

The Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) has the legal duty to issue licences to all clubs in the Premier League, English Football League, Wembley and the Principality Stadium, which allows admittance of spectators to grounds.

Clubs in the Premier League or Championship, or any who have been in the top two tiers for more than three seasons since 1994/95, must have an all-seated stadium. This is a condition of the SGSA licence.

Despite the licence condition and the efforts of clubs, we know many fans still choose to stand. Standing in areas which are meant for sitting has a number of safety risks, including injury and crowd management and care issues.

The All-Seater Policy – Enforcement Approach 2020/21, based on the 2019/20 document, gives clarity and transparency to our role in enforcing the licence conditions. It sets out the reasonable steps clubs can take to reduce the safety risks associated with persistent standing, recognising the context of the widespread and ongoing socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This overview summarises the key points. Detailed guidance is provided in the full Enforcement Approach document.

The guidance outlines:

- Requirements of clubs to meet the licence conditions.
- Reasonable steps we expect clubs to put in place to address persistent standing.
- Ways clubs can minimise the safety risks for fans who still choose to stand in seated areas, despite the efforts of clubs.

It doesn't:

- Introduce new requirements for clubs.
- Create new powers for the SGSA.
- Change the all-seater policy.

The steps within the document aren't new. The vast majority were agreed in 2013 by the Premier League, English Football League, FA, police and others. Additions, such as the use of seats incorporating barriers, have been included because of advances in technology and safety management since 2013.

SGSA Inspectors work closely with clubs around ways to reduce safety risks. This guidance brings together that advice into one document to help clarity, consistency and understanding.

Reasonable steps

The SGSA expects clubs to carry out the following actions to address persistent standing:

- Talk to fans – both home and away – to find out why they stand, and how it can be addressed.
- Educate fans about why they should sit – the safety management issues and the risks associated with standing in seated areas.
- Make sure season ticket holders know that a condition of entry is they sit, and that not doing so risks their ticket being withdrawn.
- Keep gangways and vomitories clear at all times. This could include taking certain rows of seats, or seats near gangways out of use and raising the height of front barriers on upper tiers.
- Make sure that disabled spectators aren't prevented from seeing the pitch due to others standing.

Additional steps

If the reasonable steps don't reduce the safety risks, the following voluntary measures should be considered:

- Limit persistent standing to certain areas of a ground where safety risks are lower, such as a lower tier, and take extra steps to reduce safety risks in these areas.
- Recognise triggers, such as goals, in the Persistent Standing Management Plan, which could lead to safety issues.
- Make sure the Crowd Disorder and Anti-Social Behaviour Plan reduces risks through ticket checks and bag/personal searches.
- Install seats incorporating barriers or independent rails in areas where persistent standing continues to take place, although only once all other measures have been tried.