



Health and Safety Guidance

Purpose

To provide guidance to help ensure that croquet clubs, their players, members and other visitors are protected, as far as possible, from risks to their health or safety.

Health and Safety for croquet clubs

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 ('the Act') and the regulations made under it, apply to club organisers who are both employers and self-employed. The law requires them to do what is reasonably practicable to ensure people's health and safety.

The Act sets out the general duties that employers have towards their employees whilst at work. The Act also requires employers and the self-employed to protect people other than those at work e.g. volunteer staff like coaches, club members, visiting teams and spectators. These people should be protected from risks to their health and safety arising out of, or in connection with, their club's work activities.

Guidance on running a safe croquet club

The Health and Safety Executive [Planning for safety: Amateur Sports Clubs \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/plan/) gives the following advice:

Don't get tied up in red tape. Sports activities are enjoyed by people everyday without a problem. However, it is a good idea to have a think about how you make your club activity run smoothly, deciding on things that might be an issue e.g. the safety of any sports equipment you have control over.

Your decisions should make sense and be proportionate to the level of risk. Stand up for common sense, and if someone says you can't do something for health and safety reasons, challenge them to find out exactly why.

Risk Assessment

Conducting a risk assessment for a croquet club helps to identify and mitigate against possible hazards. There is an expectation by insurers that a risk assessment has been carried out and may be requested in the event of a claim. For many clubs all that is required is to follow a basic series of steps:

- Think about the risks - a risk is the chance, high or low, of somebody being harmed by a hazard, and how serious the harm could be.
- Think about how accidents could happen and who might be harmed.

- Think about what you will need to do to control the risks and ask if there is anything you should do to make your club activities safer.

Focus on risks that could cause real harm. If there is a genuine risk, see what you can do to minimise that risk and still go ahead – it can often be done. Be sensible and proportionate in your approach to managing risk.

Every club is different but a generic risk assessment provided (in [MS-Excel](#) and [PDF](#) formats) covers most of the hazards likely to be encountered during the playing of croquet at most clubs. It is intended specifically to cover the playing of the sport, an activity common to all clubs.

Whilst other approaches are possible, new clubs, or those without existing risk assessment documentation, are encouraged to make use of this document as a starting point for a more comprehensive risk assessment of their club. Other areas that may need consideration are:

- Car Park
- Clubhouse
- Kitchen and Catering* (a food hygiene certificate may be required)
- Toilets
- Equipment Stores/Sheds
- Maintenance* and Use of Machinery
- Hazardous Materials: fuel, line marker, etc.

*It is particularly important to ensure that those carrying out such activities are appropriately qualified/trained/experienced.

An MS-Excel template for a likelihood/severity risk assessment is available [here](#).

Risk assessments and/or their relevant outcomes should be made available to members and visitors to the site. An appropriate induction process for new members should be considered.

Volunteers running croquet clubs

Whilst Health and Safety law is focussed on organisations with employees, anyone (including volunteers) with control of, or use of, premises like a clubhouse or lawns, has a duty to see that the premises, access to them, plant (e.g. mowing equipment or sports equipment) and substances provided are safe for the persons using them, so far as is reasonably practicable. Often this is a shared duty between the premises owner, the club committee and users.

The extent of a club's legal duty will depend on the level of control it has over the premises and the type of plant or substances provided. For example, if your club owns or manages the premises, then you would be expected to keep the premises and any mowing or sports equipment provided in good repair. You would also be expected to take reasonable steps to check machinery and equipment is well maintained, safe to use and that users are trained.

Guidance for safe play

Croquet is not a risky sport but there are potential hazards at every club that should be considered.

- Lawn treatments

Lawns may be treated with toxic chemicals. Hands should be washed after handling balls and particularly before eating. It should always be clearly indicated if lawns have been treated recently, including advice as to whether they may or may not be used. This advice should always be heeded.

- Mallets

Mallets weigh approximately 3 pounds (or 1.4 kg.). If you hit your ankle or shin it will be very painful.

Never throw down a mallet casually or in temper. Apart from the likelihood of damaging the lawn, and the risk of injuring someone, you could end up with a large bill for replacing a broken mallet.

Injuries to wrists, elbows, shoulders and backs can result from errors of technique. If you find you are starting to get aches and pains, ask someone to look at your technique and make suggestions before the injury become debilitating.

- Hoops

Tripping over hoops may look funny from a distance but can be very dangerous; remember that all that furniture on the lawn that is forever getting in the way of your shots is equally unforgiving to legs. Never walk backwards without looking behind you first.

Lifting hoops can take real strength. If possible, provide and use a hoop lifter.

- Stop-boards

Stop-boards will generally stop balls but occasionally a ball may hit the foot and launch into the air. Do not walk in front of someone taking a shot and never sit on the ground with your back to a lawn where there is a game in progress. Stop-boards will also stop you if you are not looking where you are going!

- Double banking

When double-banking the players should always be aware of what is happening in the other game. In particular do not walk on or off the lawn without looking, alert the other striker if you are about to send a ball close to them and watch out for long shots in the other game.

- Carrying lawn equipment

A set of hoops and balls is heavy. Where possible use a trolley or other carrying equipment. If none is available, then consider making several trips.

- Club house

The club may wish to have rules about use of the club house such as always using an appropriate stepladder when working at height, keeping out of the kitchen when food is being prepared and cooked, being aware of slippery floors when wet etc.

General Information

- Accident book - All accidents (not illnesses) must be entered in the accident book which is kept for this purpose. Its location should be clear.
- Details of where the nearest A&E is situated should be displayed. The club's address, including postcode should also be displayed as it will be required by the emergency services. (<https://what3words.com> may also be useful)
- First aid kit for minor injuries only. Someone should be responsible for keeping it stocked and instructions should be given who to inform if something is used so the item/s can be replaced. It should be in a clearly identifiable container and located in an accessible position.
- The club may have trained First Aiders but always call an ambulance if an accident or illness is serious before seeking first aid help. (Note: The club chairman should be informed if anyone is taken to hospital - see accident book for reporting details).
- The Law requires clubs with any sort of club house to carry out a fire risk assessment. Emergency fire procedure should be clearly posted.
- All members, and particularly new members, should be made aware of the location of the accident book, and the first aid kit. The club's Guidance for Safe Play should ensure everyone plays safely.

Further advice on frequently encountered issues and what to do, is provided by the Health and Safety Executive at [planning and managing low-risk, small-scale sports and activities.](#)

References

[Croquet England Club Insurance Policy](#)

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