

HEALTH & SAFETY ADVICE FOR FOOTBALL CLUBS

Increase your chances of passing your annual audit in 5 simple steps

Football clubs of all levels have a duty of care to protect their staff, volunteers and service users.

No organisation is exempt from abiding by health and safety legislation, and while managing health and safety may not be the most exciting part of running your club, it's an area where you can't afford to fall short.

Not only will inadequate procedures invite accidents – therefore leaving you exposed to fines and reputational damage – but failing to meet the necessary standards will also prevent you from passing your annual audit.

For larger clubs, failing an annual audit can prevent you from meeting the conditions to achieve Elite Player Performance Plan (EPPP) status, which can incur significant financial risk for your club and impede player recruitment.

Similarly, for community trusts, passing an audit is essential to draw external funding and maintain charitable status.

A significant element of your annual audit will centre around the safety of your facilities and the measures you have in place to protect those who have contact with your organisation. Therefore, while you may think that health and safety is just a tick-box exercise, the consequences of poor compliance can have a very real impact on the overall success of your club.

Put your best foot forward



Just like on the pitch, when it comes to your annual audit, it pays to play a strong defence. Audits can be stressful; however, taking the time to lay the necessary groundwork can help ensure a positive outcome.

But where do you start?

From our experience, there are five steps you can take to help the audit process run smoothly.

1. Review your policy documentation

It's good practice to regularly review your policies and procedures. Your organisation's policy documentation shouldn't be viewed as static and unchanging; these are living documents that should evolve with you as you grow. Ask yourself:



- Are your policies outdated? Do they refer to legislation that has changed since they were produced? Has new legislation been introduced that affects how you operate?
- Have organisational changes occurred since your policies were created? If so, does your policy documentation still reflect your structure and processes?
- Has there been an incident or policy violation that would indicate a need for change?
- Taking the time to update your policy documentation will ensure compliance with legislation and prevent accidents occurring from inconsistent practices.

2. Conduct a risk assessment

Risk assessment is an integral part of any safety management plan and is a legal requirement under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. Risk assessments are an essential tool to raise awareness of potential hazards and allow you to put in place appropriate control measures.



As a club, you need to be able to demonstrate that you have assessed the safety of your facilities, equipment and activities in order to minimise the risk of harm. When conducting a risk assessment, you should:

- Identify possible causes of harm within the workplace and who may be harmed;
- Evaluate the likelihood of that harm occurring given the safeguards you have in place; and
- If necessary, put in place further safeguarding measures to reduce risk to as low a level as reasonably practicable.

If you have five or more employees, you will need to record this information. Even if you don't, it makes sense to keep a written record as it will allow you to demonstrate compliance during an audit. Conducting a pre-audit risk assessment will help you to stay ahead of the game and give you confidence going into the audit process. Importantly, it will prove that you have taken practical steps to ensure the safety of those who come into contact with your organisation, which will be instrumental in achieving a positive outcome.

3. Appoint a competent person

By law, you must have access to a "competent person" to support you in meeting the requirements of health and safety legislation. Your competent person must be capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards associated with your club's environment and have authorisation to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate them. When deciding whether an individual can be considered 'competent', you should ask yourself:



- Have they had relevant training, such as a course accredited by IOSH?
- Do they have practical knowledge and experience of managing health and safety?
- Do they have the appropriate skills and technical ability to develop solutions to problems?

If you're not confident in your ability to manage health and safety internally, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) advise that you can appoint an external Health & Safety Consultant to act as your competent person. Appointing a professional will not only improve your chances of passing your annual audit but will also allow you to focus on running your club.



With the recent increase in Fee for Intervention charges, average fines are now 450% higher than they were in 2016.

Ellis Whittam is a leading provider of fixed-fee, solutions-focused Health & Safety support. Thousands of organisations across the UK trust us to manage their compliance.

4.

Develop your accident reporting and investigation procedures

All accidents and near-misses that occur on your premises, however minor, must be recorded and investigated by a suitably trained individual.



An **accident** refers to any unplanned event that results in injury or damage to property, plant or equipment. All accidents must be recorded in an accident book and an individual investigation conducted into the circumstances surrounding each accident so that remedial action can be taken. You should review your accident book regularly to ascertain the nature of the incidents which have occurred and identify any patterns which may suggest more control measures are needed.

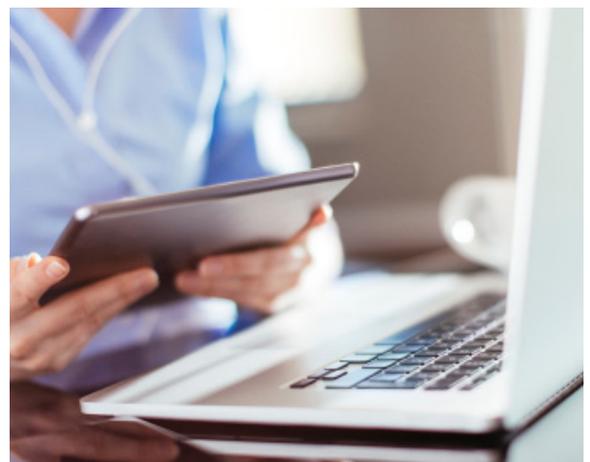
A **near-miss** is an unplanned event that doesn't cause injury or damage but could have done so. All near-misses must be reported to the individual responsible for managing health and safety at your organisation as soon as possible so that steps can be taken to investigate the causes and prevent recurrence.

The procedures that are to be adopted when any employee, visitor or contractor experiences an accident, near-miss or dangerous occurrence should be clearly outlined clearly in your Accident and Investigation Policy and communicated out to everybody. By ensuring proper procedures are followed across your organisation, you can take steps to eliminate unsafe actions or conditions and protect your organisation against risk.

5.

Make sure you can demonstrate your compliance

It may seem obvious, but it's important to ensure you can prove, with evidence, the steps that you have taken to create a safe environment.



Before your audit, ask yourself what proof you can present to the auditor to demonstrate compliance; this may include your Health & Safety Policy, training documents and risk assessments. It's good practice to keep physical records of any health and safety activities you undertake as you go, and to review documents regularly, to minimise work leading up to an audit.

If collating and managing this documentation is taking up too much of your time, our Health & Safety Software has been specifically designed to cut out unnecessary admin and allow you to manage compliance through one easy-to-use dashboard. Here, you can safely store, retrieve and modify important documents, receive automatic alerts when your certificates and documents are due for renewal, and keep a paperless evidence of compliance. **Speak to one of our specialists about implementing this simple solution at your organisation.**

Tackle your annual audit with Ellis Whittam

Getting everything together in preparation for an audit can feel overwhelming, especially if you don't have the time or expertise. With Ellis Whittam, you can take the pressure off and ensure your organisation is audit-ready at all times.

Your dedicated Health & Safety Consultant will:

- review and update your policies and procedures,
- conduct on-site risk assessments; and
- even act as your legally-required competent person.

Our aim is to support your hard work and help eliminate any barriers to growing your club.

If you're in the process of preparing for an audit or need advice on a failed audit, call 0345 226 8393 for hands-on professional support.



Visit
elliswhittam.com/football-clubs
to find out more.



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