

**COMMITTEE ON SAFETY AND SECURITY
AT SPORTS EVENTS (T-S4)**

COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONVENTION ON AN
INTEGRATED SAFETY, SECURITY AND SERVICE
APPROACH AT FOOTBALL MATCHES AND OTHER
SPORTS EVENTS



Strasbourg, 28 April 2026

Rec (2026) 2

Saint-Denis Convention (CETS No. 218)

**Committee on Safety and Security at Sports
Events**

**Recommendation Rec (2026)2
on essentials and guidelines to strengthen
the safety and service pillars of the Saint-
Denis Convention**

**Adopted by the Saint-Denis Committee
at its 9th meeting, on 28 April 2026**

RECOMMENDATION REC (2026) 2

COMMITTEE ON SAFETY AND SECURITY AT SPORTS EVENTS, OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONVENTION ON AN INTEGRATED SAFETY, SECURITY AND SERVICE APPROACH AT FOOTBALL MATCHES AND OTHER SPORTS EVENTS (SAINT-DENIS COMMITTEE OR T-S4)

Strasbourg, 8 April 2026

Recommendation Rec (2026) 2 on essentials and guidelines to strengthen the safety and service pillars of the Saint-Denis Convention

Preamble

The Saint-Denis Committee,

Recalling the objectives, principles and obligations enshrined in the Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events (Saint-Denis Convention, CETS No. 218), in particular the emphasis on achieving a balanced, multiagency, integrated, and human-rights-based approach across the Safety, Security and Service pillars;

Mindful that effective implementation of the Convention requires elevating the Safety and Service pillars to parity with the Security pillar, ensuring that all individuals may attend sports events safely and in a welcoming environment in full respect of human rights and the rule of law;

Recognising that a multi-agency integrated approach, involving national and local authorities, venue operators, event organisers, supporters and local communities, is essential to provide and continually improve high standards of safety and service at sports events in line with the Convention and evolving societal needs;

Acknowledging the substantive findings of the European Union – Council of Europe Joint Project “Balance S4” and its consultative process, which have demonstrated both the variety of practices and the necessity to strengthen and harmonise the Safety and Service pillars at local, regional, national and international levels, including measures to promote inclusion, accessibility, diversity, and non-discrimination;

Bearing in mind that the present Essentials and Guidelines on the Safety and Service pillars are non-binding and intended as a blueprint to inform and enhance legislative, regulatory or practical arrangements in accordance with the domestic legal orders and specific contexts of the Parties;

Recalling also the Saint-Denis Committee’s frame Recommendation (2021)¹, namely its Annexes A (Safety) and C (Service), and the need to further update, clarify and

operationalise standards regarding the Safety and Service pillars, to ensure their effective awareness and implementation from national to local level;

Recognising that Safety comprises all measures to protect people from physical harm or risks to their health and well-being, and that Service encompasses all measures to ensure events are enjoyable, welcoming, and inclusive for all, both within stadiums and throughout the entire spectator journey;

Acknowledging the right of all individuals, irrespective of gender, age, disability, cultural or social background, or economic situation, to attend and enjoy sports events in conditions that are safe, healthy, inclusive, accessible and free from discrimination or offensive behaviour;

Hereby,

- Welcomes the Safety and Service Essentials and Guidelines, as annexes 1 and 2 hereto, as a reference for all Parties, authorities and stakeholders when developing or refining an integrated approach to safety, security and service at football matches and other sports events;
- Encourages their translation, dissemination and adaptation as appropriate to national contexts;
- Affirms the commitment of the Saint-Denis Committee to monitoring and supporting the strengthened implementation of the Safety and Service pillars, through ongoing standard-setting, monitoring and technical assistance;
- Invites all stakeholders to contribute to the culture of continuous improvement and shared responsibility in securing and enriching the experience of sports events across Europe; and
- Recommends that Governments of Parties to the Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events (CETS No. 218) review their relevant legal frameworks, standards and policies in light of these Essentials and Guidelines, with a view to enhancing the safety, service and overall well-being of all persons at football matches and other sports events.

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ANNEX 1

ESSENTIALS ON SAFETY AND SERVICE

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This document was one of the deliverables of the European Union - Council of Europe's Joint Project "Balance S4 – Strengthening the Safety and Service Pillars of the Saint-Denis Convention".

It provides an overview of the essentials for the safety and service elements of the Convention. These elements are often and mistakenly seen as subordinate to security. The Saint-Denis Convention clearly outlines the importance of all three elements. This document aims to rebalance and strengthen the awareness and understanding of the safety and service pillars.

It is not a comprehensive representation of all issues. However, it should provide sufficient overview of some of the key principles and where further information and tools can be found.

This guidance should be used proportionally, based on the individual stadium and/or event¹. It is not expected to be followed exactly and instead should be used to enhance the stadium management in their understanding of safety and service.

Safety essentials

1. Management has the responsibility to keep all people safe.
2. Understand the safe capacity.
3. Assess the risks involved.
4. Recognise the importance of good design and safety management.
5. Safety cannot be achieved in isolation.

Service essentials

1. The spectator journey starts when purchasing event tickets.
2. Preparing a welcoming environment is key.
3. Positive attitudes and actions of event personnel have a positive impact on spectator behaviour.
4. Every spectator should be able to enjoy the event day without fear or worry.
5. Communication is key to a safe and welcoming atmosphere.

¹ In this Recommendation, the reference to "stadium", "sports venue" or "sports ground" shall be understood as synonyms and comprising any type of sports venue. Likewise, the content of this Recommendation applies not only to football matches and stadiums but can also be applied and adapted, where necessary or desirable, to other sports and venues.

1.2 Safety, security and service

It is widely acknowledged that the delivery of a safe event is achieved by adopting an integrated and balanced approach towards the core elements of safety, security and service, as advocated by the Council of Europe. In brief, these are:

- a. **Safety – all measures related to the protection of people from being injured or facing a risk to their health and well-being during sports events, including protecting people on their journey to the event and in public viewing areas outside stadiums.**

To be considered 'safe' management should ensure the stadium is:

- free of hazards, as far as is reasonable or practicable; and
- well managed: that is, the responsibility for safety should be allocated to a named individual (Safety Officer) and that the personnel operating and staffing the stadium should be appropriately trained, briefed and resourced, and be able to carry out their allocated safety roles both in normal conditions and in the event of an incident.

Understanding the distinction between the physical condition of a stadium and its safety management forms a crucial part of event safety management. Equally important is recognizing how these two aspects are interdependent.

- b. **Security – all measures designed to deter, prevent and sanction any incident of violence or misbehaviour in connection with football or other sports events – inside or outside of a stadium.**

To be considered 'safe' a stadium should also be secure. Conversely, a stadium that is not secure cannot be considered to be safe.

Security depends on the following five key elements being in place:

- A named individual with responsibility for security. On event days they might report directly to the Safety Officer. In some locations, it may fall within the remit of the Safety Officer.
- Measures to prevent, detect and respond to, as far as is reasonably practicable, incidents of violence or criminal activity (including terrorism) from taking place. This should be based on information and intelligence.
- The stadium's security personnel should, as part of the overall safety culture, engage with all aspects of event planning to ensure that staff in other functional areas share situational awareness.
- Access controls and management plans should be in place to deny entry to non-accredited individuals and vehicles to the stadium.
- Plans should be in place to manage access and any vulnerable points which are intersected by areas or routes shared with the public.

Finding and maintaining a balance between measures required for safety and those required for security is one of the major challenges of event safety management.

- c. Service – all measures designed to make football and other sports events enjoyable and welcoming for all, in stadiums but also in public spaces where spectators and supporters gather before, during and after the matches.**

Service encompasses those management plans and procedures that are aimed towards the wellbeing of *all* people at an event, whether attending as individuals or in groups (including family groups).

Wellbeing is relevant to safety management because experience shows that the behaviour of people at an event can be significantly influenced by conditions at a stadium, and by the attitudes and actions of the event staff.

Everyone should be able to enjoy the event without the fear of discrimination or abuse from any party, be it from fellow spectators or event staff.

People present at an event should not only be safe, but they should *feel* safe as well.

1.3 Supporting guidance and documents

a. Standards of the Saint-Denis Committee

The Saint-Denis Committee adopted Recommendation Rec(2021)1 on Recommended Good Practices on Safety, Security and Service at Football Matches and other Sports Events, in particular its Annex A on Safety and Annex C on Service, which set the Council of Europe's standards in this field, as well as Annex D with a checklist.

The Saint-Denis Committee further adopted Recommendation Rec(2022)2 on a Model national legislative and regulatory framework on safety, security and service at football matches and other sports events. Its Annex 1, on a model national law, sets the recommended safety, security and service provisions, whereas Annex 2 sets a model of a regulation on stewarding at football matches and other sports events.

b. Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (Green Guide)

The Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) is the UK Government's advisor on safety at sports grounds and a world leader in safety.

The Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (also known as the *Green Guide*) is the world's foremost guidance on the building, planning and management of safety at stadiums.

A fundamental principle of the *Green Guide* is that responsibility for all people present in a sports ground lies at all times with the ground management. It also emphasises that safety at sports grounds is achieved by establishing a balance between good management and good design.

The *Green Guide* details how to calculate a stadium's safe capacity, outlining how to calculate the entry, holding, exit and emergency exit capacities. It also details the requirements for the safe movement of people in, out and around the sports ground, detailing:

- Circulation, including ingress, egress, vertical circulation and concourses.
- Structures and installations, including barriers and separating elements and spectator accommodation (both seated and standing).
- Importance of effective systems including communications and control issues, along with mechanical and electrical installations.
- Specific issues, including fire safety, medical and first aid provision, and media provision.

To support the *Green Guide*, several free worked examples and annexes have been created to provide additional detail on certain issues:

- Annex A – P Factor Indicative Questions.
- Annex B – S Factor Indicative Questions.
- Annex C – Guidance on Colour Vision Deficiency.
- Annex D – Demountable Structures Checklist.
- Annex E – Medical Room Checklist.

Capacity calculation worked examples:

- Football and rugby.
- Cricket.
- Racecourse.

All of these can be found on [the SGSA website](#).

The *Green Guide* is updated periodically, usually around every 10 years. The latest, sixth edition, was published in October 2018. The next edition of the Green Guide is due for publication in 2029.

c. Supplementary Guidance 03: Event Safety Management

The Supplementary Guidance 03: Event Safety Management (SG03) provides a comprehensive overview of the planning and delivery of safe events. It builds on ideas and concepts within the Green Guide, for example around Zone Ex, safety personnel and the contents of the Operations Manual.

Safety management seeks to ensure that all people present at an event not only are safe but also that they should have sufficient confidence in the safety management operation to feel safe.

The core elements of event safety management are brought together in this guidance, including:

- Management responsibilities and safety personnel, including the safety officer and stewarding.
- Conducting risk assessments and contingency planning.
- Developing an Operations Manual and Event Day Plan.

To support the Supplementary Guidance 03: Event Safety Management document, SGSA produced the following annexes and templates which are freely available on [the SGSA website](#):

- Exercise planning.
- Control points.
- Recording of tests and inspections templates.
- Template risk assessment form.

d. Toolkit of Factsheets on Saint Denis Convention

To support the Saint-Denis Convention, the Council of Europe has published a Toolkit comprising 16 factsheets, titled "*How to ensure a safe, secure and welcoming environment at football matches and other sports events*". All you need to know is available on [Toolkit - Sport](#).

These include the following, of particular relevance for the safety and service elements:

- Safety: Which actors and which roles?
- Safety: How to assess, identify and manage risks at sporting events?
- Safety: Certification, maximum safety capacity and European standards.
- Service at football matches: What is it about?
- Racism, discrimination and intolerance, including hate speech, in sport.
- Accessibility and inclusiveness at sports events.

e. Online training

The Council of Europe and Liverpool University have produced a free online course to raise awareness and understanding of the requirements of the Saint-Denis Convention.

The course – [Promoting and Strengthening the Council of Europe Standards on Safety, Security and Service at Football Matches and Other Sports Events](#) – is made up of eight modules.

These modules contain details of effective and efficient safety, security and service management at sports events with the ultimate aim of making football matches and other sports events more welcoming, safe and secure.

It is highly recommended that anyone involved in the safety and security of events, particularly football matches, should complete this course.

f. Country Profiles

The Council of Europe developed a database with “country profiles” that provides a list of countries that have ratified the convention, along with detailed information on the institutions responsible for sport and security, major sports events, supporter organisations, the legal framework and national strategies. It also highlights the major risks involved in each country. This is available to anyone interested in learning more about the specific actions each state is taking to implement the Saint-Denis Convention on the [Saint-Denis website interactive map with the country profiles](#).

2. Essentials of safety

Regardless of the size of the stadium or the activity there are five key principles for spectator safety. These are outlined in detail across all of the SGSA’s guidance documents.

In brief, these are:

1. Management has the responsibility to keep *all* people safe.
2. Understand the safe capacity.
3. Assess the risks involved.
4. Recognise the importance of good design and safety management.
5. Safety cannot be achieved in isolation.

The following sections provide further details on each of these principles.

2.1 Management has the responsibility to keep *all* people safe

For all individuals involved in the management, organisation or hosting of an event, whatever their role, whatever the nature of the event, wherever the event is staged, the safety of *all* people present must take precedence over every other concern.

‘*All people*’ includes not only spectators or audience members but also players, athletes, participants and performers, competition officials, stadium and event staff, representatives of the emergency services, representatives of the media, and indeed any individual who attends the event, in whatever role.

2.2 Understand the safe capacity

At its most basic level, one of the first issues to consider is the capacity of the stadium and its suitability for accommodating the anticipated attendance numbers.

The stadium, or section within it, including those areas where people queue to gain entry, congregate for amenities, or disperse, can be considered safe only if the number of people present – and that includes all people, not only spectators – equals the number of people that area can accommodate safely.

The safe capacity should be carried out by a competent person – that is someone who has the sufficient training and experience to conduct the assessment. However, it is important for all involved in the stadium management to be aware of how the safe capacity is calculated.

This section provides an overview of the factors used to calculate the safe capacity:

- a. **Entry capacity** – the number of spectators who can pass through all the entry points or turnstiles serving the stadium, or a section of the stadium, within a one-hour period.
- b. **Holding capacity** – the number of spectators that can be safely accommodated in the viewing accommodation of the stadium, or in a section of the stadium.

For seated accommodation this is the actual number of seats, less any that cannot be used safely owing to seriously restricted views or inadequate condition.

For standing accommodation this is determined by several factors, including an assessment of the space available and the appropriate density measure, crush barrier strengths and layouts and any seriously restricted views.

For both seated and standing accommodation, the holding capacity will also be assessed according to its physical condition (also known as the (P) Factor) and the safety management of that area (the (S) Factor).

- c. **Exit capacity** – the number of spectators that can safely exit from the stadium, or from a section of the stadium, under normal conditions. The calculations should take into account whether the exit route is flat or stepped. In addition, it should be calculated based on the exit width of the narrowest point, for example this may be a vomitory or staircase leading to the final exit, rather than the width of the exit gate itself.
- d. **Emergency exit capacity** – the number of people (spectators and all other people present) that can safely exit from the stadium under emergency conditions to a place of safety within a set time. The determination of that set time is based on an assessment of the levels of fire risk present throughout the exit route (for example eight minutes), as well as whether the route is stepped or flat, and the width of the narrowest points, as in the exit capacity above.
- e. **Final capacity** – having calculated all the above figures, the final capacity of the sports stadium, or section of it, will be determined by whichever is the lowest figure of the above four factors.

Once the final capacity of a section, or of the whole stadium, is determined, in no circumstances should a larger number of spectators be admitted.

If that final capacity is lower than the level management ideally requires, it can only be raised after the necessary remedial work has been completed, and/or the quality of safety management improved, and after the area in question has been re-assessed by a competent person.

To support the understanding of how a safe capacity is calculated, the SGSA has developed supporting materials, available on its [website](#).

2.3 Assess the risks involved

Event safety management is, in essence, about the management of risk.

More specifically, managing risk is one of the principal means by which stadium management can meet their responsibility to achieve a reasonable degree of safety for all people present at an event.

No other forms of risk management should take precedence over the safety of all people present. For example, no event should be staged, nor, once started, continued, despite known safety risks, purely in order to avoid financial losses, avoid breaking commercial arrangements, or avoid potential reputational damage to the hosts or visitors.

Risk assessments generally fall into one of the following five main categories:

- a. **Standard, or generic risk assessments:** to consider potential incidents, hazards or threats when the stadium is in standard operational mode.
This type of risk assessment is typically drawn up before the start of a season at stadiums which stage the same sport or type of event on a regular basis. It will, however, need to be supplemented on an event-to-event basis by the following.
- b. **Event specific risk assessments:** to consider potential incidents, hazards or threats arising from the specific event in question, also when the stadium is in standard operational mode. Even if standard or generic risk assessments have been completed, no two events are identical. Each might attract a slightly different demographic, or take place at a different time of the day, or year, or in different circumstances or in different weather conditions. Therefore, an event specific risk assessment is critical.
- c. **Dynamic or ongoing risk assessments:** to consider incidents or hazards that emerge, or threats that are identified, during the event planning cycle.
Any risk assessment can only reflect conditions or circumstances at the time the assessment is carried out. As conditions or circumstances change, as incidents occur, as hazards arise, or as threats are identified, it will be necessary to conduct a further, dynamic risk assessment to determine whether further controls or mitigation measures, or changes to standard operational procedures, will be necessary.
- d. **Statutory risk assessments:** as required under local or national legislation, for example, in relation to health and safety, fire safety, medical provision or equality and inclusivity.
- e. **Risk assessments carried out by external agencies:** events are often graded or categorised by external agencies or emergency services, such as the police, in order to ascertain their own resourcing levels. Third party contractors

such as broadcasters and caterers should also provide their own risk assessments.

Although the ultimate responsibility for commissioning risk assessments lies with the stadium management, all risk assessments must be carried out by competent persons with the appropriate skills and experience.

Furthermore, risk assessment is not an exact science because different people and organisations perceive risk in different ways. It is therefore good practice for risk assessments to be reviewed by a group of people in consultation, rather than by a single individual.

2.4 Recognise the importance of good design and safety management

Safety at stadiums is best achieved when led by good design overlaid by high quality safety management.

Reasonable levels of spectator safety are difficult to achieve where design is poor. Additional levels of safety management should not be seen as the solution to compensate for poor design. In this respect, safety cannot be achieved simply by ensuring that individual components of a stadium – such as stairways, gangways, seated areas or terraces – are satisfactory in themselves. The inter-relation of these and other components, such as concourses and CCTV systems, is critical. None can be treated in isolation without consideration of the effect its design and management has upon other components. They should all be compatible and combine to form a balanced unit.

Safety management seeks to ensure that all people present at an event not only are safe but also that they should have sufficient confidence in the safety management operation to feel safe. It should never be an afterthought. It is a discipline that requires forethought, focus, detailed planning and leadership, backed up by information and intelligence gathering, the co-ordination of multiple stakeholders, targeted communications, and the presence of competent staff who are appropriately trained, briefed and resourced.

Points to consider include:

- a. The importance of maintenance, tests and inspections for all parts of a stadium. These should be retained within a Planned Preventative Maintenance Schedule. By adopting this proactive approach, management should be able to reduce its long-term costs, as well as reduce any potential liabilities arising from damages or faults.
- b. Regardless of the type or size of an event, there should be a control point (also known as a control room). This facility should form the hub of the safety management team's command, control and communications network during an event. This should include access to critical life safety systems including the fire

detection and alarm system master panel, CCTV cameras, PA systems, communication systems and emergency lighting.

- c. Stadiums should be inclusive and accessible to all spectators – no one should be excluded because of disability. Stadium management should strive to meet all the requirements of disabled supporters so that stadiums are fully accessible with a focus on making all supporters' services equal and inclusive. Management should also be conscious of any legal requirements around accessibility.
- d. No matter how basic or sophisticated the stadium, or how technologically advanced the safety systems in place, it is the competency and capacity of the stadium's people that will ultimately determine the quality of the safety management operation. For this, there must be an effective safety management structure, or chain of command, in place at the stadium. This includes:
 - A Senior Executive with overall responsibility for safety.
 - A Safety Officer to plan and oversee the event day operation.
 - Supervisory stewards to form a link in the chain of command between the Safety Officer and all other stewards.
 - Stewards performing locational or functional roles.
 - A named individual with a responsibility for security.
 - Event attendants carrying out non-safety critical (service) roles.
- e. There should be a Safety Officer in place who has overall responsibility for safety at an event. The Safety Officer plays a pivotal role in the implementation of the management's Event Safety Policy and, as such, should be a skilled and experienced professional who has demonstrated occupational competency for the role. During an event, the Safety Officer should:
 - be recognised as being in overall control of all operational matters in relation to safety management; and
 - be given the authority to make any safety-related decisions without having to refer to the senior executive with responsibility for safety, the stadium management or the event organiser.
- f. An Operations Manual should be in place which sets out the way a stadium operates on a daily basis. It serves two principal purposes: firstly, to act as a reference point and a prompt for key members of the safety management team during an event; and secondly, to act as a record of the event planning process, should it be necessary to review or question any of the actions taken. The range of documents to be included in the Operations Manual will vary according to the stadium and the event, but is likely to include:
 - The Event Safety Policy.
 - A set of annotated site plans of the stadium and its immediate environs.
 - Capacity calculations.
 - Generic risk assessments for the stadium and the event, including any regular pre-event activities.
 - The Stewarding Plan, based on a staffing risk assessment.
 - All contingency plans.
 - The Security Plan, to include counter terrorism measures and the security of athletes, performers and VIPs.

- Any Memorandum of Understanding or Statement of Intent in place, for example with service providers or the police, which has a bearing on event safety management.

The SGSA [website](#) outlines full details of what should be included in the Operations Manual.

2.5 Safety cannot be achieved in isolation

Whilst the responsibility for safety in a stadium rests with the management, it cannot be achieved alone. It requires the participation and co-operation of numerous agencies and stakeholders, depending on the stadium and the event. This is what is meant by implementing an integrated approach to safety.

The stakeholders involved will vary, but are likely to include:

- the local authority, which might require a safety certificate and/or licence to be in place, with certain conditions, such as a limit on capacity;
- a sport governing body, which may impose certain requirements;
- the police;
- medical providers who will require certain access and facilities;
- fire service;
- the local highways authority; and
- others, such as local businesses.

A key factor of this is the need for stadiums, and wider stakeholders, to consider the *Zone Ex*. *Zone Ex* is defined as consisting of those areas, either in the public domain or under private ownership, considered to be integral to the circulation and safe management of people both arriving at the stadium and dispersing afterwards. Typically, *Zone Ex* includes routes linking the stadium with transport hubs, car parking areas and local amenities. However, in every location its extent and character will differ.

These and other relevant elements and characteristics of *Zone Ex* must be taken into consideration when planning the event safety management. This is because:

- a. No stadium or event exists in isolation.
- b. The physical characteristics and management of *Zone Ex* may have a bearing upon the safe capacity of the stadium.
- c. Safety management plans must balance the operational requirements of the stadium and the needs of those attending the event against any impact that the event might have upon *Zone Ex*.

In most locations the routes or areas that make up *Zone Ex* fall outside the legal jurisdiction of the stadium management. It is nevertheless incumbent upon them to ensure that all safety, security and service arrangements within that zone are integrated, co-ordinated and agreed by all key stakeholders prior to the event.

3. Essentials of service

The Council of Europe Saint Denis Convention states:

“The concept of service comprises any measure designed and implemented with the primary aim of making individuals and groups feel comfortable, appreciated and welcome when attending a football match or other sports event, inside or outside of a stadium”. This incorporates material elements like good catering and toilet facilities; but above all, focuses on the manner in which people are greeted and treated throughout the event.

This section outlines the following five essentials of service:

1. The spectator journey starts when purchasing event tickets.
2. Preparing a welcoming environment is key.
3. Positive attitudes and actions of event personnel have a positive impact on spectator behaviour.
4. Every spectator should be able to enjoy the event day without fear or worry.
5. Communication is key to a safe and welcoming atmosphere.

A central part of service is to understand the ‘spectator journey’. Fundamentally, spectator behaviour at an event can be significantly influenced by conditions at the stadium and by the attitudes and actions of the event staff. The ‘spectator journey’ itself can be defined as the experience of a spectator from the purchase of event tickets to the return home after the event has taken place.

3.1 The spectator journey starts when purchasing event tickets

A safe and welcoming experience for spectators begins before the event itself. It starts at the point of purchasing tickets. For example, ticket buyers (whether supporters of a home team or visiting supporters) should have an understanding of the location of seats and have options to select the most appropriate placement within the stadium. This should include having clearly identified, accessible fan and family areas.

For this, an effective Ticketing Strategy, as part of the Operations Manual, is critical. An important part of this is effective relationships in the stadium itself between the safety team, ticket office, facilities management, marketing and any other relevant departments.

At the point of purchase, it can also be useful to include information about the spectator journey. This could cover activities which will be available before the start of the event, for example if any fan zones were planned, or any family friendly activities taking place, either inside or outside the stadium.

3.2 Preparing a welcoming environment is key

Preparations ahead of an event day are essential to creating a welcoming environment. This is true not only for the stadium itself, but also providing key information to spectators.

a. Stadium preparations

Ahead of an event day, the stadium should set a positive tone, by ensuring that cleaning and sufficient inspections and checks take place in the period before the gates open. This includes making sure that seats, concourses, toilets facilities, etc, are clean and tidy.

b. Spectator preparations

Stadium management should make sure that spectators are provided with sufficient information ahead of the event day in order for them to feel safe and welcome. This could include:

- Details of how to get to the stadium through different transport points and how to effectively access the stadium, for example using the correct gate for their seats.
- Details of any security arrangements in place on event day. This could include providing details of any searching and screening that may take place, any bag restrictions, and so on.
- Terms and conditions of entering the stadium.

Some stadiums have achieved this through the introduction of videos which follows the spectator journey into the stadium. This can be particularly effective for visiting fans.

Stadium management should also consider facilities for spectators in order to make the experience as welcoming and enjoyable as possible, and outlining the facilities available before the event day. This could include, for example, supporting spectators with specific requirements, such as having hearing loops for deaf/hard of hearing spectators, the provision of sensory rooms or offering faith rooms.

3.3 Positive attitudes and actions of event personnel have a positive impact on spectator behaviour

Stewards are amongst the most critical staff members at a stadium, as they implement the policies and instructions from the safety management team. They are often the first and only point of contact between the stadium management and members of the public. Their roles and responsibilities focus on ensuring a safe and welcoming environment for spectators.

It is, therefore, critical that stewards, and any other public facing roles, have the appropriate training, qualifications (as required) and briefing to effectively do their roles.

All stewards should:

- be fit and active;
- have a mature character and temperament; and
- demonstrate interpersonal skills.

The duties of a steward will vary, depending on the size and configuration of the stadium and the nature and timing of the event. As an overview, these can include:

- Assisting with the circulation of spectators, including during ingress and egress.
- Monitoring and controlling crowd movements and density within viewing areas, so as to prevent overcrowding.
- Identifying and reporting any potential hazards, or incidents.
- Staff entrances, exits and other strategic points, such as the pitch, or any exit doors or gates as needed.

There are also various roles at a stadium which can be safely carried out by well-trained and briefed individuals who are not a qualified steward. These roles are focused on customer service and enhancing the experience of spectators in and around the stadium. These non-safety critical roles can be completed by an Event Attendant.

Whilst Event Attendants do not require the same qualifications as stewards, they must have similar qualities and attributes, as noted above. They must also be sufficiently trained and briefed by the stadium.

The basic duties of Events Attendant include:

- Wayfinding and general support to spectators.
- Guidance and direction to attendees arriving by car or on foot.
- Customer care duties including directing to refreshments, toilets and first aid facilities.
- Monitoring non-safety critical locations, as identified by the safety management team and included in the deployment section within the Stewarding Plan.

Stewards can carry out the duties of non-safety critical roles and locations. It is the responsibility of stadium management to determine how best to use their resources, as part of the Stewarding Plan.

In order to enhance the service provision, all personnel conducting safety, security and non-safety related roles should be properly trained and briefed to carry out their roles effectively.

a. Training

Training is critical for all safety personnel, particularly non-safety critical roles, such as Event Attendants. This is to make sure they are fully aware of stadium and event requirements, along with having a clear understanding on the roles and responsibilities they hold – in other words what they can and, importantly, what they cannot do.

As good practice, management should encourage continuous professional development and refresher training opportunities for safety personnel. In addition, management should ensure records of training received are kept for each personnel member.

Training should be:

- **Stadium specific** – delivered to each employee, volunteer or contractor before or when they first attend the stadium. This important familiarisation training is to outline the safety and security features and requirements of the stadium.
- **Event specific** – alongside gaining an understanding of the stadium, training should include elements specific to the nature of the event taking place. Importantly changes to the usual operational procedures or policies will need to be identified and communicated.
- **Role specific** – staff members deployed to specific roles or locations within each stadium will need to be appropriately trained on the key safety, security and service roles and actions needed for the event and location or deployment.

b. Briefing

Event day briefing and debriefing sessions are an essential part of safety management operations. They allow stadium management to be confident that every member of the safety team are informed of the key issues for the day, and how they relate to their roles.

The content of briefing sessions will vary according to the stadium and the event. They are intended to provide safety personnel with whatever specific information and instructions they require in order to perform their functions at that particular event. The contents of the briefing should be relevant, concise and clear.

In addition, stadium should balance the security requirements with the welcoming atmosphere. For example, a heavy police/military/armed guard presence at entry points can impact how safe and welcome fans might feel. Whilst, of course, the safety and security of spectators should never be compromised, it is important to consider the perceptions of fans.

3.4 Every spectator should be able to enjoy the event day without fear or worry

Stadiums should be a safe, secure and welcoming environment for all. Critical to this is ensuring that those with specific requirements, for example disabled spectators are not discriminated against. An Accessibility Plan is essential to this. Stadium management should also consider the welfare of wheelchair users during adverse weather, for example by providing ponchos or covers if they are in open spaces, including accompanying persons.

Beyond this, spectators should be able to enjoy a match, with sufficient facilities and concessions available throughout the stadium and without their health and well-being being affected.

Offensive and bigoted behaviour and language must not be tolerated at any time. Stadium management should ensure there are effective plans in place to deal with anyone who is displaying those behaviours.

In addition, it is important to consider the general welfare of spectators before, during and after events, and having appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure a smooth event. This could include:

- Having appropriate safeguarding policies in place for children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Ensuring there are appropriate facilities in place for spectators, such as sufficient toilets and refreshment opportunities.
- Considering the needs of visiting spectators, and ensuring away areas are welcoming, with appropriate staffing arrangements, and the abilities to put club colours in the area. Visiting supporters should not be treated as second rate to home supporters.

Stadium management should also consider the general welfare and support for spectators. This includes having food, beverages, appropriate hygiene and cleaning activities during a match, particularly in concourses.

3.5 Communication is key to a safe and welcoming atmosphere

The central factor in all service elements is the importance of effective communications.

Communications should be friendly, understandable and accessible. It should be in both written and verbal forms, with consideration given to those with sight problems (such as colour-blindness), cognitive or hearing difficulties to ensure that all spectators have an equal ability to receive the required information about a stadium before, during and after an event.

Consideration should also be given to ensuring key communications are available in other languages, particularly if the stadium hosts events such as UEFA cup fixtures or international matches.

Communication is also key for fans to be aware of any impact on travel arrangements after an event. In particular, this relates to visiting spectators who may not know the stadium and require additional advice and support.

Stadiums can achieve good communication in a number of ways, including:

- messaging sent to spectators ahead of the event;
- information about the event on the stadium's website;
- information being located strategically around the stadium;
- social media activities; and/or
- the establishment of a specific app.

Critically, the safety team should work closely with communications/marketing teams to ensure that information is effectively distributed.

It is also important to obtain feedback from spectators themselves in order to try to address any issues or needs, and to continuously improve the service element at stadiums. This could be achieved via fan forums, to feedback on events and experiences, through the establishment of a Supporter Liaison Officer, online feedback forms, or a combination of these and other activities.

ANNEX 2

GUIDELINES ON SAFETY AND SERVICE

1. Introduction

These Guidelines are based on findings and discussions within a range of activities that were developed under the European Union – Council of Europe Joint Project “Balance S4 : Strengthening the Safety and Service pillars of the Saint-Denis Convention”, between January 2024 and December 2025, including: research from across Europe on the current levels of safety and service at stadiums; on-site evaluation and observations at the UEFA Women’s EURO 2025 (Switzerland); and views and feedback from the Balance S4 Expert Group composed of representatives of member states and sports organisations.

These Guidelines offer advice and proposals for how safety and service pillars of the Saint-Denis Convention can be strengthened at venue, local, regional, national and international levels, both by public and sports authorities.

The content provided is not legally binding, but instead provides a blueprint for how safety and service can be enhanced in Council of Europe member states and beyond.

These Guidelines should be read as a complement to the T-S4 Recommendation Rec(2021)1, which covers Safety, Security and Service pillars.

These Guidelines should be considered alongside existing national and international legislation and requirements. This is particularly critical in areas of accessibility, including the European Convention on Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and EU Accessibility Act 2025.

This document marks a significant early step in a long-term journey toward consolidating the safety and service pillars and balancing them with the security one, from local venues to the international stage. Moving forward, the responsibility now rests with the Saint-Denis Committee and its delegations to nurture the strengthening of the safety and service pillars through monitoring and technical assistance to countries.

2. How to use the Guidelines

These Guidelines follow on from the “Essentials on Safety and Service”, in Annex 1 of this Recommendation.

Throughout the document, there are references to venue, local, regional and national activities.

For ease of reference, these are defined as the following:

- *Guidelines*: propositions that provide advice or proposals to help organisations or individuals implement policies or procedures effectively, serving as a framework for best practices without being legally binding.
- *Venue operators and/or event organisers*: individuals or organisations responsible for managing, maintaining and operating a specific venue, ensuring it is suitable and safe for events; and/or the planning, coordination, and overseeing the execution of events.
- *Local authority*: actions, policies or activities related to authorities within a specific locality of municipality.
- *Regional level*: actions, policies or activities related to a broader geographic area that encompasses multiple local municipalities, such as a state or province.
- *National level*: actions, policies or activities related to the entire country, typically managed by central government bodies or ministries.

The content and guidance are not expected to be implemented as drafted. It is important for member states to consider these Guidelines in their specific contexts, as they provide valuable principles and best practices that can guide effective decision-making. Integrating these Guidelines into local practices does not mean adopting them wholesale, rather, they should be adapted to suit specific local realities, influenced by cultural, legal, economic, and social factors in member states. Individual member states should consider what is achievable and a reasonable time period in which to integrate Guidelines into current practice. The Guidelines are intended to have the flexibility required to be applied in the national contexts.

Part 1 – Safety and service in general

This section builds on the “Essentials on Safety and Service”, in Annex 1 of this Recommendation.

It outlines guidelines and recommendations under the following points:

Safety

- A commitment to considering the safe capacity of a stadium: using the structure and approach used by the SGSA.
- The importance of conducting risk assessments – both general and for event specific and how these support the development and maintenance of a safe environment for all.
- The critical area of Zone Ex (the area outside a stadium), how this impacts on the safe ingress and egress of spectators and the importance of working in partnership to effectively manage this area.

Service

- The expectations for all event personnel to demonstrate a positive attitude in how they engage with spectators, and how this can lead to positive behaviours.
- Understanding and addressing the needs for all – ensuring accessible facilities and preventing discriminatory and offensive behaviour.
- The importance of communication and engagement throughout the spectator journey, including getting to know spectators and how they engage with the stadium, in order to make their interaction smooth.

1. The safe capacity of a stadium: structure and approach

This principle outlines the commitment to consider and calculate the safe capacity of a stadium, using the structure and approach adopted by the SGSA.

Stadiums are more than just venues: they are vibrant hubs where communities gather to celebrate, support, and unite. Ensuring safety is not optional – it is a duty. A clear understanding of a stadium’s safe capacity is the cornerstone of this.

The safe capacity is the maximum number of people who can be safely accommodated within a venue whilst it is hosting an event.

The Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (Green Guide), published by the SGSA, outlines an internationally recognised approach to calculating and evaluating the safe capacity.

The safe capacity is not the number of seats or standing spaces available. Instead, it is based on the following elements:

- Entry capacity
- Holding capacity, including (P) and (S) Factors

- Exit capacity
- Emergency exit capacity

The final capacity is then the **lowest** of these calculations.

Once the final capacity of a section, or of the whole stadium, is determined, in no circumstances should a larger number of spectators be admitted.

To uphold a firm commitment to safety, organisations must build a safety-first culture. This involves comprehensive training for staff, clear safety policies, and strong leadership that prioritises adherence to capacity limits. Transparency and communication are essential — all stakeholders should understand that safety is non-negotiable and that exceeding capacity is unacceptable.

While internal and external pressures – such as commercial pressure to maximise revenue - – can challenge a safety team’s commitment to maintaining prescribed stadium capacities, unwavering dedication to safety is essential.

Guidelines

Guidelines for venue operators and/or event organisers

- Conduct a capacity calculation on the venue to ascertain the maximum safe capacity and ensure that this is not exceeded.
- Conduct structural inspections and appraisals, particularly on aging stadiums, in order to ascertain if there are any physical impacts on the safe capacity.
- Conduct periodic reviews of capacity and crowd control plans, especially following structural changes or after significant events.
- Develop an Operations Manual to support the safety management procedures within the venue.

Guidelines for local authorities

- Conduct capacity assessments, using competent persons, to evaluate the stadium’s physical structure, seating arrangements, entry and exit points, and crowd flow in order to determine the safe capacity of the venue.
- Use local authorities to certify and conduct regular audits and inspections to ensure that stadiums maintain their designated safe capacity.
- Conduct a review on safety management processes and procedures in the stadium in order to understand if these have an impact on the safe capacity.

Guidelines for regional authorities

- Implement standards for assessing and maintaining stadium capacity based on safety regulations, building codes, and best practices, and require all venues within the region to adhere to these standards.
- Facilitate training in order to improve the awareness of safe capacity and the capabilities of people to conduct capacity calculations appropriately. This should include an understanding of how event overlay can impact on the safe capacity.

Guidelines for national authorities

- Consider the implementation of national laws and regulations governing stadium safety, outlining how capacity is to be calculated, along with associated safety standards, and crowd management.
- Mandate regular safety audits and capacity assessments for all stadiums hosting large events.
- Introduce a national authority responsible for accrediting stadiums, reviewing capacity assessments, and enforcing compliance.
- Provide financial assistance or grants to stadiums for infrastructure upgrades, safety systems, and staff training.

2. The importance of conducting risk assessments

Conducting risk assessments – both general and for event specific – is crucial. These have impact on developing and maintaining a safe environment for all. Creating a safe environment at any event, especially in large venues like stadiums, requires meticulous planning, vigilance, and proactive management. In essence, it is about the management of risk.

More specifically, managing risk is one of the fundamental means by which stadium management and/or event organisers can meet their responsibility to achieve a reasonable degree of safety for *all* people present at an event.

Central to this process is the essential practice of conducting risk assessments. These assessments serve as foundational tools that enable organisers and safety teams to identify potential hazards, evaluate their risks, and implement appropriate measures to mitigate danger.

Risk assessments generally fall into one of the following categories:

1. **Standard, or generic risk assessments:** These are conducted to consider potential incidents, hazards or threats when the venue is in standard operational mode. This type of risk assessment is typically drawn up before the start of a season at venues which stage the same sport or type of event on a regular basis.
2. **Event specific risk assessments:** These are conducted to consider potential incidents, hazards or threats arising from the specific event – no two events are identical. They may attract a slightly different demographic or take place at a different time of the day, or year, or in different circumstances or in different weather conditions. Therefore, an event specific risk assessment is critical.
3. **Dynamic or ongoing risk assessments:** These consider incidents or hazards that emerge, or threats that are identified, during the event planning cycle.
4. **Statutory risk assessments:** These are conducted as required under local or national legislation, for example in relation to health and safety or fire safety.
5. **Risk assessments carried out by external agencies:** Events are often graded or categorised by external agencies or emergency services, such as the police, in order to ascertain their own resourcing levels. Third party contractors

such as broadcasters and caterers should also provide their own risk assessments.

Owing to the diverse scale and complexity of venues, and the diverse characteristics of events, it is not possible to provide a comprehensive list of all the incidents, hazards and threats that may need to be considered when conducting risk assessments. The majority will, however, fall under the following headings:

- a. **Venue:** including structures, physical environment and overlay.
- b. **Event:** including its specific characteristics and hazards arising from the activity.
- c. **People:** including the anticipated audience and staffing issues.
- d. **Systems and services:** including power supplies, communications and digital networks.
- e. **Security:** including threat levels, accreditation procedures, and crime and disorder.
- f. **Fire:** including ignition sources, fuel storage, exit routes, means of escape.
- g. **Weather:** including extremes of temperature, wind and the potential this has on the migration of spectators.

Guidelines

Guidelines for venue operators and/or event organisers

- Implement processes for developing general risk assessments of all elements of the stadium's safety processes and identify and implement any mitigating factors to reduce known risks.
- In implementing risk assessment processes, ensure there is involvement from a range of departments involved in the venue, including ticketing, facilities management and marketing.
- For each event, implement event specific risk assessments, which analyse factors such as expected attendance, event type, activities planned, environmental conditions, and special requirements. For example, risk assess the level of searching needed for the expected demographic for the event, and identify mitigating actions, such as the use of wands to reduce use of body search and increase speed of entry.
- Develop contingency plans for each reasonably foreseeable high-level risk that might impact on the overall delivery of a safe event. This identifies what actions need to be taken if an incident escalates to become critical, or is immediately critical.

Guidelines for local authorities

- Develop clear procedures for conducting regular reviews of risk assessments of the stadium, including structural integrity, safety systems, emergency exits, fire safety, and crowd management.
- Conduct training sessions for staff as part of emergency preparedness processes. This includes organising drills to simulate emergency scenarios in order to test the contingency plans.

- As part of general risk assessments, consider implementing requirements for venues to consider promoting a culture of environmental responsibility and sustainability as part of risk assessments, considering issues such as energy consumption, water usage, sustainable transport and eco-friendly messaging and merchandise.

Guidelines for regional authorities

- Facilitate training and capacity building through regional training events and programmes for venue managers, safety officers, and event planners on conducting comprehensive risk assessments.
- Create regional guidelines, using collaboration with local authorities and safety experts to develop standardised protocols for risk assessments, ensuring these procedures align with national safety regulations and best practices.
- Monitor and audit compliance through periodic regional audits to verify that local venues are performing regular risk assessments and implementing recommended measures.

Guidelines for national authorities

- Consider establishing a central regulatory framework via national legislation and standards mandating risk assessments for all stadiums and large venues. This could include a definition of the minimum requirements for both general and event-specific assessments.
- Consider creating an oversight institution responsible for regulating, monitoring, and enforcing compliance (where possible at national level).
- Provide funding and support initiatives, offering grants or subsidies to assist venues in conducting comprehensive risk assessments and infrastructure improvements.
- Support research initiatives to develop innovative risk mitigation strategies and assess emerging threats.
- Collate data from venues to identify common risks or emerging hazards and use this information to refine regional safety policies and share best practices.

3. Zone Ex and its impact on the safety, security and service for spectators

No venue or event exists in isolation. Zone Ex – is defined as those areas, either in the public domain or under private ownership, considered to be integral to the circulation and safe management of people both arriving at the venue and dispersing afterwards – has a critical impact on the safety, security and service for spectators. Working in partnership with others involved in the ownership and safe management of these areas is crucial to ensuring the safe ingress and egress of spectators.

This area, where spectators arrive, exit, and navigate before and after events, plays a pivotal role in shaping the safety, security, and overall experience for every attendee. It is the gateway to our venues and the first and last impression spectators have of our commitment to their safety, security and comfort. Its design, management, and

coordination directly impact crowd flow, emergency response times, and the ability to deliver a seamless experience.

The importance of Zone Ex cannot be overstated. Inadequate planning can lead to congestion, delays, and even dangerous overcrowding - risks that can escalate into injuries or compromise safety during emergencies. Conversely, a well-organised Zone Ex enhances crowd management, reduces stress and frustration, and ensures quick, safe ingress and egress. It also understands any particular needs of different user groups in this space.

Creating such a secure environment requires a concerted effort - working in partnership with local authorities, law enforcement, transport providers, emergency services, and the community.

Effective partnership planning includes coordinating traffic management strategies, deploying sufficient security personnel, implementing clear signage, and establishing contingency plans for incidents or unexpected surges in crowd movement. It also involves engaging with public transport agencies to facilitate safe, efficient travel to and from the venue, avoiding congestion and delays.

Guidelines

Every venue and Zone Ex is different. However, the following recommendations and guidelines are offered to aid in the development of the understanding and management of this critical area.

Guidelines for venue operators and/or event organisers

- Each venue should conduct a Zone Ex assessment to map the immediate surroundings of the stadium, including roads, parking, public transport access points and pedestrian routes. This process can help identify potential hazards and risks, such as congestion points, bottlenecks or high-risk areas for crowding, violence or accidents.
- Develop a Zone Ex Co-ordination Plan, which outlines the safety, security and service arrangements within that zone, ensuring they are integrated, co-ordinated and agreed by all key stakeholders prior to the event.
- Implement event day plans, including communications approaches, such as signage to communicate directions and ingress/egress routes; staffing processes, deploying trained and briefed staff and volunteers at strategic points for crowd management; co-ordinating with the police and conducting continuous monitoring to manage crowd flow and identify issues in real time. Plans should ensure that all communication approaches are accessible to the range of people travelling to the stadium.

Guidelines for local authorities

- Ensure sufficient collaboration is in place between the venue, local authorities and stakeholders. Once an assessment has been completed, use this to identify those involved in the management and ownership of areas within Zone

Ex. This will include the local authority and emergency services, but also transport providers, retailers, pubs/bars and local residents.

- Develop emergency preparedness exercises to test issues and responses within the Zone Ex area, bringing together multiple stakeholders.

Guidelines for regional authorities

- Standardise Zone Ex management protocols, developing regional guidelines and identifying best practices which can be shared with venues locally.
- Develop regional partnership networks, involving local authorities, emergency services, transport agencies, and stadium management in order to facilitate Zone Ex partnership working. These can also assist in the development of joint working and information sharing.
- Collate and analyse regional data on crowd movements, traffic flow, incident reports, etc, in order to continually refine Zone Ex management strategies.
- Develop regional training to help increase the understanding of Zone Ex and its impact on the safety, security and service of spectators.

Guidelines for national authorities

- Consider establishing a national framework and standards around Zone Ex. This could include developing legislation and standards for managing Zone Ex around all large venues, ensuring consistency and accountability; or mandating risk assessments, emergency plans, and partnership working protocols.
- Promote best practices and innovation by publishing national guidelines outlining effective Zone Ex management, crowd control, and partnership coordination, or supporting research into emerging technologies such as AI-based crowd monitoring, mobile apps for real-time info, and automated traffic systems.
- Consider national policy support, such as mandatory planning, coordination, and post-event review for all large events with significant spectator flow or providing funding or grants for infrastructure upgrades and technology adoption at venues.

4. Event personnel positive engagement with spectators

There must be an expectation for all event personnel is to engage with spectators in a positive way: this approach can lead to positive behaviours and reduce tensions.

The success of any event relies heavily on the interactions between event personnel and spectators. These shape the overall experience, influence behaviour, and determine the environment's safety and enjoyment.

As the first line of contact, event personnel carry a responsibility to engage with spectators in a manner that is respectful, approachable, and positive. Setting clear expectations for how staff interact with attendees not only improves the immediate experience but also fosters a culture of positive behaviour among spectators.

Event personnel – whether it's stewards, security personnel, police, volunteers, service staff or others – serve as authority figures and role models for spectators. When they promote positive behaviours, such as encouraging respectful cheering, ensuring safety rules are followed, and maintaining a friendly atmosphere, they influence spectators to behave similarly.

Conversely, if event personnel act or respond aggressively or dismissively, it might lead to increased tension or negative behaviours among spectators.

In essence, their behaviour and communication can shape the crowd's conduct through social influence, promoting a safe, secure and welcoming environment for everyone. At the core of positive engagement is respect. All spectators, regardless of their background, age, or behaviour, deserve to be treated with dignity and courtesy.

Event staff should be trained to provide information calmly, accurately, and kindly. When spectators receive clear directions and accurate information, confusion and frustration diminish, reducing the likelihood of disruptive behaviours. Active listening is equally important: when staff genuinely hear and acknowledge spectator concerns, they demonstrate empathy and foster a sense of understanding. This two-way communication encourages cooperation and positive interactions.

Positive engagement by event personnel is vital to fostering a respectful, safe, and enjoyable environment. By consistently demonstrating respect, proactively assisting spectators, and communicating effectively, staff can influence behaviours positively, leading to better experiences for everyone involved.

Guidelines

Guidelines for venue operators and/or event organisers

- Conduct regular, mandatory training sessions focusing on customer service, effective communication, respectful communications, cultural sensitivity, and conflict resolution. These should incorporate role-playing scenarios to practice positive engagement. In addition, pre-event briefings should be used to reinforce the importance of a positive attitude and engagement with spectators.
- Consider the event personnel structure and numbers used in a venue and for a specific event, for example implementing a layered presence of different staff – volunteers, stewards, security personnel and police – to create a sense of structure, without intimidation.
- Ensure safety and security staff and volunteers are easily identifiable from other staff/the general public, to enable spectators to quickly identify those able to assist them.
- Promote specific reception measures aimed at underrepresented groups, such as women, children, the elderly, persons with visible and non-visible disabilities, migrants and refugees, ensuring that there are dedicated, clearly identified reception points offering personalised assistance upon arrival at the venue. (For

example, where applicable, visits by groups from local institutions may be scheduled).

Guidelines for local authorities

- Ensure a sufficient number of volunteers/stewards are used for different roles as required for the expected demographic, and make sure they are clearly identified and easy to spot in a crowd. Utilise those who can speak the language of the teams and clearly identify this. For example, during ingress, make sure that sufficient staff are available to help with automatic scanning of digital tickets.
- Consider the role of the police and the use of 'dialogue police' that are more welcoming and not intimidating.

Guidelines for regional authorities

- Implement regional support networks, such as regional workshops for event personnel from multiple local venues to promote consistency in engagement approaches. This could help share success stories and effective strategies region-wide.
- Establish regional support teams or coordinators to assist local venues in implementing expectations. This could facilitate communication channels among venues for shared learning.
- Consider implementing financial or other incentives to reward venues that demonstrate exemplary inclusion practices, through programmes or rankings that assess the application of positive communication strategies, non-confrontational crowd management and conflict mediation techniques, tailored to different audience profiles, with a special focus on under-represented groups.

Guidelines for national authorities

- Consider implementing national standards and policies around event personnel and engagement expectations. These could be embedded into licensing, accreditation, and compliance requirements.
- Create a national training and/or certification programme for event personnel focused on positive engagement practices.
- Invest in research to identify the most effective engagement strategies and approaches and use these findings to inform policy revisions and best practice guidelines.
- Develop nationwide campaigns advocating for respectful engagement at stadiums.

5. Understanding and addressing the needs for all

Understanding and addressing the needs for all is essential for ensuring accessible facilities and for preventing discriminatory and offensive behaviour. Creating inclusive and welcoming environments at events is essential to guarantee that everyone can participate fully and enjoy their experience. This requires a comprehensive understanding of diverse needs and a proactive approach to addressing them.

Ensuring accessible facilities and preventing discriminatory and offensive behaviour are fundamental components of creating an inclusive environment that respects and values all individuals.

Accessibility is not merely a legal obligation but a moral and social imperative. It ensures that people with disabilities (visible and non-visible), the elderly, families with young children, and persons with mobility or sensory challenges can access facilities comfortably and safely. Accessible facilities include ramps, elevators, designated parking spaces, accessible restrooms, clear signage, and designated seating areas. These accommodations enable individuals to participate fully without fear of exclusion or difficulty. By providing an enabling environment with accessible facilities, event organisers foster an environment where all spectators feel valued and supported, encouraging a sense of belonging and community.

To effectively address accessibility, it is essential to understand the diverse needs of attendees. This includes recognising physical, sensory, cognitive, and linguistic differences. Many disabilities are not visible, and creating an inclusive environment must understand, recognise and cater for the broad range of needs of those who may use a stadium. Conducting needs assessments, consulting with accessibility and disability organisations, and involving community members in planning are valuable strategies. Training staff to recognise and assist individuals with specific needs ensures that everyone receives appropriate support and guidance.

Furthermore, providing information in multiple formats, such as braille, large print, or audio, helps accommodate those with sensory impairments. Multilingual signage and staff capable of communicating in different languages also promote inclusivity for non-native speakers. Understanding that needs vary and contextualising solutions accordingly is key to creating an accessible environment.

Accessibility alone is not sufficient. Fostering an environment free of discrimination and offensive behaviour is equally crucial. Discriminatory acts, such as racial, gender-based, or religious discrimination, prevent individuals from feeling safe and welcomed. Offensive behaviours, including harassment, derogatory language, and microaggressions, undermine the dignity of attendees and can lead to conflicts and unsafe situations.

Preventing such behaviour requires a clear policy that explicitly condemns discrimination and offensive conduct. Staff and volunteers should be trained to recognise, address, and escalate incidents promptly and effectively. Promoting a culture of respect begins with leadership setting a positive example. Public messaging, signage, and announcements emphasising the importance of inclusivity reinforce these values.

Additionally, creating a zero-tolerance environment encourages spectators to behave responsibly. Providing accessible channels for reporting discriminatory or offensive

behaviour ensures that issues are addressed swiftly, making the environment safer and more welcoming for all.

Addressing the diverse needs of all attendees through accessible facilities and the prevention of discriminatory and offensive behaviour is fundamental to creating inclusive, respectful, and safe environments at events. Accessibility ensures everyone can participate fully, while proactive measures against discrimination foster a culture where everyone feels valued and respected. By prioritising these principles, event organisers not only comply with legal and ethical standards but also build a community where diversity is celebrated, and everyone has the opportunity to enjoy their shared experiences. Ultimately, understanding and addressing diverse needs enriches the event experience for all and strengthens the social fabric of our communities.

Guidelines

Guidelines for venue operators and/or event organisers

- Implement and adopt a holistic model of accessibility, which covers physical, sensory, cognitive and communication needs to create a welcoming and accessible venue for all.
- Conduct a needs assessment to gather insights on accessibility requirements and experiences with offensive behaviours. This should include engaging with local communities, including persons with disabilities, minority groups, and other marginalised populations, to understand their specific needs.
- Create policies and procedures that emphasise the importance of accessibility, inclusivity, and zero tolerance for discrimination. These must be communicated clearly.
- Conduct an accessibility audit of existing facilities regularly to identify barriers and areas for improvement. This could include installing ramps, accessible toilets, clear signage, hearing loops, and other accommodations as needed. In addition, ensure signage uses clear symbols² and multiple languages where appropriate. As part of this, consider how different groups use facilities, for example if food trucks are used, do they have a low height service point that can be accessed by wheelchair users.
- Consider the user needs for specific groups, particularly those with accessibility requirements. This should include through ticketing arrangements, maps on tickets/apps for accessible facilities and pre-event information around accessibility. In addition, if pre-event entertainment is being offered, careful consideration should be made to ensure that specific groups are not excluded from this. For example, not adapted for users with different physical or cognitive abilities.
- Linked to the above, consider how bag searching and safety and security policies impact spectators who require medical equipment and devices to be brought with them when attending a stadium. Work with individuals and representative groups to ensure that their needs are considered, whilst at the

² For colour blind persons or persons with vision impairment.

same time not compromising safety and security. A standard list of medical equipment and devices, accompanied by a medical report, that spectators are authorised to be brought to a stadium should be agreed upon by sports authorities, if possible applicable at European and international level.

- Ensure there is sufficient toilet provision for the expected demographic. This may mean extra female toilet provision, more unisex provision or 'flipping' male toilets to be female toilets. This includes family and accessible toilet consideration and provision. This should also apply to fan zones and other areas where people will congregate in the host city and on the journey to the stadium.
- Implement internal training processes, particularly for all public facing roles, on the importance of respecting diversity, avoiding assumptions, and supporting individuals with specific needs, along with inclusivity, cultural sensitivity, and recognising unconscious biases.
- Ensure there is trained, dedicated and identifiable staff to provide real-time assistance during events.
- Create an inclusive environment such as using inclusive language in all communications, signage, and announcements, celebrating diversity through campaigns, social media, and culturally respectful programming and promoting respectful behaviour and shared community values among spectators. Enhance this further by offering accessible communication in multiple formats (such as braille, large print, sign language videos and accessible digital platforms).
- Encourage clubs to appoint a Disability Access Officer (DAO), in accordance with UEFA guidance, who is responsible for improving access for disabled people (on both matchdays and non-matchdays) and ensuring continued progress in this critical area.

Guidelines for local authorities

- Monitor the completion and implementation of accessibility audits at venues to ensure that these are being conducted.
- Provide regular staff training on disability awareness, cultural competence, diversity, and anti-discrimination practices. Use this training to enable staff to recognise and address offensive behaviour promptly and effectively.
- Ensure that accessibility audits include areas outside as well as inside the stadium perimeter.
- Set up accessible reporting channels that are easy to use - and inclusive of all users of the stadium - for people to report problematic behaviour, such as an anonymous reporting line/website/text number. Consider what language these should be in for international fixtures. As part of this, ensure there are effective protocols in place to respond swiftly to incidents of discrimination or offensive behaviour, implementing appropriate sanctions such as ejection or bans.

Guidelines for regional authorities

- Develop regional frameworks and networks to coordinate among local authorities, sports clubs, community organisations, and private sector partners

to develop region-wide standards for accessibility and behaviour. Use these to share best practices and resources across local areas.

- Establish regional training workshops and sessions for local organisations, stadiums, and event staff on inclusive practices, cultural sensitivity, and anti-discrimination measures. This should include all parties involved, namely those with lived experience of discrimination.
- Create regional forums to bring together local authorities, venues and user groups to exchange good practices.
- Consider allocating regional funding to support infrastructure upgrades and training efforts, particularly supporting smaller venues and organisations in making necessary accessibility modifications.
- Collect regional data on incidents of discrimination and barriers faced by attendees and use this to inform policy updates and targeted interventions.

Guidelines for national authorities

- Consider developing comprehensive national standards and legislation for accessibility and inclusion, aligning with international best practices. This should include how to enforce anti-discrimination laws applicable at all levels of event organisation.
- Consider the establishment of funding for infrastructure upgrades and assistive technology innovation to support the implementation of national standards and legislation.
- Consider establishing mandatory training programs for stadium management, staff, and security personnel nationwide.
- Launch nationwide campaigns highlighting the importance of inclusivity and respect, utilising media, social media, and influential figures to promote positive behaviours and attitudes.
- Establish a national oversight body to monitor compliance, investigate incidents, and enforce regulations. This could include the introduction of measurable benchmarks, such as the number of venues that offer sensory-friendly zones or events publishing accessible information materials in advance.
- Consider implementing a national programme to encourage and support projects that promote the participation of under-represented groups in sporting events, through concrete accessibility measures, specialised staff training and the implementation of anti-discrimination policies. This programme could provide specific funding, set targets and impact indicators, and promote the sharing of good practices.

6. Communication and engagement throughout the spectator journey

The communication and engagement throughout the spectator journey is essential. This includes getting to know spectators, and the way they engage with the stadium, in order to make their interaction smooth. Communication and engagement are fundamental components of creating a memorable and seamless spectator

experience in stadiums and large-scale event venues. Understanding the entire spectator journey – from initial awareness and ticket purchase to in-stadium experience and post-event interactions – is essential for optimising engagement and ensuring satisfaction.

As spectators increasingly expect personalised, convenient, and immersive experiences, seamless communication and targeted engagement strategies become vital. These efforts not only influence attendance and loyalty but also foster a positive reputation that attracts new spectators.

A key initial step in enhancing the spectator journey is understanding who the spectators are. Gathering detailed insights into their preferences, demographics, interests, and behaviours enables venues to personalise communication effectively. Techniques such as surveys, social media interaction, and data analytics help create detailed spectator profiles. Organised supporter groups, Supporter Liaison Officers (SLOs) and Disability Access Officers (DAO) have valuable insights into fan groups and particular needs. By knowing their expectations, stadiums can tailor their offerings accordingly.

Clear, timely, and relevant communication is essential at every stage of the journey. Before an event, providing comprehensive information through multiple channels – email, social media, mobile apps – helps build anticipation and reduces confusion. For example, sharing details about parking options, entry procedures, and event schedules sets the stage for a smooth experience.

During the event, real-time communication via digital signage, apps, or announcements keeps spectators informed about delays, activities, or safety instructions. Post-event communication extends the engagement by soliciting feedback and maintaining contact through loyalty programs or exclusive content, thus nurturing ongoing relationships.

The ultimate goal of communication and engagement is to make every interaction as smooth as possible. Leveraging data to anticipate needs - such as identifying peak times and deploying additional staff - can prevent bottlenecks and frustrations. A well-coordinated communication system that provides real-time alerts and updates helps spectators navigate seamlessly through the stadium environment.

Effective communication and engagement are cornerstones of the modern spectator journey. By understanding spectators' needs, delivering timely and relevant information, and creating interactive experiences, stadiums and event organisers can facilitate smoother interactions and foster loyalty.

Guidelines

Guidelines for venue operators and/or event organisers

- Conduct an audience profile review of the spectator journey and data collection by conducting surveys and gather feedback from local spectators to understand their preferences, needs, and behavioural patterns. Use ticketing data, social media, and direct interaction to get insights into audience demographics and expectations.
- Embed clear and consistent communication through the spectator journey, providing pre-event information through multiple channels: websites, social media, emails and messaging, including directions, parking, access points, and protocols.
- Use a variety of communication channels to transmit important information before, during and after the match, using both digital and traditional methods of communication. This could include interactive digital content, such as videos, tutorials, and virtual tours of the venue, explaining entry procedures, location of services, and safety rules, tailored to different audience profiles (families, people with reduced mobility, migrants, the elderly, etc.), in order to reduce questions on the day of the event and improve the fluidity of the experience. For example, having a map of the venue available on an app, as well as large area maps available for fans around the stadium, highlighting where they are.
- Ensure effective signage is in place both inside and outside the stadium. This should be clear, accessible, visible, and multilingual where necessary.
- Use public address (PA) systems and digital screens to communicate important information and updates during the event.
- Implement user-friendly apps or mobile platforms for ticketing, entry, and real-time updates, providing digital maps, live updates about queues, and other relevant information to keep spectators informed.
- Set up easy-to-access feedback mechanisms, such as feedback forms, emails, apps, or on-site stations, for spectators to share their experience. Use this feedback for continuous improvement.
- Given the changes in climate and the more extreme weather patterns being seen across Europe and globally, ensure that effective planning is in place to address the needs of spectators based on the weather conditions, and ensure where extreme weather is expected, any requirements of fans are communicated in advance – for example, whether full water bottles are to be allowed to be taken into the stadia in hot weather, or have access to free drinking water.

Guidelines for local authorities

- Monitor the implementation of communication processes and the impact this has on service levels and behaviour of spectators locally.
- Implement a system to monitor feedback from spectators and identify and review how these are addressed.

Guidelines for regional authorities

- Consider the physical spectator journey to the stadium and how this can be made as simple and smooth as possible, for example during major tournaments, offering free transportation.
- Develop regional guidelines for consistent messaging and engagement practices, sharing best practices and success stories among local venues to foster a common understanding.
- Collect and analyse data on spectator interactions region-wide, and use these insights to tailor communication approaches and improve overall event experience.
- Facilitate the deployment of advanced ticketing and communication systems, encouraging the use of regional mobile apps that provide seamless access to event information.
- Promote regional coordination between transport operators, local authorities and event organisers in order to provide fans with integrated, real-time information on mobility, access and waiting times, facilitating a seamless, uninterrupted experience from the moment they leave home until their return.

Guidelines for national authorities

- Develop overarching strategies, standards, and policies to guide communication and engagement at all venues nationwide. These should ensure alignment with legal, cultural, and technological standards.
- Collect comprehensive data on spectator behaviour, preferences, and engagement outcomes across the country. Use these research findings to refine policies and develop tailored communication strategies.
- Create and promote a unified national digital platform that centralises information on sporting events, transport, ticketing and security, ensuring consistent, real-time communication.

Part 2 – Specific safety and service considerations

1. Overview

This section considers safety and service in the four specific areas:

- A. Changing spectator demographics at stadiums, including gender-balance, diversity and non-discrimination (girls, women, children, families, elderly people, minority groups, migrants and refugees);
- B. Safety and service specificities of women's sports competitions;
- C. Accessibility and inclusivity at stadiums, particularly for spectators with disabilities (covering both visible and non-visible disabilities); and
- D. Public health issues at sports events.

The guidelines outlined in each section are not exhaustive. However, they provide a broad overview of points to consider and could be applied based on local circumstances.

2. Safety and service considerations for changing spectator demographics at stadiums

Traditionally, stadiums – especially football stadiums – were predominantly attended by men. The experience was somewhat uniform, with less emphasis on inclusivity or accessibility. Safety measures focused mainly on crowd control and emergency response. The atmosphere reflected a culture where women, children, and minority groups were underrepresented or felt unwelcome.

In recent decades, the landscape of sports spectatorship has shifted considerably. There has been a notable increase in the participation of women, families, and young people in attending football matches. Cultural diversity has also grown, with more spectators from varied ethnic backgrounds attending games worldwide due to globalisation and increased inclusivity initiatives. Additionally, awareness around disability rights has led to better accessibility features at many venues. Technological advancements and changes in social attitudes have fostered environments where a wider spectrum of society feels comfortable and encouraged to attend.

The evolving demographics of sports spectators present both opportunities and challenges for stadium management. Increasing diversity in age, gender, cultural background, physical ability, and technological familiarity necessitates adaptive safety protocols and enhanced service provisions.

While significant progress has been made, there is still room to broaden participation further. Stadiums can play a proactive role by launching targeted outreach campaigns to underrepresented groups, such as women and minority communities, showcasing the inclusive aspects of attending matches. Hosting family-friendly events and providing affordable ticket options can encourage attendance among younger audiences and lower-income groups. Creating a safer, more welcoming environment - free from discrimination, harassment, or intimidation - is crucial. Training staff in inclusivity and zero-tolerance policies against misconduct will help make everyone feel safe and respected.

A significant change in the demographics of a sports event – by having more women, children, youngsters, elderly people, persons with disabilities, persons with lower income, migrants and refugees attending – will positively impact the behaviour of the other spectators: it contributes to decrease tensions and conflicts within and between rival violent and extremist supporter groups, and reduces their feeling of ownership/monopoly of the tribunes, thus creating a safer, more secure and more welcoming environment inside and outside of the sports venue.

To encourage a wider range of demographics to attend sport events, stadiums must continue to innovate, creating inclusive infrastructures, offering diverse services, engaging communities, and fostering a culture of respect and safety. Doing so not only enhances the experience for all spectators but also helps preserve the spirit of sport as a unifying and accessible social activity.

Guidelines

Guidelines for venue operators and/or event organisers

- Consider the use of targeted marketing and communication channels to reach diverse audiences and foster a welcoming environment, potentially through community engagement initiatives.
- Implement flexible ticketing options that reflect the demographic diversity and enhance digital access and reduce barriers for different user groups.
- Ensure there are sufficient toilet and other sanitation/hygiene facilities available, evenly distributed throughout the venue.
- Consider the development of accessible facilities such as gender-neutral restrooms, family-friendly amenities, and mobility access points that cater to local demographic profiles.
- Provide training to staff on cultural sensitivity, non-discrimination, and disability awareness.
- Regularly gather feedback from different demographic groups to identify areas for improvement. Monitor safety incidents and service satisfaction to adapt strategies dynamically.

Guidelines for local authorities

- Gather feedback from local groups and spectators from different demographics to identify what can be done to encourage wider attendance at sports events and understand the barriers to inclusion.
- Develop initiatives aimed to increase participation among a wide range of demographics and implement visible anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies for all spectators.
- Create partnerships with local entities to promote the participation of underrepresented groups, offering special access and reception conditions tailored to their needs.

Guidelines for regional authorities

- Develop regional standards for inclusive stadiums, emphasising gender-sensitive designs, safety, and accessibility.
- Advocate for regional funding programs dedicated to improving inclusivity in sports venues.
- Organise regional training programmes and networks on cultural competence and anti-discrimination practices, allowing best practice to be shared amongst venues.

Guidelines for national authorities

- Develop national standards and guidelines for inclusive sports infrastructure, programming, and staffing.
- Develop national awareness and education campaigns promoting diversity, non-discrimination, and respect across all stadiums.
- Develop nationwide indicators and benchmarks to measure progress on inclusivity goals.

- Establish a national certification programme for inclusive sports venues, publicly recognising those that meet high standards of accessibility, diversity, and good safety practices, encouraging others to adopt similar measures.

3. Safety and service specificities for spectators of women's sports competitions

The landscape of women's sports has grown significantly in recent decades, serving as platforms for promoting gender equality, empowering female athletes, and inspiring wider participation.

While much emphasis is often placed on athletes' safety and the quality of sporting events, the safety and experience of spectators – particularly women – are equally vital in shaping a welcoming, inclusive environment. Addressing the unique safety concerns and service needs of women spectators is essential for fostering confidence, encouraging attendance, and promoting positive attitudes toward women's sports.

Many safety protocols for women's sports align with general standards. However, women's sports also pose specific challenges related to accommodation needs, cultural sensitivities, and gender-based violence and harassment. Properly addressing these factors enhances participation, performance, and long-term engagement while ensuring the dignity and rights of women are upheld in all sporting contexts.

The observation visit carried out during UEFA Women's EURO 2025 in Switzerland, supported by UEFA, provided hands-on experience of good practices and lessons learned, thus enriching the content of these Guidelines. A central concern is around infrastructural deficits. Venues are designed traditionally for men, and with a 'one size fits all' approach. This neglects the needs of women and families, which can lead to discomfort and logistical challenges for women attending matches with young children or infants, discouraging their participation as spectators³.

Women spectators can also face specific safety challenges that require targeted strategies. One concern is harassment and gender-based violence. Large crowds, poor crowd control, and inadequate supervision can lead to incidents of verbal abuse, inappropriate contact, stalking, or even physical assault. Such experiences discourage women from attending future events and erode a culture of safety and respect.

These concerns should also be extended to all the spectator journey, namely the public transport provided to and from the sports venue. Public transport can be an area where women are consistently made to feel uncomfortable or their safety jeopardised. In order to increase women and girls' participation at sporting events, they must feel safe travelling to and from such events. Dialogue between event organisers and public service providers should be encouraged to meet the mobility needs of this specific group.

³ Statistically, more children attend sports events when they are accompanied by women. Emphasis needs also to be on women themselves attending as spectators.

Guidelines

Guidelines for venue operators and/or event organisers

- Ensure there are sufficiently trained safety personnel, including a sufficient number of female stewards, particularly in areas such as ingress points.
- Create simple and discreet reporting channels, accessible via mobile app, SMS or physical points on the premises, so that spectators can immediately report situations of harassment or inappropriate behaviour, ensuring a rapid response from safety personnel.
- Conduct pre-event briefing for staff on gender sensitivity, harassment prevention, and incident response.
- Consider creating designated zones or entrances to manage crowds effectively and implement efficient entry and exit protocols that reduce congestion and enhance safety.
- Customise emergency plans considering the specific demographics, ensuring inclusivity and sensitivity.

Guidelines for local authorities

- Consider how infrastructure issues can be addressed to support women's sport and spectators, such as the need to modify toilet provision depending on the expected demographic to an event.
- Implement effective crowd control measures to avoid overcrowding and physical jostling.
- Implement clear and firm policies against sexism, harassment, and discrimination.
- Have clarity on bag and security policies for families and those attending with young children, which are sufficiently communicated with spectators ahead of the event, outlining what can and cannot be brought into the venue⁴.
- Collect feedback from spectators at women's sports and identify and address any concerns or suggestions raised.

Guidelines for regional authorities

- Develop regional standards aligned with national policies, focusing on gender-sensitive safety and service provisions.
- Organise region-wide training programmes focused on gender sensitivity, harassment prevention, and incident response.
- Establish systems for collating feedback and best practice on a regional level.

Guidelines for national authorities

- Develop and enforce laws and policies promoting gender equality, harassment prevention, and safe environments in all sports events.
- Allocate resources for upgrading infrastructure to meet safety standards across venues nationwide.

⁴ With the possibility to provide bag drop facilities free of charge outside the venue.

- Use data-driven insights to update policies, allocate funds, and develop targeted interventions, along with using and supporting research on women's safety in sports environment.
- Use targeted messaging celebrating women's sports to enhance pride and engagement and promote positive representation of women athletes and inclusive narratives.
- Create a standardised national protocol for the prevention of and response to incidents of harassment and gender-based violence at sporting events, ensuring mandatory training for all personnel involved in the sports event.

4. Accessibility (persons with visible and non-visible disabilities) at sports venues

Accessibility encompasses not only physical modifications but also sensory, cognitive, and communication considerations that ensure full participation for individuals with both visible and non-visible disabilities.

Visible disabilities, such as mobility impairments requiring wheelchair access or assistive walking devices, are immediately recognisable. Addressing these needs typically involves infrastructure modifications like ramps, elevators, and accessible seating arrangements. Conversely, non-visible disabilities – such as sensory processing disorders, mental health conditions, intellectual disabilities, or chronic illnesses – are less apparent but equally impactful. Such persons can be affected by the way in which the environment is designed and perceive, process, and respond to this environment, requiring tailored accommodations that often go beyond physical infrastructure.

Fundamental to inclusive design is ensuring physical access throughout the venue. Entrances should feature ramps, automatic doors, and wide pathways to accommodate wheelchairs and mobility aids. Seating should include designated areas that offer clear sightlines and sufficient space for assistive devices. Restrooms must be accessible, equipped with handrails and appropriate fixtures, and signage should be clear, high-contrast, and tactile for easy identification. Efforts to map out unobstructed routes and provide tactile indicators benefit persons with visual impairments.

Sport venues must also cater to individuals with sensory sensitivities. Loud noises, flashing lights, or crowded environments can be overwhelming. Whilst this is to be expected, it should not be a barrier for people to attend. The creation of sensory-friendly zones with controlled lighting and sound levels offers a refuge and removes this impediment from all people attending and enjoying an event. Providing visual and tactile communication aids, such as sign language interpreters, captioning, braille signage, and visual schedules, ensures effective communication. For visitors with cognitive or learning disabilities, clear wayfinding, simple instructions, and supportive staff interactions foster a welcoming environment.

Accessible communication extends beyond physical facilities. Event information should be available in multiple formats, including large print, audio, sign language

videos, and accessible websites or apps. Providing advance notice of available accommodations allows individuals to plan their visit confidently. Real-time assistance during events, through signage updates or digital notifications, helps attendees stay informed and engaged.

Creating accessible sport venues is more than fulfilling legal obligations; it is a moral imperative rooted in principles of human rights and social justice. True inclusivity involves thoughtful planning and ongoing commitment to removing barriers that hinder participation. By embracing physical modifications, sensory and cognitive accommodations, staff training, assistive technologies, and accessible communication, sport venues can become spaces where everyone, regardless of disability – visible or not – can enjoy the thrill of the game, connect with their communities, and celebrate the universal spirit of sport.

Guidelines

Guidelines for venue operators and/or event organisers

- Conduct an accessibility audit to evaluate how accessible the venue is, from a physical and sensory and cognitive accessibility point of view. Work with local accessibility groups and experts to review the audit and make adjustments to ensure the venue is fully accessible.
- Ensure all communications and information – whether pre, during or post-event – are available in accessible formats. This should include having specific accessibility information, such as maps of the venue outlining accessible routes, and areas of accessible toilets and other facilities.
- Implement inclusive facilities and services, for example creating quiet zones or sensory-friendly areas for spectators with sensory sensitivities and inclusive facilities with accessible features and privacy considerations.
- Consider how people who require medical equipment and resources to be brought with them when attending a stadium may be negatively impacted by searching safety and security arrangements, and work with them to identify how this can be properly addressed without negatively impacting the service requirements for the spectator and the safety and security arrangements for the venue. A standard list of medical equipment and devices, accompanied by a medical report, that spectators are authorised to be brought to a stadium should be agreed upon with the sports authorities and communicated to spectators prior to the event.
- Provide information about accessibility features well in advance via website, tickets, and at the venue and use multiple communication methods (visual, auditory, digital) to reach diverse needs.
- Encourage clubs to appoint a Disability Access Officer (DAO), who is responsible for improving access for persons with disabilities (both on matchdays and non-matchdays) and ensuring continued progress in this critical area.

Guidelines for local authorities

- Put in place systems to monitor accessibility audits conducted in venues and to review how recommendations found in these are implemented.
- Ensure there are identifiable staff available to support disabled supporters, who are fully trained and to assist.
- Conduct regular training with all event personnel (including stewards, security personnel, facilities staff and refreshment servers) in relation to disability sensitivity, including respectful interactions and understanding visible and non-visible disabilities.
- Regularly review accessibility processes, gathering feedback from spectators on what improvements could be made to support a safer, more secure and welcoming environment for all.

Guidelines for regional authorities

- Develop regional standards, aligned with any national disability and accessibility legislation, particularly focusing on the need to conduct accessibility audits.
- Review the findings of accessibility audits and implementation of recommendations on a regional basis, providing funding or grants to support renovations if appropriate.
- Implement regional forums for both venue operators and users in order to gather feedback and promote best practice.

Guidelines for national authorities

- Enforce laws mandating accessible facilities at all public sports venues and develop national standards for accessibility.
- Allocate funding for infrastructure upgrades and innovation in assistive technologies, along with supporting research on best practices for inclusive design.
- Promote awareness campaigns to change societal perceptions about disability.

5. Public health issues at sports events

Sports events are a vital part of cultural, social, and recreational life, attracting millions of spectators worldwide. They promote physical activity, foster community spirit, and can generate significant economic benefits. However, alongside their many positives, sports events also pose substantial public health challenges. They attract large crowds, creating complex environments that can amplify public health risks. Managing these issues effectively is crucial to ensure the safety and well-being of athletes, spectators, organisers, and the broader community.

One of the most pressing public health concerns at large sports gatherings is the risk of infectious disease transmission. Crowded environments with close contact facilitate the spread of contagious illnesses such as respiratory infections, including influenza, and/or gastroenteritis outbreaks, such as norovirus. In more extreme cases, pandemics, like that experienced during COVID-19, have a significant impact on the safe management of stadiums. During pandemics or outbreaks, failure to implement

adequate infection control strategies can lead to widespread illness beyond the event itself, impacting public health at a national and even global level.

Public health considerations at stadiums go beyond infections. Medical emergencies, such as heart attacks or strokes, are not uncommon at venues. These often require urgent response from medical teams within the stadium which, on occasion, has led to play being suspended whilst the incident is dealt with. Ensuring adequate medical support, hydration stations, and emergency response plans is essential to mitigate these risks. Failure to do so not only endanger individuals but can also strain local healthcare facilities and emergency services.

Safety and security staff and volunteers, provided that they are adequately trained and certified by professionals, can also administer first aid - namely on cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) -, clear the area and ensure coordination with the medical teams on site to provide immediate care for the affected person. Defibrillators and other critical medical emergency tools should be sufficient and available to be used on time, in and around the venue.

Environmental and climate-related hazards are additional concerns. Extreme weather conditions such as heatwaves, cold snaps, storms, or heavy rainfall can threaten health and safety. Overexposure to heat, for example, can cause heat exhaustion or heatstroke, particularly when combined with high attendance and limited shade or cooling options, and access to drinkable water is therefore essential. Effective weather monitoring and contingency planning are necessary to protect health during such adverse conditions.

Managing these numerous public health issues requires a coordinated approach involving multiple stakeholders, including health authorities, event organisers, security agencies, and the local community. Pre-event planning should incorporate risk assessments, infrastructure improvements, and staff training. During the event, surveillance, prompt medical response, and clear communication are key to addressing health emergencies. Post-event evaluations help identify lessons learned to improve future safety measures.

Guidelines

Guidelines for venue operators and/or event organisers

- Conduct a comprehensive risk assessment during the pre-event planning stage to evaluate potential health risks and assess venue infrastructure and health service capacity.
- Use the risk assessment to develop a Medical Plan, as part of the venue's Operations Manual. This should include an outline the numbers, location and duties of all members of the medical and first aid team, outline procedures for responding to and managing incidents, and procedures for transferring individuals from specific areas of the stadium, for example upper tiers of large stands. It should also establish clear communication channels and ensure the

availability of medical supplies, first aid stations and medical rooms and emergency evacuation routes.

- Implement hygiene measures, infection prevention and control procedures. This includes installing adequate handwashing stations and sanitisers throughout the venue, improve ventilation systems and regularly disinfect high-touch surfaces and shared facilities. These procedures can be escalated dependent on the level of risk, for example implementing crowd flow measures to avoid congestion and promote physical distancing if appropriate.

Guidelines for local authorities

- Ensure that public health planning considers the specific needs of vulnerable or underrepresented groups, such as children, elderly people, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, and persons with chronic illnesses. This includes providing air-conditioned rest areas, accessible hydration points, specialised mobility support, and clear, multilingual communication about the location of medical services and emergency procedures.
- Implement and monitor compliance with local requirements around public health issues.
- Ensure that sufficient information is provided to venues and the public around public health matters and initiatives that are implemented.
- Provide clear, accessible information on health protocols and safety measures before and during the event.
- Coordinate with public health authorities for guidelines, updates, and support.

Guidelines for regional authorities

- Develop co-ordination processes, including region-wide protocols for dealing with public health emergencies and standardising safety measures at venues.
- Conduct training programmes with the aim of promoting best practices in infection control, injury prevention and emergency response.
- Disseminate consistent messaging on a regional basis around health awareness and infection control.
- Collate data for regional health assessments and share best practices and lessons learned to improve protocols.

Guidelines for national authorities

- Develop national policies on public health at mass gatherings, potentially supported by legal and regulatory standards.
- Create standardised protocols applicable nationwide for infection control and injury management at stadiums.
- Provide central support for public health emergencies, including co-ordination and assistance at a regional and local level.