

# Safety in broadcasting sports events

## HSE information sheet

### Entertainment Information Sheet No 1 (Revision 1)

### Introduction

In this information sheet, '**must**' denotes a legal obligation. Words such as 'do', 'should' etc are used to give advice on good practice.

This information sheet is one of a series produced by the Joint Advisory Committee for Entertainments (JACE). It gives general guidance for broadcasting activities at sports grounds and is relevant to both television and radio. More specific guidance is available on many of the topics, (see Further reading).

The advice is directed at pitch-side filming and at those with high level commentary boxes or observation platforms within a stadium complex. The general principles can be applied to any sports ground.

### Hazards

When covering events at sports stadia, the main hazards arise from:

- accessibility to the broadcaster's position;
- fire and other emergency situations;
- working at heights and from temporary structures;
- exposure of staff to crowd disorder and personal violence;
- wind and other weather conditions;
- collision with players or the ball when recording near touchlines;
- noise;
- trip hazards from cables to cameras, gantry etc, especially through public areas;
- manual handling of kit from vehicles to camera positions and gantry;
- electrically powered equipment and power sources.

### Risk assessment

Prior to broadcasting any event an assessment of the potential risks must be carried out. This must be reviewed as necessary if more information becomes available. The assessment will determine what control measures, if any, are required.

The event organisers, stadium management etc should also have carried out a risk assessment. The broadcast organiser should liaise with these bodies to make sure that all hazards arising from the event have been identified and that everyone is aware of the risks arising from each others activities, and of the control measures that are in place.

### Precautionary measures

#### Access and egress routes

In the aftermath of the Bradford and Hillsborough disasters it was found that many venues had only a single means of access to the broadcasting area. In many cases the areas were difficult to negotiate and a certain degree of agility was needed.

The assessments should consider whether access routes are:

- free from obstruction and debris;
- of sound construction;
- securely fixed and fitted with handrails;
- sufficiently illuminated, even under emergency conditions.

Any obvious defects should be brought to the attention of the stadium management.

Access for equipment should also be considered. Where lifting equipment has to be used it must be suitable for the job and examined by a competent person before being put into use, in accordance with the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) 1998. Spectators and others must be protected from the possibility of anything falling as a result of defective equipment or poor handling arrangements. The route from the vehicle compound to the camera positions should be carefully planned to minimise manual handling, aids such as trolleys and barrows should be used wherever possible.

Remember that winter events will often require de-rig after dark. Make sure that sufficient lighting has been arranged with the venue to allow this to take place safely.

### **Fire and associated hazards**

You should be aware of the details of fire and other emergency procedures. These should be obtained from the stadium management or their agents. The procedures should include information on alarm signals, evacuation routes, emergency exits and assembly points. This information should be communicated to everyone involved.

It is important to establish fire exit routes which apply during the rig and de-rig phases of the broadcast. During these phases it is likely that some of the fire exits will be locked for security reasons and will only be opened when the audience/spectators are admitted.

Whenever possible at each venue, a secondary means of escape/rescue from the broadcasting area should be identified. This could comprise of self-lowered equipment, for which training should be provided, or portable ladders that can be deployed from below. Whenever such means are used they should, where possible, not come down into an exit used by the audience/spectators.

### **Working at heights**

Only people who are willing to do so should be asked to work at height. Adequate safety measures such as guard rails must be in place to prevent falls. Where safety belts/harnesses and work restraint systems are necessary, they must be appropriate to the nature of the work being performed. Selection of such equipment must be in accordance with the Work at Heights Regulations 2005.

When working from temporary structures such as scaffolding, access towers and platforms, check with the venue management that the structure is safe and available for use. Very often the broadcaster will be responsible for contracting a competent scaffolding firm and will need to obtain certification that the scaffold is safe, fit for purpose and constructed to the correct specification.

Metal working platforms should, where necessary, be electrically bonded to make sure they cannot 'become live' if a fault develops with the electrical equipment being used on them.

Working platforms should have fully boarded floors, guard rails and toe boards. They should also be fitted with nets or toe boards, as appropriate, to prevent items falling from the platform and causing injury to those below. They should also be fitted with safe means of access and egress.

Further guidance can be found in *Working at heights in the broadcasting and entertainment industries*, HSE Information Sheet ETIS 6.

### **Violence**

There are some sporting events which have the potential for crowd violence. Camera crews filming on touchlines are particularly vulnerable to injuries resulting from actions of individuals in the crowd.

The practical measures required in these circumstances will vary but they should be considered at the planning stage of the broadcast. Priority should be given to establishing the safest possible working conditions. Further guidance can be found in *Violence to workers in broadcasting*, HSE Information Sheet ETIS 2.

### **Pitch-side cameras**

Manned cameras used close to the action at sporting events fall into two main categories, fixed and mobile. For each, care must be taken to reduce the risk from the camera to both players and camera crews.

**Fixed cameras** A fixed camera position is normally where a camera is mounted, for example on a tripod, eclair etc. In some cases, the camera can be moved from one fixed position to another during an event.

Wherever possible, fixed camera positions should be placed behind recognised spectator barriers or adjacent to permanent fixtures such as dugouts. In such situations, the camera should not protrude any more than is necessary for operation. It may be necessary to request a steward to control any spectators who are close to the camera operator.

All fixed cameras should be protected to prevent injury in the event of a person, ball or vehicle etc colliding with them. Suitable protective barriers (eg buffer bags) should be placed to the height of the top of the mounting.

**Mobile cameras** Mobile cameras are defined as those that are hand held, either cabled or radio relay. Mobile cameras should stay a safe distance from the touchline. Normal practice is to stay at least two metres onto the spectators' side of the field of play, away from the officials and players. Mobile cameras should not encroach onto the field of play or into those areas where touch judges or linesmen operate while play is in progress.

Operators of mobile camera cranes with cables should be accompanied by a second person to control the safe position of the cables. A cable minder is not necessary for a radio relayed mobile camera, but on some occasions and in certain locations, consideration should be given to using a second person as a safety lookout.

## **Noise**

The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 require employers to carry out an assessment of the risk to the health and safety of their employees who, in the course of their work, are exposed to noise at or above a daily or weekly noise exposure of 80 dB(A) or a peak sound pressure of 135 dB(C).

There are further requirements concerning eliminating or reducing exposure to employees. Further information can be found in Noise at work INDG362.

Crowd noise levels are a particular problem at sports events, as talkback may have to be at high levels for operators to hear it clearly. The consequent risk of hearing damage can be reduced by either wearing sound excluding headphones so the effect of crowd noise is reduced, or allowing talkback through ordinary headphones, but wearing high fidelity ear plugs to reduce noise levels reaching the ear.

## **Slips and trips**

With many venues there will not be a permanently installed cable rig, therefore cables will need to be run into the venue from the scanner to most camera positions and to the broadcast gantry. The cable routes need to be carefully planned to avoid presenting slip/trip hazards to others, especially the public. Where possible, cables should be flown well above head height, or if at ground or floor level they should be ramped, matted or dug in.

## **Electricity**

Outside broadcasts require power and there can be a variety of electrically powered equipment distributed around the venue. It is vital that electrical connections to power sources are made only by competent persons, and only then when they have assessed them and declared them safe. All portable electrical equipment should be PAT tested. Installations should meet either BS 7671: 2008 or BS 7909: 2008.

## Further reading

[www.hse.gov.uk/risk](http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk)

*Management of health and safety at work. Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. Approved Code of Practice and guidance L21* (Second edition) HSE Books 2000 ISBN 978 0 7176 2488 1  
[www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l21.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l21.htm)

*A review of work at height practices by the Broadcasting Industry in sports stadiums used by the UK Premier and Scottish Premier football leagues: Wash Up report* HSE 2009 <http://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/pdf/broadcasting-washup.pdf>

*Review of work at height practices in the UK Broadcasting Industry: A report from NEL* HSE 2006 <http://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/pdf/broadcasting.pdf>

*Controlling noise at work. The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005. Guidance on Regulations L108* (Second edition) HSE Books 2005 ISBN 978 0 7176 6164 0  
[www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l108.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l108.htm)

*Sound advice: Control of noise at work in music and entertainment* HSG260 HSE Books 2008 ISBN 978 07176 6307 1  
[www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg260.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg260.htm)

*Electricity at work: Safe working practices* HSG85 (Second edition) HSE Books 2003 ISBN 978 0 7176 2164 4  
[www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg85.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg85.htm)

BS 7671: 2008 *Requirements for electrical installations. IEE Wiring Regulations. Seventeenth edition* <http://www.bsigroup.com>

BS 7909: 2008 *Code of practice for temporary electrical systems for entertainment and related purposes* <http://www.bsigroup.com>

## Further information

For information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit [www.hse.gov.uk/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/). You can view HSE guidance online and order priced publications from the website. HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops.

British Standards can be obtained in PDF or hard copy formats from BSI: <http://shop.bsigroup.com> or by contacting BSI Customer Services for hard copies only Tel: 020 8996 9001 email: [cservices@bsigroup.com](mailto:cservices@bsigroup.com)

**This document contains notes on good practice which are not compulsory but which you may find helpful in considering what you need to do.**

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