

# Sports Club and Venue Risk Management

The roar of the crowd, the thrill of competition, the towering highs of victory and the devastating lows of defeat—this is what colours the local sports club. However, among this revelry, there are hazards for both those in the stands as well as on the pitch. As the owner or manager of a sports club, it is your responsibility to establish a risk management scheme to mitigate possible hazards as they arise.

## Your Duties and Responsibilities

Before you, as the owner or manager, host an event at your sports club, you must ensure that the proper precautionary risk measures have been taken. To better regulate the possible hazards, you may want to appoint a risk management officer for your club to oversee and enforce the various measures. Below is a selection of your responsibilities as the owner or manager:

- Establishing a set of club regulations for spectators (such as appropriate behaviour, safety procedures, whether or not they are allowed to bring food and beverages into the club)
- Enforcing age limits if your club sells alcohol or you host groups on your premises that provide alcohol
- Training your employees in first aid
  - Additionally, before any event, contacting emergency health services and providing an ambulance on-site
- Inspecting and maintaining the condition of both the pitch as well as the stands
  - If you identify any hazards that may result in an injury or illness, close the club until a professional can make the proper repairs

- Providing personal protective equipment such as earplugs
- Ensuring access for people with disabilities
- Outlining a thorough set of rules, regulations and guidance for groups that rent your premises

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**Nearly 16 million adults in the United Kingdom participate in some type of regular sport. To keep playing, ensure that your sports club has a robust risk management scheme.**

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However, a portion of the risk management responsibility lies with the teams that compete at your club. The athletes and coaches who participate in an event need to adhere to the rules of the club. If you or your risk management officer discover that any of the safety regulations outlined in your risk management scheme have been violated, you have the authority to remove the guilty party from your club.

## Sports Club-related Hazards

As the owner or manager, you are liable for each individual who enters your sports club. Therefore, it is critical that you and your risk management officer conduct a risk assessment to identify any of the following hazards:

- Improperly secured equipment or temporary structures that could collapse and cause injury
- Uncontained fires caused by improperly set up or unattended barbecues and bonfires

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## Provided by Henshalls Insurance Brokers

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- The spread of communicable blood-borne pathogens or other diseases due to insufficient first aid or unhygienic facilities
- Physical altercation between attendants (the improperly regulated distribution of alcohol can contribute to such events)
- Incorrectly installed fireworks, which can cause injuries, explosions and fires
- Extreme weather

While this is not an exhaustive list of hazards that can occur at a sports club, it does represent those that may be most common. A thorough inspection of your premises before, during and after an event can curb the development of hazards. Neglecting to identify and manage risks on your premises can lead to fines, a tarnished reputation—even legal action.

## Successfully Managing Your Risk

Nearly 16 million adults in the United Kingdom participate in some kind of regular sport. While your club will not need to accommodate this many people, there will be a great deal of individuals in attendance. Review these five aspects of the setup and management process to identify any possible hazards if they arise and protect anyone on the premises:

1. Review your sports governing body (SGB) liability policy to ensure that your club is adequately insured and that there are no gaps in the cover.
2. Install informative signs in the dressing rooms and lavatories detailing your club's 'blood rule', first-aid and hygiene policy as well as the medical emergency plan.
3. Before and after an event, clean the changing rooms as well as the lavatories with disinfectant to prevent the spread of disease and infection.
4. Depending on the severity of hazardous or inclement weather, either firmly secure any temporary structures and equipment or disassemble the structures and store them indoors along with any equipment.

5. Regulate the amount of alcohol that is sold to customers, and if an individual appears inebriated, cut them off. The standard SGB liability policy does not provide cover for the operation of a licensed premises.

By reviewing these five aspects of setup and management of your sports club, you and your risk management officer will be able to identify and curb hazards as they develop.

## Goal: The Importance of Risk Management

The sports club is an important part of any community; it is the place where individuals gather to compete and celebrate. However, there are hazards that come with hosting athletic events. Therefore, it is critical that you thoroughly inspect the venue as well as the risk management scheme that you have implemented.