means of attendance and observation the provision of safety measures provided by the club in question in terms of stewarding effectiveness and provision of police services.
- To identify, inform and advise other agencies that have responsibility for crowd safety on any deficiencies that come to light.
- To provide specialist advice from a police perspective at all stages of development or redevelopment of a sports ground.
- To provide Police Officer(s) to attend multi agency control rooms on selected match days as appropriate to observe and understand the operation of the ground and fulfil the role of Emergency Services Police Officer.

4.7 Role of Liaison Officer from West Midlands Ambulance Service and/or the First Aid organisation

- To advise on health and first aid matters as referred to in the Green Guide.
- To act as a point of reference for first aiders attending specific incidents.
- To attend S.A.G. meetings.
- To provide Ambulance officer to attend multi agency control rooms as appropriate.

- To attend on selected match day as appropriate to observe and understand the operation of the ground or to undertake inspections on aspects that the liaison officer is suitably qualified to report on.

4.8 Role of Sports Grounds Safety Authority Regional Inspector (where involved)

The core functions of the Sports Grounds Safety Authority, as set out in the Football Spectators Act 1989, are to ensure the implementation of government policy concerning the safety and comfort of spectators at designated football matches (Developed from the final report by Rt Hon Lord Justice Taylor following the inquiry into the Hillsborough Stadium Disaster in 1989) and specifically in relation to Local Authorities to:

- Keep under review the discharge by the local authority of their functions under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 in relation to sports grounds at which designated football matches are played.
- Offer guidance on good practice issues relating to the organisation of S.A.G.
- Where possible to attend meetings of the S.A.G.
- Where appropriate to advise on crowd management and safety issues.

4.9 Role of Holder of General Safety Certificate at Designated Sports Grounds

- To be responsible for the safe operation of the sports ground including crowd safety and movement, segregation, entrance, egress, ticketing and stewarding.
- To bring to the attention of Birmingham City Council any observations or concerns in relation to technical equipment e.g. turnstile operation, lighting etc.
- To ensure that all terms and conditions of the General Safety Certificate are complied with.
- To complete the annual self-assessment questionnaire to assess the grounds compliance with the General Safety Certificate.
- Where required, to provide relevant information as contained within the terms and conditions of the General Safety Certificate to the S.A.G. and/or Birmingham City Council.
- To notify Birmingham City Council of any developments, proposals, changes or proposed installations including temporary demountable structures at the sports ground that may affect the safety of spectators.
- To action if appropriate any professional recommendations or requirements advised by the S.A.G. and/or Birmingham City Council.
- To obtain feedback from clubs attendees of the S.A.G.
- To obtain feedback from pre and post season inspections of the sports ground.

APPENDIX A – DESIGNATED GROUNDS AND REGULATED STANDS

Designated Sports grounds in Birmingham requiring a General Safety Certificate

- Aston Villa Football Club
- Birmingham City Football Club
- Warwickshire County Cricket Club

Regulated stands in Birmingham requiring a safety certificate

- Alexander Athletics Stadium (four number stands)
- Perry Barr Stadium (Greyhound Racing)
- Moseley Rugby Football Club