

# 38 - GOALPOST SAFETY GUIDELINES

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The Football Association, along with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the Health and Safety Executive and the British Standards Institution, would like to draw your attention to the following guidelines for the safe use of goalposts.

Several serious injuries and fatalities have occurred in recent years as a result of unsafe or incorrect use of goalposts. Safety is always of paramount importance and everyone in football must play their part to prevent similar incidents occurring in the future:

To minimise the risk of poorly designed, badly installed or inadequately maintained goals being used the BSI have a standard for football goals, nets, maintenance and management which has been agreed across Europe. Only goals and nets that are certified as complying with the relevant British Standard should be purchased or used for all forms of football.

Traditionally larger sized/weighted goals have been designed to withstand the types of misuse that can occur on unsupervised sites (people swinging on the cross bar, etc.); making the goals strong enough to withstand abuse does result in them being quite heavy and concerns have been expressed that there is the possibility of a greater risk of injury occurring through a heavy goal tipping or when a free-standing type, as often used on 3G pitches, is being moved around a field. Lighter goals have been developed for these pitches and a new standard established. BS EN 16579

When selecting goals and other sports equipment, consideration must be given to the precise uses of the pitch, so that changes in activity can take place with the minimum of effort and inconvenience. Goals can be freestanding, and therefore easily moved, although it is important to make proper provision for their storage when not in use (the run-offs of the pitch must not be used for this purpose) or they can be socketed when semi-permanent installation is required.

1. For safety reasons goalposts of any size (including those which are portable and not installed permanently at a pitch or practice field) must always be anchored securely to the ground or have a weighted back bar.
  - Portable goalposts must be secured as per the manufacturer's instructions; this is also a requirement for the Laws of the Game.
  - Under no circumstances should children or adults be allowed to climb on, swing or play with the structure of the goalposts;
  - Particular attention is drawn to the fact that if not properly assembled and secured, portable goalposts may overturn; and
  - Regular inspections of goalposts must be carried out to check that they are properly maintained.
2. Portable goalposts should not be left in place after use. They should either be dismantled or removed to a place of secure storage, or placed together and suitable fixings applied to prevent unauthorised use at any time.
3. Goalposts which are "homemade" or which have been altered from their original size or construction should not be used under any circumstances as they potentially pose a serious safety risk
4. There is no BS/CEN standard for wooden goals and it is unlikely that wooden goals will pass a load or stability test. The FA recommends that wooden goals should be replaced with British Standard compliant metal, aluminium or plastic goalposts. All wooden goals previously tested by independent consultants have failed strength and stability tests.

The FA and BSI, recognise the previous industry, standards for goalposts – BSEN 748 (2013) BS 8461:2005 +A1: 2009 and BS 8462: 2005 +A2: 2012 along with the new BS EN standard 16579. It is strongly recommended that you ensure that all goals purchased comply with the relevant standard. A Code of Practice BS 8461 is also available and copies of all of these standards are available from the BSI. Funding for the replacement of unsafe goals is available via the Football Foundation and eligibility criteria and further details can be obtained from their website.

REMEMBER TO USE GOALPOSTS SAFELY AT ALL TIMES