

Sports Grounds Safety Authority Guidance Frequently Asked Questions

Preparing Counter Terrorism Measures at Sports Grounds

Guidance is available from the Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) on the responsibilities for preparing counter terrorism measures at a sports ground. This includes explanations of the acronyms used.

The questions and answers below are intended to help clarify issues that might be raised when considering the guidance.

1. Sports grounds

Q.1. Along with other football grounds and some other major venues, we have already received inspection visits from CTAs and/or SecCos and are working to their advice. What else should we be doing?

The ground should have developed its own counter terrorism plan which should, where it is available, include any advice provided by CTAs or SecCos. Where the ground is subject to a safety certificate those plans should be shared with the local authority.

In recognition of the sensitivities involved in discussing counter terrorism matters, it may be necessary for these issues to be discussed in a separate meeting of the SAG where only those needing to be engaged are present. Separate confidential minutes might also be required for that part of the meeting. It is important that the privacy of counter terrorism documents is preserved and that documents are shared and discussed only with those who need to see them. This is likely to include the SAG chair or lead officer at the certifying authority.

The ground's counter terrorism plans should be marked and distributed in accordance with a suitable and agreed security marking scheme, for instance the Government Security Classification Scheme.

Q.2. What is the difference between a Threat Level and a Response Level?

The Threat Level indicates the risk (likelihood) to the UK of a terrorist attack. The response level provides an indication of the protective security measures that should be implemented by management at grounds at each Threat Level. In simple terms, the higher the Threat Level, the more security measures should be in place. You should also look at the *Crowded Places Guidance*, Managing the Threat chapter at www.gov.uk/government/publications/crowded-places-guidance.

Q.3. It seems many of the activities we use to prevent disorder apply equally well to counter terrorism, for example searching and using CCTV – do we need a completely separate plan?

It is true that many of the mitigation measures against disorder and counter terrorism are very similar. Both will be based on risk assessments and the intensity of the responses to the risks may vary over time and circumstances.

It is for you as the ground to lay out your plans in a way which suits your needs. It may be that separate plans will provide more clarity and help highlight certain areas, particularly the different actions to be taken when there is a change in the threat and response levels.

Q.4. Will our steward and staff briefings need to be far more detailed, we are worried that if we tell everyone at the ground what our counter terrorism plans are that we will increase the risks to the ground?

As with all briefings, your stewards' and staff briefings should be targeted to provide them with the information they need to do their job. There is no need for them to have detailed information about the ground's counter terrorism plans.

They do, however, need to know what they have to do in particular circumstances.

Q.5. What if my Board Chair thinks that the advice the police give us on counter terrorism measures are unaffordable and unfair – could the police advice end up as a condition in the safety certificate?

On those occasions when there is disagreement between the ground and local police, support and advice is available from national counter terrorism experts and contact with them can be facilitated by your local SGSA inspector, along with a representative of the relevant competition organiser.

Terrorism is a threat to the safety of people at the ground and, where a certificate is in place, the local authority has a duty to issue terms and conditions necessary to ensure that people are kept safe.

2. Certifying Authorities

Q.6. NaCTSO and Counter Terrorism Security Advisors (CTSAs) are already supporting the major sports grounds on counter terrorism, why do local authorities need to get involved?

NaCTSO and CTSAs have no ability to require clubs to take steps to protect their ground from the risk of a terrorist attack; a local authority can via the safety certificate.

Local authorities have a duty to satisfy themselves that sports grounds are safe for everyone. They will need to seek assurance from the experts – CTSAs and Police Security Co-ordinators (SecCOs) about counter terrorism measures. They do not need to be experts themselves.

The SGSA is working closely in partnership with NaCTSO.