



SAFE CODE OF PRACTICE

OFFICIALS: PRE AMBLE

(2016) - Supersedes 2007 UKA Safe Codes of Practice

GENERAL INTRO

Technical Official and Officials are always in close contact with Athletes. They should always remember that the main focus of athletes is to perform and not to secure his/her immediate environment.

Event safety begins with the planning and layout of facilities, followed by the manner in which events are managed and officiated. Your legal obligation as a qualified official is to provide a reasonable, prudent and professional duty of care during a competition. The word professional in this context places a responsibility on you to check that equipment and facilities are in good order and that you are following safe practices when officiating at athletic events.

PRE EVENT PREPARATION

Officials play a vital role in the safety of all participants at athletics events. However, it should be noted that the majority of officials are only involved on the day of the competition and it is vitally important that Event organisers/Competition providers carry out detailed [pre event safety checks](#) **at least 4 weeks before the event day**. (See Table XX below)



As well as enabling a timetable of events and roles and responsibilities to be agreed this also allow plenty of time for any facility safety concerns to be noted, discussed with the facility operator and rectified well in advance of competition day.

Table XX

Pre Event checks (4weeks prior the event)	
Event programming and facilities	
Confirm with the facility the list of events taking place	
Review any potential safety issues re: layout v timetable	
Check if there is a requirement for concurrent pools in events	
Confirm the timetable of events	
Track Events	
Check that all track/circulation areas are clear from hazards	
Check to make sure that you have all required equipment	
Check hurdle toppling weights	
Use barriers/taping to restrict access to runways/field events	
Make sure all equipment is present and in good condition	
Field Events	
Determine who will layout the field & available equipment	
Check status and condition of all equipment and bars	
Check that circles and runways are clean, dry & in good repair	
Check sector, circles, runways & circulation areas for hazards	
Pole Vault/High Jump: Check landing areas are secured & in good condition	
Pole Vault/High Jump: Check that uprights are available/not bent or damaged	
Shot Put: Check stop board to ensure it is tightly held in the concrete	
Hammer/Discus Throw: Check concentric ring is properly installed	
Hammer/Discus Throw: Check the cage opening and position of the gates	
Hammer/Discus Throw: Check condition of cage and netting for holes & gap	
Long/Triple Jump: Put down any additional horizontal take off boards	
Long/Triple Jump: Check boards to see if they need repair or levelling	
Long/Triple Jump: Check that sand is even and level with take-off board	
General	
Likely number of spectators (Will this require stewards?)	
Will any temporary barriers be required?	
Access arrangements.	
(Athletes, officials, spectators	
Any need for allocated seating. (E.g. timekeepers?)	
Parking for competitors, spectators, officials, VIPs	
Confirm venue safety and evacuation procedures	

Failure to carry out important pre-event safety checks can result in safety issues only being spotted on the day of the event – essentially when it is too late to do anything about them. In these situations officials can come under pressure from clubs, coaches and athletes to make “snap” decisions which can potentially compromise safety.

For example, consider a British League fixture where athletes have travelled the length of the country to find that on the morning of competition a hole has been found in the netting of the venue’s throws cage. Athletes/Coaches want the competition to take place but officials are concerned about safetyWhat decision should be taken? What decision is taken? Could the situation have been avoided if the hole had been identified in a pre-event safety check 4weeks prior to the event?

In addition to pre event checks, “on the day” safety checks are equally important (See Table XX overleaf), and officials should always be aware that, along with the facility owners and the event organisers, they share an overall responsibility for the safety of participants.

Table XX

On the day Safety checklist	
Arrive at least 90mins before the first scheduled event	
Conduct a safety walk round of the facility	
Attend a team briefing to discuss any timetable/safety issues	
Check that all sectors, circles, runways & circulation areas are clear from hazards	
Check to make sure that you have all required equipment	
Use barriers/taping to restrict access to runways/field events	
Make sure all equipment is present and in good condition	
Check the sector layout/alignment	
Check that circles and runways are clean, dry & in good repair	

SAFETY ROLES AT COMPETITIONS

Role of Officials

- Control the competition areas at all times from warm-up to event completion
- Officiate the event properly and fairly
- Lead by example particularly in the area of safety
- Audit the adequacy of the equipment, implements and the facilities to be used in the competition including lighting if it is to be used
- Ensure the safety of officials, athletes, coaches and spectators in and around their event by constant awareness of what is happening around them and how it might impact what they are doing

See Appendix 3 (UKA rulebook)

BASIC RULES FOR TRACK & FIELD OFFICIALS

- Be alert to what is going on around you, not only at your event but any adjacent activities that might impact you
- Always look in both directions before crossing the track, sector/infield or any runway to insure that it is safe to do so
- If your job requires for you to be in the infield area, you must be alert to all implements
- Never enter any throwing impact area unless your job involves marking throws or retrieving implements
- If you are assisting in marking or retrieving you will be in or near the throwing impact area. Never turn your back on the throwers-during warm-ups or competition
- If you are responsible for handling the javelin, always carry it vertically
- For hammer or discus, if you are not marking/retrieving, you must be at least 2m behind the cage for all throws, both during warm-up and competition
- If you are the head official at a throwing event, you should monitor both the warm-up and the competition to help ensure safety
- If you are the head official at the pole vault or high jump, double check to ensure that the foam landing beds are securely buckled together prior to warm-up and during warm-up and competition
- Officials should immediately contact meet management if they are not comfortable with the safety in any situation
- If you are not actively involved in assisting an event stay out of the infield
- Immediately notify meet management of any injury or near miss in your area