

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, including Wembley and the Principality Stadium, must have an all-seated stadium. This is a condition of the SGSA licence to admit fans. Grounds are now also able to offer licensed standing areas, subject to meeting strict criteria.

Despite the all-seater 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 which could lead to injury, and also poses challenges in terms of crowd management and customer care.

The All-Seater Policy – Enforcement Approach 2023/24 gives clarity and transparency to our role in enforcing the all-seater licence condition and the licensed standing areas condition. It outlines:

- Requirements of clubs to meet the licence conditions.
- Initial steps and further actions 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.

This overview summarises the **initial steps** clubs are expected to take to reduce the safety risks. It also outlines the **further action** clubs may need to take to bring their grounds back into compliance. Full details are provided in the Enforcement Approach 2023/24 document.

Initial steps

'Initial steps' has replaced 'reasonable steps' for 2023/24 to highlight that these steps are the start of the journey towards compliance, not the end point.

These include (but not limited to):

- **Talk to and educate fans** – both home and away – to find out why they stand, and how it can be addressed.
- 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season ticket holders know that a **condition of entry** is they sit, and that not doing so risks their ticket being withdrawn.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 fans aren't prevented from seeing** the pitch due to others standing.
- **Identify triggers**, such as goals, which could lead to safety issues and plan mitigations to these risks.
- Make sure the Crowd Disorder and Anti-Social Behaviour Plan reduces risks through **ticket checks and bag/personal searches**.

Further action

If the initial steps don't reduce the safety risks, the following further action should be considered:

- **Relocate supporters** to areas where the safety risks are lower, for example lower tiers.
- **Reduce the density** through reduction of capacity in the area where spectators choose to stand
- **Install seats incorporating barriers or independent barriers** in areas where spectators still choose to stand.

These three further action options outlined immediately above are **not mutually exclusive**. Rather, they should be used individually or in combination as appropriate to address the identified safety risks.

SGSA Inspectors work closely with clubs around ways to reduce safety risks and comply with licence conditions. The Enforcement Approach brings together that advice into one document to help clarity, consistency and understanding.

Licensed standing areas condition

The All-Seater Policy – Enforcement Approach 2023/24 also sets out how the SGSA will enforce the licensed standing areas licence condition – essentially, checking that grounds are complying with the licensed standing criteria, including:

- The necessary infrastructure being in place, which must be in both home and away sections.
- The seats cannot be locked in the 'up' or 'down' position, allowing fans the option of being able to sit (for example, during breaks in play).
- There must only be one seat/space per person.
- The licensed standing areas must not detrimentally impact the viewing standards of other fans, including disabled fans.
- Consideration being given to accessibility and equality issues arising from the installation or other parts of the stadium impacted by it.

If there is evidence of non-compliance with any of the criteria, the SGSA will work closely with the club, consulting the relevant local authority as necessary, to bring the ground back into compliance with all the criteria.

The licensed standing criteria compliance assessment process complements the SGSA's approach to enforcement of the all-seater licence condition outlined above, with licensed standing grounds subject to both processes.