

Sports Governing Bodies Risk Management

Sport cannot be separated from risk. Its appeal lies in its inherently risky nature—players could become injured and fans could get rowdy.

While sport's characteristic risk is arguably one of the biggest draws for fans, it is definitely one of the biggest drawbacks for stakeholders, who try to confine the risks without simultaneously draining sport of its allure. Stakeholders such as sports governing bodies (SGBs), or sports organisations that have a regulatory or sanctioning function, are constantly trying to manage their ever-present risk in accordance with the law.

As the owner or supervisor of an SGB, you face the difficult task of managing risk that can never be fully eliminated in a niche industry. Failure to do so could result in criminal or civil liability. Capitalise on risk management strategies that limit your SGB's risk.

Assessing Your Risk

Because you represent an organisation relying on employees or volunteers, you have a legal obligation to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of them and anyone else affected by your SGB. For SGBs exposed to many risks every day, this can seem impossible. However, with thorough risk management, your SGB can clamp down on its risk to protect employees, volunteers, participants, spectators and members of the public.

Because SGBs typically operate within a specific sport and provide sport-specific guidance—in order to comply with relevant health and safety legislation—you must identify risks, provide appropriate guidance and ensure that affiliated clubs and societies follow every requirement, rule and procedure. Ensuring

consistency with associated organisations starts with identifying your sport's risks.

Sport cannot be separated from risk—its appeal lies in its inherently risky nature. Rely on risk management strategies to limit your sports governing body's risk.

Make sure your SGB develops an administrative structure that is conducive to risk management. This structure should accomplish the following to ensure legal compliance and risk reduction:

- Provide a statement on your SGB's health and safety principles.
- Define the organisational structure for managing your sport's activities.
- Establish rules and procedures for controlling the risks associated with your sport.
- Review general rules and procedures and revise them when necessary.

Depending on your SGB, your organisation might not shoulder sole responsibility for health and safety at all levels of your sport. However, a solid managerial framework is essential for pinpointing and minimising risk for associated organisations which look to you for guidance. Your SGB should establish procedures that

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enable associated organisations to safely manage their own events.

Perform risk assessments according to the five steps listed below to identify your risks and require all affiliated clubs, organisations and societies to do the same.

1. Identify the facilities, equipment and activities involved.
2. List the hazards associated with these facilities, equipment and activities.
3. Name the people directly or indirectly affected by these hazards.
4. Estimate the level of risk experienced by the people exposed to these hazards.
5. Recommend measures required to lower the risks to acceptable levels.

The information gleaned from your risk assessments should be shared with all stakeholders to encourage consistent risk management. The same goes for records of ill health and injury associated with your sport's activities. These records can help shed light on whether or not your organisation's risk management strategies are effective.

Controlling Your Risk

After assessing your SGB's risk, implement control measures, which help limit risk, based on your findings. Control measures fall into three general categories: (1) physical controls, which include the maintenance of equipment, general facilities and medical facilities; (2) management controls, which include defining and enforcing rules; and (3) personal controls, which include the capabilities and responsibilities of stakeholders such as coaches, officials and players.

The control measures you implement will depend on the hazards your SGB faces. Use the following list of general hazards and their accompanying control measures as a starting point to identify and manage your own hazards.

- **Activities** – Specify management controls to limit liability for all events associated with the sport, such as competition and training.
- **Facilities** – Identify the range and acceptability of all activities that take place at your facilities. Additionally, institute procedures for inspecting and maintaining all facilities.
- **Equipment** – Assess the suitability of equipment used by participants to ensure it meets manufacturer specifications and complies with the sport's rules and guidelines.
- **Participants** – Communicate to participants the risks they face by engaging in the sport. Consider a consent form for all participants.
- **Officials and instructors** – Establish the level of training required for employees and volunteers that officiate or instruct.
- **Spectators** – Anticipate spectator attendance and implement crowd control strategies such as liaising with the local police.
- **Public** – Examine whether your SGB's activities could negatively affect the public. If they could, suggest measures to control those activities.
- **Media** – Determine whether the media will need access to your SGB's venue and devise a policy that ensures safe access for all media members.

Bespoke Is Best

SGB risk management is a thorny process that is different for every organisation. Rely on the insurance professionals at Henshalls Insurance Brokers to provide you with a bespoke risk management strategy that addresses every one of your SGB's risks. Contact us at 01952 820 358 to start reducing your risk today.