

Briefing and Debriefing

It is the responsibility of the ground management to brief all personnel involved in safety management. This factsheet outlines the key considerations for briefing and debriefing.

Event day briefing and debriefing sessions are an essential part of safety management operations. They allow ground management to be confident that every member of the safety team are informed of the key issues for the day, and how they relate to their roles.

Briefing is not a substitute for proper qualifications (see **Factsheet 4 – Qualifications**) or training (see **Factsheet 5 – Training**). Rather, it is intended to provide safety personnel with whatever specific information and instructions they might require in order to perform their functions at the particular event.

Briefings

Who

Briefing and debriefing should include any safety, security and non-safety critical personnel involved in the safe running of the event. This means not only in-house stewards but also agency stewards, visiting stewards, event attendants, the medical team, turnstile operators, car park staff and hospitality staff.

What

The content of briefing sessions will vary according to the venue and the event. They are intended to provide safety personnel with whatever specific information and instructions they require in order to perform their functions at that particular event. The contents of the briefing should be relevant, concise and clear.

Care should also be taken not to duplicate information that is already available in the Stewards' Safety Handbook (see Section SG03 4.23 and Figure SG03 7), such as emergency call signs.

It is also recommended that whoever delivers the briefing session asks occasional questions of those attending, or asks individuals to repeat information, in order to test whether the briefing has been fully understood.

Where

The location of briefing sessions will clearly be determined by the layout of the venue, the facilities available, and the numbers of personnel involved.

In smaller venues it might be possible to brief all personnel in one location, whereas in larger venues with more event staff it will be necessary to conduct briefings in different groups and locations, known as cascaded briefing (outlined later in this Factsheet).

In all locations the following should be noted:

- It must be possible for everyone present to hear what is being said and for individuals to be able to ask questions.

Briefing information may include:

- Type of event, categorisation (if needed) and timings.
- Details of key safety, security and medical personnel and their location.
- Details of any activities taking place before or after the match.
- Details of any security concerns.
- Details of any VIPs or special guests attending (if appropriate, shared only with key personnel).
- Any other operational factors that may differ from previous events, such as weather conditions, ticketing procedures or traffic management issues.

- Wherever possible the location should have adequate lighting or natural light, and offer shelter in the event of rain.
- Wherever possible all personnel should be able to sit.
- The sessions should take place within the venue rather than off-site.

When

Briefing sessions must be scheduled to allow sufficient time for all personnel to be in position before spectators are admitted to the venue. This might require earlier briefings to take place for personnel staffing car parks or hospitality areas or those who may be unfamiliar with the venue and therefore need more information before the main briefing begins.

Where applicable, allowance should also be made for the arrival of personnel accompanying visiting supporters.

How

Briefing document



It is strongly recommended that the structure and content of all briefing sessions are set out in pre-prepared documents and, where appropriate, pre-scripted. This is particularly important where cascaded briefings are to take place – that is, in smaller groups – to ensure that all personnel hear the same core information as well as the details relevant to their own allocated locations or roles.

Pre-prepared briefing notes or scripts should be included within the Event Management Plan.

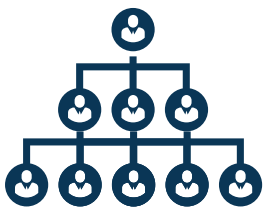
Digital briefings



Certain basic elements of a typical event day briefing session can be delivered to safety personnel in advance of the actual event day briefing.

While this may save time on the day, and allow the recipients more time to absorb the details, it is stressed that briefings on the day will still be necessary to ensure questions can be asked and any late changes and any new intelligence can be communicated directly to staff and stewards.

Cascaded briefings



Arrangements for briefings will vary according to the number of individuals involved. If the total does not exceed 50, it should be possible for all personnel to be briefed together, by the Safety Officer or Chief Steward.

Where more than 50 individuals are deployed, experience shows it is beneficial to organise cascaded briefings, where the Safety Officer or Chief Steward briefs individual supervisors, who then brief their individual sections.

It is recommended that these cascaded briefings should be scripted so they are consistent. This also provides a note which will form part of the event's record.

As a further measure of quality control, senior members of the safety management team should attend cascaded briefings on an occasional basis.

Debriefing

A debrief – sometimes called a ‘hot debrief’ – should be held as soon as possible after all spectators at the event have departed.

A debrief should:

- assess the effectiveness of the safety management operation.
- Identify any issues or deficiencies that may have arisen during the event.
- Collect any incident reports that may have been completed by event staff, or to remind staff to offer feedback digitally.
- Show the management’s appreciation to all personnel involved.

As with briefing, the debriefing arrangements will vary according to the number of individuals involved, and should include:

- A de-brief of all stewards, in one group or by sector.
- Incident reports completed during the event.
- The event log itself.
- Questionnaires filled in by staff.
- Feedback from the public.
- Other relevant reports.

If appropriate, representatives of external stakeholders such as medical providers, the fire service, police, local authority and competition organisers may also be invited to contribute their comments independently.

Record keeping

Records of all briefing and debriefing sessions must be kept and maintained as part of the Event Record (see Chapter SG03 10.0).

These records can be written, or recorded in either audio or video formats.

Such recordings serve to:

- Help the safety management team to refine and improve the content and delivery of briefing and debriefing sessions.
- Form a record for legal purposes, should a serious incident occur during the event.
- Contribute towards the management’s periodic safety audit.

Find out more

Further details can be found in the SGSA’s existing guidance:

Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (Green Guide) sixth edition – Sections 3.10 – 3.13 and Section 4.1 – 4.22.

Supplementary Guidance 03: Event Safety Management – Section SG03 4.12 – 4.26 and Section SG03 9.9.