

Safety at Sports Ground: Monitoring and Inspection Policy

1. Introduction

Middlesbrough Council recognises its statutory duty for the safety certification of sports grounds under Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 (as amended) (1975 Act) and the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987 (1987 Act), and also recognises its responsibilities for spectators safety at all sports grounds within its boundary, and in furtherance of meeting its role will implement the following procedures and arrangements in respect of monitoring and inspection of sports ground.

This document should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

Safety at Sports Grounds: *General safety certification policy*

Safety at Sports Grounds: *Enforcement policy*

so as to provide a full understanding of the Safety at Sports Ground role carried out by **Middlesbrough Council**

In discharging its monitoring and inspection responsibilities the Council will:

- delegate its power to take and implement decisions on safety certification to a designated council officer;
- appoint a designated council officer to chair the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) to each sports ground subject to a safety certificate and be delegated with powers to make decisions on behalf of the Council;
- provide for adequate resources and appoint appropriate council officers and/or engage competent specialist agencies/external consultants as necessary, to assist the Council in carrying out its statutory duties relating to the monitoring and inspection sports grounds under the provisions of the 1975 and 1987 Acts;
- convene regular SAG meetings to assist in its statutory duty in respect of sports grounds.
- regularly monitor by inspection/audit compliance with the terms and conditions of any safety certificate issued; and
- keep under review its procedures and arrangements in pursuit of ensuring the reasonable safety of spectators at sports grounds within its responsibility.

2. Definitions

The 1975 Act defines a sports ground as a place where sports and 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.

Under the provisions of section 1 of the 1975 Act the Secretary of state for Culture, Media and Sport may designate as requiring a safety certificate any sports ground that has accommodation for more than 10,000 spectators, or 5,000 in the case of Premier League and Football League grounds in England and Wales. These sports grounds are referred to as designated grounds.

A Regulated Stand is defined in the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987 as any covered stand at a sports ground with accommodation for 500 or more spectators, whether seating or standing.

The Safety Advisory Group (SAG) is a multi-agency advisory group consisting of Relevant Council Departments, Cleveland Police, Cleveland Fire Brigade, North East Ambulance Service and Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit

3. Legislation and guidance

The legislation that applies to the monitoring of the safety of spectators at sports grounds should be read in conjunction with this policy and procedures. The relevant legislation is as follows –

Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 – Section 10B of which provides that it shall be the duty of every local authority to enforce within their area the Act and regulations made under it and for that purpose to arrange for the periodical inspection of designated sports grounds. “Periodical” is defined in that section as meaning at least once in every 12 months.

Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1997 – Section 34 of which provides that it shall be the duty of every local authority to enforce within their area the provisions of Part III of the Act and for that purpose to arrange for the periodical inspection of sports grounds at which there are regulated stands.

Both Acts also require local authorities to act in accordance with such guidance as the Secretary of State may give them. Such guidance has been given in the following Home Office Circulars.

Home Office Circular No 72/1987 - This circular sets out the Statutory Guidance given by the Secretary of State on the scope of inspections of designated sports grounds.

Home Office Circular No 97/1988 - This circular sets out the Statutory Guidance given by the Secretary of State on the frequency and scope of the inspections of the regulated stands. It also reminds local authorities that section 34 of the Act applies to the whole of a sports ground which contains a regulated stand but that the extent of the inspection of any un-certificated parts of the ground should be determined by the local authority.

In addition the “Guide to Safety Certification of Sports Grounds” published by the Sports Ground Safety Authority provides further guidance on monitoring by local authorities.

4. Purpose of monitoring and inspection

The monitoring and inspection regime is intended to provide reassurance to the Council that the terms and conditions of safety certificates issued under the provisions of the 1975 and 1987 Acts are being complied with and that ground management are maintaining the sports ground and its safety management regime at a level which provides for the reasonable safety of spectators.

The regime will include:

- annual inspections; and
- during performance inspections.

5. Scope

The monitoring and inspection procedures set out in this document will apply to the following sports grounds and regulated stands –

Riverside Stadium.

Middlesbrough Sports Village (when complete)

6. Delegated powers

The Council has delegated its powers for the monitoring and inspection of sports grounds under the 1975 Act and the 1987 Act to:

Highways and Transportation manager (or equivalent post) and Principal Engineer (Highways and Transportation)

7. Annual Inspection

An inspection will be undertaken of each designated ground at least once every 12 months.

The inspection schedule of grounds with regulated stands will depend on the size of the largest regulated stand.

Where a ground contains a regulated stand that has accommodation for more than 2000 spectators an inspection of that stand, plus any other regulated stands and such un-certificated parts of the ground as the Council considers necessary, will be undertaken at least once every calendar year following the date of the last inspection.

At all other grounds with regulated stands an inspection of the regulated stands and such un-certificated parts of the ground as the Council considers necessary will be carried out at least once every alternate calendar year following the date of the last inspection.

The police, fire authority and ambulance authority will also be invited to take part in the inspection.

The inspection of designated sports grounds will include all items detailed in the Secretary of State's statutory guidance as set out in Home Office Circular 72/1987. For regulated stands the inspection will cover the items in the statutory guidance set out in Home Office Circular 97/1988. The inspections will encompass:

- the certificates covering structural, dynamic performance and electrical tests;
- the records maintained by the management of the sports ground, in particular of attendances, accidents, maintenance, equipment tests, steward training and contingency plans;
- the condition of the sports ground and its fixtures and fittings; and
- the lighting, public address, fire warning and entry control equipment.

8. During Performance Inspection

During Performance Inspections will be made from time to time, on event days, to ensure that the terms and conditions in the safety certificate are suitable and appropriate for the use taking place and to monitor the ground management's compliance with the terms and conditions of the safety certificate.

When undertaking during performance inspections the council's inspecting officer will:

- make their presence known to the duty safety officer and others in the control room;
- tour all accessible parts of the sports ground and 'walk the ground', that is to say, not stay in one particular area of the sports ground for any length of time;
- observe the safety management arrangements and crowd, recording any problems and noting the time of the incident etc;

- record items examined on an inspection check sheet a copy of which will be annexed to the officer's report of the inspection; and
- after the event produce detailed reports of the management of the activity which shall be copied to members of the SAG and submitted at any debriefing meeting or sent to the club requesting action and/or explanations, to enable consideration to be given to further control and/or enforcement action.

Where breaches in the terms and conditions of safety certificates are noted, these will be brought to the attention to the holder and duty safety officer immediately. A standard notification of non-compliance form will be used to notify the holder at the venue of any non-compliance. These will be followed up by formal letters of confirmation.

The responsibility for the safety of spectators lies at all times with the holder of the general safety certificate. Therefore, when the inspecting officer is at the ground, he should not try to enforce the terms and conditions of the safety certificate on the spectators, but should refer breaches and concerns immediately to the club's duty safety officer.

The frequency of during performance inspections will be determined by risk assessment which will take account of the safety management culture at the ground and ground management's compliance with the safety certificate.

9. Suitably trained and competent staff

Individual officers who undertake inspection duties under the 1975 and 1987 Acts will be suitably trained and qualified to ensure their competency.

The Council will ensure that:

- duties are specified in job descriptions and experience is built-up over time with provision made in individual appraisal for monitoring progress;
- appropriate succession planning is in place to ensure that staff have the necessary training and experience to undertake the roles they may be expected to undertake.

10. Review and revisions to this document

This policy and procedures will be reviewed at intervals not exceeding 12 months and amended at any stage to reflect any changes that may occur in operation procedure or to current legislation.

Following any amendment a complete replacement will be distributed.

Date of Issue – 15th December 2014

Date of last review –

Reviewed by – S Binks