

Introduction

Safety is one of the three pillars of the integrated approach advocated by the Saint-Denis Convention. It covers all measures aimed at preventing people from being injured or exposed to risks to their health or well-being during sports events.

There are many measures that fall under the thematic concept of safety. An important and overriding element of this approach to safety is **the risk assessment process**.

Purpose of the risk assessment

■ The aim of the risk assessment procedure is to reduce the likelihood of one or more risks occurring and to limit the severity of any danger to those attending or in the immediate vicinity of a sports event.

■ All relevant aspects of the safety management arrangements for the sports event should result in a risk assessment which should be reviewed and refined if necessary for subsequent events. The details and results of each assessment should be retained for audit purposes.

” Safety management must be based on a dynamic risk assessment



The "last mile" is an area where dynamic risk assessment is key for an effective crowd management

Identification of possible risks

■ Several categories of risks can be identified as part of the risk assessment process, which need to be dynamic:

- ▶ Risks associated with fan safety: fans without ticket, late arrivals, overcrowding, panic and crowd movements;
- ▶ Risks related to criminal activities: black market and counterfeit money, violent crimes, drug trafficking, pickpockets and robberies;
- ▶ Risks arising from fire, weather, gas leaks or chemical incidents and infrastructure incidents;
- ▶ Logistical risks such as traffic accidents, power failures, computer breakdowns or security system failures;
- ▶ Risks associated with terrorism: bomb threats by individuals or groups;
- ▶ Unauthorised use of drones;
- ▶ Health risks arising from infectious diseases, dehydration, excessive alcohol consumption, food poisoning; and
- ▶ Public order risks: historical hostility between the clubs or their supporters, fans with a history of using pyrotechnics or other dangerous objects, including laser pointers, possibility of racist, discriminatory or other unacceptable behaviour.

Risk assessment procedure

■ A risk assessment should always be carried out by a competent person and in consultation with all agencies and stakeholders involved in the organisation, such as the police, emergency services, relevant municipal or national authorities, the supporter liaison officer (SLO) and the disability access officer (DAO).



Co-operation between police and stewards is key, notably in safety checks and ticket control

■ In many cases, it is the stadium safety officer who ensures that this crucial task is undertaken for all safety, security and service operations. This is normally done as follows:

- ▶ **Step 1:** Identify the venue and event hazards;
- ▶ **Step 2:** Quantify the risks associated with the hazards. Determine who might be injured and how, identify any target groups that may need additional assistance (people with disabilities, other vulnerable people, children, etc.);
- ▶ **Step 3:** Evaluate the risks and decide whether the precautions and control measures planned are sufficient or should be strengthened;
- ▶ **Step 4:** Record the outcomes; and
- ▶ **Step 5:** Review the assessment and modify it if necessary.

Dynamic risk assessment

■ A risk assessment is only valid at the time the competent person conducts it. Incidents and circumstances arising during the course of an event can change the hazards and risks previously identified. For this reason, it may be necessary to assess certain situations dynamically, i.e. as they evolve.

Anticipating and mitigating risks

■ In order to ensure the highest levels of safety, it is necessary to take into account all available means of mitigating risks.

■ At the same time, it is important to assess how a malfunction in one service can lead to a risk in another, and thus impact on the safety and security dynamic. That is, it is essential to anticipate the possibility that an unavailability of a service may lead to a multitude of problems arising directly from it.

Example of consequences that can be linked to the unavailability of a service

Unavailability of catering services → Congestion in front of usual sales points → Blockage of evacuation routes → Frustration among spectators → Increased risk of non-compliance with stewards' instructions → More blatant disruptions

Safety management systems

■ Security management arrangements are key to reducing risk and making the event a safe, secure and welcoming place for all participants. Several key procedures and measures form the basis of effective and appropriate security management arrangements, such as:

- ▶ the presence of trained and competent stadium safety personnel;
- ▶ maintaining a smooth flow of spectators in the sports venue;
- ▶ effective and friendly communication between all stakeholders; and
- ▶ the knowledge and understanding of emergency procedures by the personnel concerned.

Medical plan, fire safety and access for all

■ Each stadium¹ must ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to minimise the risk of fire, and to be able to respond to any such incidents.

■ Each stadium must ensure that appropriate medical resources and qualified medical personnel are available to all spectators and others in the stadium.

■ The opportunity to watch a sporting event live and to share the joys and sorrows of other fans should be accessible to all. Concrete physical measures and adequate crowd safety management are therefore necessary and essential to ensure that the approximately 100 million people with disabilities in Europe are not denied this opportunity.²

” It is necessary to take into account all available means to mitigate risks

1. The text of this factsheet refers specifically to football matches but may, where appropriate, also be applied in relation to other sporting events, where deemed necessary or appropriate by national authorities.
2. For more information on this subject, please refer to Factsheet 14: *Accessibility and Inclusiveness of Sports Events*.



Dialogue between police and organised groups of supporters is critical to anticipate and mitigate risks

Risks associated with pyrotechnic devices

It is very difficult to prevent and control the use of pyrotechnic devices despite the fact that their possession or use may constitute, depending on the country, a criminal offence, a very serious offence or an administrative offence.

Pyrotechnic devices present short- and long-term risks to the health and safety of users, fans, players, security and safety personnel, and police and emergency services. They can cause various types of burns, toxic smoke, explosive effects, and the flight or panic of spectators.³

For this reason, specific strategies are detailed in Recommendation Rec(2021)1, in order to combat the risks that their use poses to all actors present at a sports event.

Pyrotechnic devices present short and long-term health and safety risks to all participants



Managing crowds in the city centres is an important part of the overall policing strategy

The pandemic has a long-term impact on the organisation of sporting events and the rights of participants

Impact of covid-19 on safety measures

The Covid-19 pandemic and the measures taken by national authorities to control its spread have had a significant impact on the organisation of sports events worldwide and on the rights of participants. In this context, it is important that policies and practices to ensure safety, security and service at sports events adapt to this new health risk. From now on, the risk assessment process must take into account international and national recommendations for the control of the virus.

Faced with this new challenge, one can note the initiatives of the Council of Europe's Sport Division in favour of a dialogue and exchange of good practices and feedback to address the consequences of Covid-19 on safety, security and service policies and practices. In November 2020, the issue was discussed during a webinar organised by the Council of Europe. Several recommendations were issued following the discussions between the various international actors in charge of safety, security and service during sports events. Among these recommendations, the importance of involving supporter organisations in the whole decision-making process concerning public health and safety measures was recalled, in order to ensure their commitment and understanding of health restrictions and instructions.

The need to work on improving the physical infrastructure to make stadiums more inclusive for all spectators, including people with disabilities, was also raised and should be considered a priority.

Finally, we note the recommendations for more effective communication and media policies, because in the context of a sanitary crisis it is even more essential that the measures taken by the public authorities can be understood, but also perceived as fair and legitimate by the population as a whole.

3. "Pyrotechnics in stadiums: health and safety issues related to the use of pyrotechnics in football stadiums", Study by Tom Smith, November 2016, commissioned by Football Supporters Europe (FSE) and UEFA.



” The Saint-Denis Convention is the only legally-binding international instrument on safety, security and service at sports events

The Saint-Denis Convention

The Council of Europe Convention on an integrated approach to safety, security and service at football matches and other sports events was opened for signature on 3 July 2016 in Saint-Denis (France), on the occasion of the UEFA EURO 2016 championship. It entered into force on 1st November 2017 after 3 ratifications – France, Monaco and Poland – and now has a large number of [States Parties](#).

It promotes an integrated multi-agency approach, covering three complementary and interdependent pillars: safety, security and service. It is the only legally-binding international instrument establishing institutional co-operation between all relevant stakeholders to make football matches and other sports events safer, more secure and more welcoming.

Useful links

1. **Saint-Denis Convention**
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/sport/safety-security-and-service-approach-convention>
2. **Recommendations T-S4:**
 - i. Rec(2021)1: Recommended good practices on safety, security and service
 - ii. Rec(2022)1: Model structure of a national strategy on safety, security and service
 - iii. Rec(2022)2: Model national legislative and regulatory framework on safety, security and service<https://www.coe.int/en/web/sport/t-s4-recommendations>
3. To learn more about the Convention and Recommendation Rec(2021)1, you can register for the following open online courses:
 - i. MOOC on Human Rights in Sport (available in English, Russian, Slovak and Spanish)
<http://help.elearning.ext.coe.int/course/index.php?categoryid=590>
 - ii. MOOC on Safety, Security and Service at Sports Events (available in English, Polish and Portuguese)
<https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/security-safety-sport/pros4-e-learning-enrolment-form>