Risk Management for Away Fixtures and Trips

Risk Strategy

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 During trips SYFA members face risks that could present threats to its success. Risk is presented as the probability of an event and its consequences. Risk management is the practice of using processes, methods and tools for managing these risks.

1.2 Many things can negatively impact on a player’s experience at an event, from boredom and home-sickness, to poor coaching practice and abuse. Although incidents of serious poor practice and abuse do arise during events the majority of incidents are lower-level concerns and are often associated with more general practicalities e.g. arrangements for refreshments, meals and transport. Nevertheless they can still have a significant impact on a child’s experience at an event.

1.3 This document is designed to give guidance to SYFA member regions, leagues, clubs, officials, players and their parents (hereafter referred to as “members”). The guidance describes the essential elements that you should have in place regardless of the size and nature of any football event you are participating in or planning. This covers away fixtures, day trips and trips with overnight stays (hereafter referred to as trips). Albeit any trips abroad and/or with overnight stays require greater considerations.

How you implement this guidance will differ according to your event, but it is vital that you address the risks in all cases.

1.4 It should be noted that this is merely guidance and that clubs must ensure that they carry out fully their legal responsibilities in relation to health and safety and all SYFA Protection obligations in respect of any trips or journeys in which they participate, attend or organise.

1.5 This includes carrying out sufficiently well in advance full and detailed risk assessments in relation to places visited, travel and accommodation arrangements, playing venues and other matters. Part of that process should be taking decisions, including decisions about whether trips should proceed at all, based both on legal obligations and requirements of SYFA guidance.

1.6 Risk management focuses on identifying what could go wrong, evaluating which risks should be dealt with and implementing strategies to deal with those risks. Members that have identified the risks will be better prepared and have a more cost-effective way of dealing with them. This document sets out how to identify the risks that members may face. It also looks at how to implement an effective risk management policy and programme which can increase the members’ chances of a successful trip and reduce the possibility of failure.

1.7 A risk register is an important process in protecting members on trips as well as complying with the law. It helps focus on the risks that really matter – the ones with the potential to cause real harm. In many instances straightforward measures can readily control risks. For most that means simple, cheap and effective measures to ensure members are protected.

1.8 Legal obligations include only exposing players, whose safety is paramount, to situations where risks have been fully assessed and are at a level that are legally acceptable. Independent advice should be sought where clubs do not have adequate knowledge of their responsibilities.
SECTION 2: THE RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS

2.1 Members face many risks, therefore risk management should be a central part of any members' strategic management. Risk management helps to identify and address the risks facing members and in doing so increase the likelihood of successfully achieving your trip’s objectives.

2.2 A risk management process involves:

2.2.1 Methodically identifying the risks surrounding activities;

2.2.2 Assessing the likelihood of an event occurring;

2.2.3 Identifying events and eliminate the risk of harm;

2.2.4 Understanding how to respond to these events;

2.2.5 Putting systems in place to deal with potential risks;

2.2.6 Monitoring the effectiveness of your risk management approaches and controls.

2.3 As a result the process of risk management:

2.3.1 Improves decision-making, planning and prioritisation;

2.3.2 Helps allocate capital and resources more efficiently;

2.3.3 Allows members to anticipate what may go wrong, minimising the amount of fire-fighting that would be required or, in a worst-case scenario, prevents a disaster or serious financial loss;

2.3.4 Significantly improves the probability that members will deliver its planned trip on time and to budget.
SECTION 3: THE TYPES OF RISKS FACED BY MEMBERS ON TRIPS

3.1 The main categories of risk to consider are:

3.1.1 **Protection.** For example player’s becoming homesick and need an official to talk to;

3.1.2 **Transport.** For example what type of transport will be used; and

3.1.3 **Accommodation.** For example what standard of accommodation plus other support facilities are available.

3.2 These categories are not rigid and some parts of the trip may fall into more than one category. The risks attached to food, for example, could be considered when reviewing accommodation.

3.3 Other risks include:

3.3.1 Operational risks including a decline in sponsorship for the trip; and

3.3.2 Reputation and image risks.

**Protection Risks**

3.4 Protection risks are those risks associated with taking young players on trips. They include but are not restricted to risks arising from:

3.4.1 Compliance with all SYFA Protection Policies including suitability of officials responsible for the trip;

3.4.2 Supervision of players by officials during the trip;

3.4.3 Tournament requirements and playing conditions; and

3.4.4 Any medical requirements of the travel party.

3.5 Where there is a strong possibility of this happening you should prepare some sort of response.

**Transport Risks**

3.6 Transport risks are associated with the transportation of players and officials during trips e.g. passenger safety, driver breaks re hours travelled, type of journey, traffic conditions, weather.

3.7 Identifying this type of risk involves examining travelling from home to the accommodation, daily transport to and from the accommodation to any matches, especially evening kick-offs.

3.8 Transport risk should take into account external factors e.g. ferries and supervision of players including travel party headcounts.
Accommodation Risks

3.9 Accommodation risks are associated with overnight stays and administrative procedures. These include:

3.9.1 Type of accommodation;

3.9.2 Facilities at the accommodation;

3.9.3 Sharing of rooms;

3.9.4 Local customs and traditions;

3.9.5 Arrangements for food plus type of food;

3.9.6 Supervision of players in accommodation especially at night.

3.10 The member will examine these operations in turn, prioritise the risks and make provisions for such a risk happening. For example, if there is a heavy reliance on one first aid officer consideration should be given to a second first aid officer.

3.11 Operational risks can include foreign exchange rates that may result in a lack of funds to adequately provide for the travel party. Especially food and drinks for players during tournaments and extreme weather conditions.

3.12 Reputation and image risks can occur when incidents take place that could seriously cause the reputation of the member to be tarnished putting their future participation in jeopardy. This may result in exposure to local and national newspaper articles and a possible requirement of legal representation.

Unruly and irresponsible behaviour can tarnish the SYFA and member’s reputation by leaving an imagine of this being normal member practice.
SECTION 4: HOW TO EVALUATE RISKS

4.1 Risk evaluation allows members to determine the significance of risks to the travelling party and decide to accept the specific risk or take action to prevent or minimise it.

4.2 To evaluate risks it is worthwhile ranking these risks once you have identified them. This can be done by considering the consequence and probability of each risk. Many members find that assessing consequence and probability as high, medium or low is adequate for their needs. These can then be compared to the members’ plan - to determine which risks may affect the trip objectives - and evaluated in the light of legal requirements, costs and members’ concerns. In some cases the cost of mitigating a potential risk may be so high that doing nothing makes more business sense.

4.3 There are some tools you can use to help evaluate risks. You can plot on a risk map the significance and likelihood of the risk occurring. Each risk is rated on a scale of one to ten. If a risk is rated ten this means it is of major importance to the member. One is the least significant. The map allows you to visualise risks in relation to each other, gauge their extent and plan what type of controls should be implemented to mitigate the risks.

4.4 Prioritising risks, however you do this, allows you to direct time and money toward the most important risks. You can put systems and controls in place to deal with the consequences of an event. This could involve defining a decision process and procedures that members would follow if an event occurred.
SECTION 5: USE PREVENTATIVE MEASURES FOR A SUCCESSFUL TRIP

5.1 Risk management involves putting processes, methods and tools in place to deal with the consequences of events you have identified as significant threats to the success of your trip. This could be something as simple as having to set aside financial reserves in case of unexpected costs during the trip should they arise.

5.2 Programmes which deal with threats identified during risk assessments are often referred to as risk registers. These set out what you should do if a certain event happens. For example a player becoming homesick and wishing to return home. You can't avoid all risk but risk registers can minimise the disruption to your trip.

5.3 Risk registers will change as the planning for the trip grows or as a result of internal or external changes. This means that the processes you have put in place to manage risks should be regularly reviewed. Such reviews will identify improvements to the processes and equally they can indicate when a process is no longer necessary.
SECTION 6: THE RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS

6.1 A risk assessment is simply a careful examination of what during your trip could cause harm to the SYFA or any member so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm.

6.2 To carry out a successful risk assessment follow the five steps listed below:

   Step 1: Identify the Risk
   Step 2: Decide Who Might be Harmed and How
   Step 3: Evaluate the Risks and Decide on Precautions
   Step 4: Record your Findings and Implement Them
   Step 5: Review your Risk Register and Update if Necessary
   Step 6: Risk Rating Chart

6.3 Don’t overcomplicate the process. For many trips the risks are well known and the necessary control measures are easy to apply.

6.4 In all cases players, officials and parents should be involved in the process. They will have useful information that will make your assessment of the risk more thorough and effective. But remember the trip leader is responsible for seeing that the assessment is carried out properly.

6.5 When thinking about any risk assessment remember the risk is the chance, high or low, that members could be harmed by these and other actions together with an indication of how serious the harm could be.

**Step 1: Identify the Risk**

6.6 First the member needs to work out how they could be harmed. It is easy to overlook some risks so here are some tips to help you identify the ones that matter:

   6.6.1 Ask players and their parents what they think. They may have noticed things that are not immediately obvious to the member.

   6.6.2 Remember to think about long-term risk as well as immediate risk.

**Step 2: Decide Who Might be Harmed and How**

6.7 For each risk you need to be clear about who might be harmed. It will help the member identify the best way of managing the risk. That does not mean listing everyone by name but rather identifying groups of people (e.g. ‘officials’, ‘players’ or ‘the members’ reputation’).

6.8 In each case, identify how the travel party might be harmed.

**Step 3: Evaluate the Risks and Decide on Precautions**
6.9 Having identified the risks the member then has to decide what to do about them. You should do everything ‘reasonably practicable’ to protect the travel party from harm. The easiest way is to compare what you are doing with good practice.

6.10 So first look at what you’re already doing, think about what controls you have in place and how the trip is organised. Then compare this with the good practice and see if there is more you should be doing to bring yourself up to standard. In asking yourself this consider:

6.10.1 Can I get rid of the risk altogether?

6.10.2 If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is unlikely?

6.11 When controlling risks apply the principles below, if possible in the following order:

6.11.1 Try a less risky option;

6.11.2 Organise trips to reduce exposure to the risk; and

6.11.3 Deliver training to increase competencies and awareness of how to handle the risk.

6.12 Failure to take simple precautions can cost you a lot more if an incident does occur.

6.13 Involve the travel party so that you can be sure that what you propose to do will work in practice and won’t introduce any new risks.

Step 4: Record Your Findings and Implement Them

6.14 Putting the results of any risk assessment into practice will make a difference when looking after the travel party.

6.15 Writing down the results of the risk assessment is recommended so that a record can be kept and continually reviewed if something changes.

6.16 When writing down the results keep it simple.

6.17 A risk assessment is not expected to be perfect but it must be suitable and sufficient. You need to be able to show that:

6.17.1 A proper check was made;

6.17.2 You asked who might be affected;

6.17.3 You dealt with all the significant risks taking into account the number of people who could be involved;

6.17.4 The precautions are reasonable and the remaining risk is low; and

6.17.5 All travel party members were involved in the process.

6.18 If, like many football groups, you find that there are quite a lot of improvements that you could make, big and small, don’t try to do everything at once. Make a plan of action to deal with the most important things first.
6.19 A good plan of action often includes a mixture of different things such as:

6.19.1 A few cheap or easy improvements that can be done quickly, perhaps as a temporary solution, until more reliable controls are in place;

6.19.2 Long-term solutions to those risks that pose the greatest risk to the organisation of the trip;

6.19.3 Long-term solutions to those risks with the worst potential consequences;

6.19.4 Arrangements for training on the main risks that remain and how they are to be controlled;

6.19.5 Regular checks to make sure that the control measures stay in place; and

6.19.6 Clear responsibilities – who will lead on what action and by when.

**Step 5: Review Your Risk Register and Update if Necessary**

6.20 Review what you are doing on an ongoing basis. The register should be reviewed at every relevant meeting and undergo a full review after the trip.

6.21 Look at the risk register again.

- Have there been any changes?
- Are there improvements you still need to make?
- Has your travel party spotted any problems?
- Has the member learnt anything from any incidents or near misses?

Make sure the risk register stays up to date.

6.22 When running a trip it is all too easy to forget about reviewing the risk registers until something has gone wrong and it is too late. Members need to set a date for reviewing the risk register. Write it down and note it.

6.23 During the time leading up to the trip, if there is a significant change, don’t wait. Check the risk register and, where necessary, amend it. If possible it is best to think about the risk register when planning change as that way you leave more flexibility.
### STEP 6: RISK RATING CHART

**Rating for Likelihood and Seriousness for each risk**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Rated as Low</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>Rated as Extreme (Used for Seriousness only)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Rated as Medium</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Not Assessed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Rated as High</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grade: Combined effect of Likelihood/Seriousness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Seriousness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Recommended actions for grades of risk**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Risk mitigation actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Mitigation actions, to reduce the likelihood and seriousness, to be identified and implemented as a priority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Mitigation actions, to reduce the likelihood and seriousness, to be identified and appropriate actions implemented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Mitigation actions, to reduce the likelihood and seriousness, to be identified and costed for possible action if funds permit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>To be noted - no action is needed unless grading increases over time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>To be noted - no action is needed unless grading increases over time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Change to Grade since last assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Grade since last assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEW</td>
<td>New risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—</td>
<td>No change to Grade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>