



National Ground Grading Document

**February 2005
Issue Number 1**

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NATIONAL GROUND GRADING DOCUMENT

IMPLEMENTATION DETAILS

The purpose of this document is to standardise the ground grading requirements between the various steps in the National League System whereby all clubs playing at a particular step will require the same ground grading requirements regardless of which league they are playing in. By following the requirements of this document clubs will have a clear idea of what improvements need to be made as the club progresses up the League System.

The contents of this document have been considered and compiled in conjunction with all leagues currently in membership of the National League System.

The document has received the approval of The Football Associations' Leagues Committee and been sanctioned by FA Council.

The document will become effective from the start of Season 2005/2006 with all clubs being required to have the appropriate facilities in place for the commencement of Season 2007/2008.

In the meantime clubs should be actively striving to achieve the appropriate grading requirements.

In the interim period between now and Season 2007/2008, where the current league requirements are higher than those contained in this document, the lower requirements will apply.

When this document is fully implemented, where indicated, clubs will be able to move from their current Step to the next higher Step with their existing grading and have until the 1st April in the year following promotion in which to achieve the higher grade, providing they meet the grading for the Step at which they currently play.

With regard to the current Step 7 Leagues, work is on-going regarding the overall structure of football at this Step and the new grading categories will be issued in due course.

All references to the Guide to Safety at Sports Ground (known as the Green Guide) refer to the Fourth Edition.

All enquiries relating to funding availability should continue to be directed to the Football Foundation. There details are as follows:-

The Football Foundation
25 Soho Square
London W1D 4FF

Tel: 0207 534 4210
Fax: 0207 287 0459

www.footballfoundation.org.uk

NATIONAL LEAGUE SYSTEM GROUND GRADING CRITERIA

<u>STEP</u>	<u>COMPETITION</u>	<u>GRADING CATEGORY</u>
Step 1	The Football Conference National Division	Membership – A Entry – B
Step 2	The Football Conference North and The Football Conference South	Membership – B Entry - C
Step 3	Isthmian, Northern Premier and Southern Leagues - Premier Divisions	Membership – C Entry – D
Step 4	Isthmian League Division One, Northern Premier League Division One, Southern League Division One East and Division One West	Membership – D Entry – E
Step 5	“Top” Division of:- Combined Counties League, Eastern Counties League, Essex Senior League, Hellenic League, Isthmian League (Division Two), Kent League, Midland Football Alliance, Northern Counties East League, Northern League, North West Counties League, Spartan South Midlands League, Sussex County League, United Counties League, Wessex League and Western League	Exit – E Membership – F
Step 6	“Second” Division of:- Combined Counties League, Eastern Counties League, Hellenic League, Northern Counties East League, Northern League, North West Counties League, Spartan South Midlands League, Sussex County League, United Counties League, Wessex League and Western League	Exit – F Membership – G
Step 7	Current Step 7 Leagues including the “third” Divisions of the Spartan South Midlands League, Sussex County League and Wessex League	Exit – G Remainder to be agreed

NATIONAL GROUND GRADING DOCUMENT

SUMMARY INFORMATION

Category	Grade	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Security required		F/hold or 10 year Lease	F/hold or 10 year Lease	F/hold or 10 year Lease	F/hold or 10 year Lease	F/hold or 10 year Lease	F/hold or Adequate Security	F/hold or Adequate Security
Capacity		4,000	3,000	2,000	1,500	1,000	Not Specified	Not Specified
Clubhouse		Not Specified	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Ideally
Car Parking		Yes + Bus Space	Yes + Bus Space	Yes + Bus Space	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pitch Perimeter Barrier		Yes – Not to exceed 1.1m	Yes – Not to exceed 1.1m	Yes – Not to exceed 1.1m	Yes – Not to exceed 1.1m	Yes – Not to exceed 1.1m	Yes – Not to exceed 1.1m	Yes – Not to exceed 1.1m
Playing Area		100m x 64m (110ydsx70yds)	100m x 64m (110ydsx70yds)	100m x 64m (110ydsx70yds)	100m x 64m (110ydsx70yds)	100m x 64m (110ydsx70yds)	100m x 64m (110ydsx70yds)	100m x 64m (110ydsx70yds)
Technical Area – trainers' boxes		Yes – 11 Seats	Yes – 11 Seats	Yes – 8 Seats	Yes – 8 Seats	Yes – 8 Seats	Yes – 8 Seats	Yes – 8 Seats
Floodlighting		250 avg lux	180 avg lux	120 avg lux	120 avg lux	120 avg lux	120 avg lux	120 avg lux
Public Address System		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not Compulsory
Entrances – turnstiles (minimum)		8 turnstiles	6 turnstiles	4 turnstiles	3 turnstiles	2 turnstiles	1 turnstile or Pay Box	1 turnstile or Pay Box
Emergency Lighting (in all spectator areas)		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Seated Accommodation (inc Directors/Committee)		500 (40)	500 (24)	250 (24)	150 (24)	150 (16)	100 (16)	50
Covered Accommodation (inc Seated Areas)		Not Specified	500	500	300	250	200	100
Press Seating		6	6	4	2	2	Not Compulsory	Not Compulsory
Dressing Rooms – players in sq m		18 Sq m	18 Sq m	Existing Size Min 12 Sq m	Existing Size min 12 Sq m	Existing Size min 12 Sq m	Existing Size min 12 Sq m	Existing Size min 12 Sq m
Dressing Rooms – match officials		6 Sq m	4 Sq m	4 Sq m	4 Sq m	4 Sq m	4 Sq m	4 Sq m

GRADING CATEGORY – A

1. GROUND

The ground must give an overall impression of being a football stadium suitable for the highest level of The National League System.

If in the opinion of the Football Conference Inspection Committee there are any extraneous objects within the boundary of the ground or the ground has an irregular configuration of seating, standing and covered areas that do not confirm to the recognized standard design of a professional football stadium the club will not be considered for membership. Bonded approved project plans for stadium development to the required standard will be taken into account in considering membership application.

Portable buildings, converted mobile cabins or similar structures within the ground will NOT be accepted as a substitute for traditional brick built, concrete buildings or modular buildings, irrespective of any local planning consent given, with the exception of toilet facilities that are specifically provided for in the Football Conference criteria. ONLY the use of HIGH QUALITY buildings will be approved. The ground must in the opinion of the Football Conference Inspection Committee have the potential of being up graded to meet the criteria to obtain a Football League Grading.

1.1 Tenure of Ground

The club must either:

- (a) Own the freehold of the ground, or
- (b) Have a leasehold interest of which the renewal provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 have not been excluded from that lease, or
- (c) Possess an acceptable licence or agreement for the use of the ground for a minimum period of 10 (ten) years unexpired.

In the event of a club having a leasehold interest of less than 10 (ten) years unexpired then the renewal provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 must not have been excluded from that lease.

In addition the club must disclose:

- (d) Whether any director or material shareholder of the club or any connected person or company has a financial interest in the ground;
- (e) Whether the club's occupation of the ground is subject to any third party option;
- (f) If any applicable planning consents are subject to restrictions; and
- (g) Whether the ground is charged by way of security.

The club must provide copies of any documents so disclosed and The Football Conference reserves the right to call for further information.

The club is to be responsible for the maintenance of the pitch and for the general maintenance of the ground, including (but not limited to) ground safety.

1.2 Ground Sharing

Ground sharing will only be approved at the discretion of the Board. The Board will not generally approve any ground sharing arrangement where the club plays its matches outside the conurbation, as defined by the Board, from which the club takes its name or with which it is otherwise traditionally associated and

- (a) Clubs will not be considered for full membership of the Football Conference if their ground sharing agreement is, in the opinion of the board, arranged especially to gain membership of the Football Conference, this includes any proposal to share with a Football League Club, Rugby Union, Rugby League Club, Athletics Club or any other sports stadium.
- (b) The Board must approve any existing ground share agreement.
- (c) No application for a ground share agreement will be accepted during the first three years of a club being elected into membership of the Football Conference, unless the conditions of paragraph 1.2 (f) apply.
- (d) Any ground share application by a member club, that does not fall within the conditions of paragraph 1.2 (f) must be for a minimum of ten years with no option to amend the terms during the first three years of a ground share approved by the Board.
- (e) No application will be accepted from a club applying for membership of the Football Conference who is in a ground sharing arrangement as a sub-tenant or second user or similar arrangements where the club is not the leaseholder, own the freehold, or license agreement holder or main tenant.
- (f) Short term ground sharing agreements will only be accepted if a club is moving to a new ground or their existing ground is being re-built or refurbished and confirmation is provide to the Board that the work proposed has full planning permission, the construction contracts with a start and finish dates have been awarded subject to ground sharing approval and that funding is in place. For the avoidance of doubt, the term "short term" refers to not more than 12 months.

1.3 Location of Ground

The location of the ground, in its relation to the conurbation from which the club takes its name or with which it is otherwise traditionally associated, must meet with the approval of the Board.

1.4 New Stadium

The club must disclose plans and details of any proposed future move to a new stadium. The location of the proposed new stadium must meet with the approval of the Board.

1.5 Club Staff

The club must have a full-time administration. The club must have a qualified physiotherapist in line with current Football Association Regulations and a groundsman.

1.6 The Football League

Clubs seeking full membership of the Football Conference must provide full details by 1st MARCH in the year of application, of how they will achieve a Football League Graded Stadium at their current home ground within the first year of membership of the Football League and within three years of membership of the Football Conference. The plans must include details of achieving the minimum requirements of a 5,000 capacity stadium including 1,000 seats for membership of the Third Division (with the potential to achieve 10,000 in the future).

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, which are acceptable to the Board, the potential of a ground to meet The Football League criteria will be based on the ability of the ground to meet the criteria WITHIN THE EXISTING BOUNDARY WALL that is in place at the time of the Conference inspection.

2 STADIUM FACILITIES

2.1 Stadium Capacity

The stadium must have a minimum capacity of 4,000 as certified by the local authority, the calculation verified by The Football Licensing Authority in line with the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds, current edition at the time of inspection, with the potential to achieve a capacity of 5,000 in the future.

Final planning permission together with a business strategy plan with realistic timescales must be available to achieve the 5,000 capacity.

It must be possible for spectators to view the match either seated or standing for the full length of all four sides of the playing areas.

The Football Conference reserves the right to refuse admission to any club who fail to satisfy the Board that they can comply with these conditions.

All Football Conference fixtures come under the Football Spectators Act 1989 (Football banning order legislation), and the definition of a designated match under the Football (Offences) Act 1991

2.2 External Boundary Wall

The ground must be enclosed with an external boundary wall of sound construction, secure on all sides of the ground and sufficient to deter would be climbers. The boundary must be of sound construction of pre cast concrete, brick, breeze block or metal cladding with steel or concrete posts and be of a minimum height of 1.83 metres as measured from outside the ground.

Whilst lapped timber, latch panel wood fences and wire mesh fences with wooden posts may be acceptable, hedges, shrubs and/or trees will not be accepted.

2.3 Terracing

All terracing must be in good sound condition and must conform with the requirements of the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (Fourth Edition).

The Local Authority, in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (currently the Fourth Edition), must independently assess terrace capacities. Any level surfaces within the ground must be hard standing and spectator-standing areas behind the goals must be terraced.

Grass banking, areas of grass or other forms of soft spectator standing areas (e.g. ash, pebbles, gravel etc) will not be accepted anywhere in the ground.

On all four sides of the ground immediately behind the pitch perimeter barrier, a gangway of hard standing must be in place to a minimum of 1.1 metres wide (1.2 metres for all new stadiums). This area must not be used as a standing area for spectators during a match and should be clearly marked as a sterile area with appropriate yellow lines. All gangways and landings must conform with the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (Fourth Edition).

2.4 Parking Facilities

Parking facilities must be provided for directors, with a minimum number of 4 places for visiting directors.

There must be safe parking arrangements for the visiting team's coach.

Parking facilities must also be provided for the match officials.

2.5 Ground Control Room

The club must provide a stadium control room before the start of the club's first season in The Football League, in accordance with the requirements of the local safety committee. This should be included in the planning details submitted to the League.

2.6 Closed Circuit Television Surveillance System

The club will be expected to install a CCTV surveillance system before the start of the club's first season in The Football League, in accordance with the requirements of the local safety committee. This should be included in the planning details submitted to the League, outlined at Section B 1.

2.7 Emergency Access

Access for emergency services must be provided.

3 PLAYING FACILITIES

3.1 Playing Area

Minimum size to be 110 x 70 yards (100 x 64 metres).

Goalposts and goal net supports to be of professional manufacture and to meet the requirements of the Laws of the Game.

The Football Association are looking to ban the use of metal cup hooks in line with its Goalpost Safety initiative. This may form part of the ground grading criteria in subsequent seasons. Clubs should bear this in mind when reviewing their facilities in line with this document. Goals manufactured to current British Standards do not permit the use of metal cup hooks.

The shortest distance between touchline and pitch perimeter barrier to be *ideally* 2.75 metres, but no less than 2.25 metres.

The shortest distance between goal-line and pitch perimeter barrier to be *ideally* 2.75 metres, but no less than 2.25 metres.

3.2 Pitch Perimeter Barrier

There must be a permanent fixed barrier of sound construction (concrete or steel) and free from all sharp edges, surrounding the playing area on all 4 (four) sides. Ideally the height should not exceed 1.1 metres.

The barrier, if other than solid wall type of construction, must be infilled. Advertising boards may be acceptable as a means of infill.

There should ideally be 2.75, but no less than 2.25 metres between the touchline, goal line and the pitch perimeter barrier.

3.3 Technical Area

Seating provided in the Technical Area must be separated and clearly marked HOME and AWAY. They should be an equal distance either side of the halfway line, a minimum of 3 metres apart. Each of the seating areas must be able to accommodate a minimum of 11 adults.

The Technical Area, as defined in Law 3 of the Laws of the Game must be clearly marked.

3.4 Playing Area Surface

The playing surface shall be grass and must be of a high standard, as defined by The Football Conference. It must be flat and free from surface depressions and excessive undulations.

The maximum slopes allowable shall not exceed an even gradient of vertical to horizontal 1:41 in any direction.

Artificial playing surfaces are not currently permitted in competitions under the control of The Football Association.

Set out below is the view of the International FA Board and FIFA with regard to artificial surfaces:

"The Board recognised the advances in artificial surface technology and the major benefits of using artificial surfaces in areas of climatic problems. It also recognised that artificial surfaces allowed multiple and extended use of facilities in urban environments. The Board mandated FIFA to create clear procedures for the use of artificial surfaces, to unify the quality system and apply it worldwide, taking into consideration the best resources and knowledge available."

The matter is therefore under review.

3.5 Secure Walkway

There must be safe unimpeded passage for players and officials between their dressing rooms and the pitch.

The use of protection designed products such as retractable tunnels or permanent structures to separate players and spectators are acceptable.

3.6 Floodlighting

The average lux value must be at least 250, obtained from 88 readings taken on a grid system provided by The Football Conference. The minimum lux reading at any one of the 88 readings taken must not be less than 100 lux.

The readings must be carried out by an "approved" contractor.

At the first inspection a floodlighting chart must be presented indicating the existing average LUX value. The readings must have been taken within the preceding THREE MONTHS.

(Further information:-

The Football League minimum average lux value for League Two Third Division is 350. A new club entering League Two must comply with the minimum floodlighting requirements by 31st May in the second season from the date of its admission).

An "approved" contractor is one which is in possession of the NICEIC (National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting) Approved Contractors' award or ISO 9000/BS 5750 (International Standards Organisation/British Standard) or is a member of the Electrical Contractors' Association.

The contractor must, when detailing the lux values, give confirmation in writing of the date when the illumination test equipment used was last calibrated.

3.7 Public Address System

There must be a public address system installed, with adequate speaker output to relay information to all spectator areas, as required by the local safety committee.

3.8 Emergency Lighting

There must be an emergency lighting system for all spectator areas and concourses, as required by the local safety committee.

4 SPECTATOR ACCOMMODATION

4.1 Seating

The minimum number of seats under cover to be 500 all the seats to be located within the main stand. The main stand must provide adequate viewing for spectators as defined in the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (Fourth Edition) and meet the "C" value sight line calculations. A minimum of five risers is required to the dimensions recommended in the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (Fourth Edition). The first line of seating must be above pitch level.

The type of seats must be individual seats with tip up bottoms and include backrests. Alternatively, other than the Directors Box, the seats can be of the plastic moulded type complete with back rests or other types of seats provided they have back rests. If clubs cannot presently achieve the seating criteria, details must be included in the final planning permission as outlined at Section B1.

4.2 Directors Box

The Directors Box to enjoy a prime position in the main stand. There should be individual seats and Home and Away areas should be clearly marked.

Home - minimum number of seats 24
Away - minimum number of seats 16

4.3 Segregation Measures

The club must have the ability to segregate home and visiting supporters to the satisfaction of the local police and the local safety committee. Any segregated area must have exclusive entrances/exits/toilet and catering facilities.

4.4 Press Facilities

The minimum number of seats and writing stations to be 12. There must be a minimum of 4 exclusive telephone lines.

4.5 Toilet Facilities (spectators)

There must be adequate toilet facilities for both men and women in each area of the ground commensurate with the capacity of that area, as required by the local safety committee, in accordance with the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (Fourth Edition).

There must be at least one hand washbasin in each toilet.

Should the Inspection Committee require new and/or additional toilet facilities to be necessary in the ground these can be of the semi-permanent type these facilities must be connected directly to main water and drainage supplies. Only the use of high quality buildings will be approved. All new and/or additional facilities will require the approval of the Inspection Committee following installation.

Clubs are recommended to refer to the guidelines in respect of new toilet installations as set out in the Football Stadia Advisory Design publication.

4.6 Refreshment Facilities

4.6.1 Directors/Committee/Guests

There must be a Directors Room located within the Main Stand or adjacent to it. If, not an integral part of the Main Stand the Directors Room must be built of traditional brick, concrete or similar construction. Portable buildings, converted mobile cabins or temporary buildings will NOT be allowed. The Directors Room must be capable of accommodating a minimum of 25 people for the use of home and visiting Directors, VIP's, guests, Sponsors and club staff only.

4.6.2 Ground Refreshment Facilities

Refreshment facilities must be available for spectators in each separate area of the ground.

There must be a refreshment room or access to a lounge area available for players.

There must be a guest room for entertaining visitors and guests of the club.

4.7 Entrances

Turnstiles must be of the automatic revolving type fitted with counting facilities. Each segregated area of the ground must have a minimum of one turnstile available for each 500 of that area's capacity. There must be a minimum of eight turnstiles. On admission to The Football League clubs must provide a computerized turnstile monitoring system. This should be included in the final planning application outlined at Section B1.

The system should be installed before the start of the club's first season in The Football League.

4.8 Exits

The local certifying authority must approve the location and number of ground exits.

All exits must be clearly signed with "running man" signs.

4.9 Disabled Facilities

Clubs must provide facilities for the accommodation of disabled supporters to meet the legal requirements imposed by the Disabled Discrimination Act 1995.

Reference should be made to the Publications/Data Sheets issued by both The Football Association and the Football Foundation.

5 DRESSING ROOM FACILITIES

5.1 Players

Separate dressing rooms must be provided for the teams. The minimum size for each changing area is 18 sq. metres and each dressing room must have either:-

- a) a shower area comprising at least 4 shower units

Each room must also be equipped with at least one urinal, one WC and one washbasin. There must be a massage table in each room.

5.2 Match Officials

The dressing room for match officials must have a changing area of at least 6 sq. metres and must contain at least one shower, one WC and one washbasin.

Provision must be made for separate dressing rooms for both male and female match officials

All dressing room areas must be maintained to a high level of cleanliness and be secure on match days.

6 MEDICAL

6.1 Medical Treatment Room

There must be a suitably equipped medical treatment room in the vicinity of the players' dressing rooms.

6.2 First Aid Facilities

There must be a designated First Aid Room fitted out with services in accordance with the requirements of the local safety committee, in accordance with the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds Fourth Edition.

GRADING CATEGORY – B

1. GROUND

The ground must give an overall appearance and impression of being a football ground suitable for the highest levels of the National League System.

It must be possible for spectators to view the match, either standing or seated, for the full length of all 4 sides of the playing area. However, at the discretion of the Board of Directors or Management Committee of the league concerned, any other configuration for spectators to view the match may be considered. Any approved configuration must meet the minimum capacity requirements.

The name of the club must reflect the area in which it operates. The location of the ground, in so far as its relation to the conurbation whose name the club bears, or is traditionally associated with, must meet with the approval of the Board of Directors or Management Committee of the league to which the club seeks membership.

The club must disclose plans and details of any proposed future move to a new stadium. The location of the proposed new stadium must meet with the approval of the Board of Directors or Management Committee of the league to which the club seeks membership.

The proposed merger of two clubs in contention for possible admission into any league within the National League System will be dealt with on its merits.

1.1 Security of Tenure

The club must either:

- (a) Own the freehold of the ground, or
- (b) Have a leasehold interest of which the renewal provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 have not been excluded from that lease, or
- (c) Possess an acceptable licence or agreement for the use of the ground for a minimum period of 10 (ten) years unexpired.

In the event of a club having a leasehold interest of less than 10 (ten) years unexpired then the renewal provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 must not have been excluded from that lease.

In addition the club must disclose:-

- (d) Whether any director or material shareholder of the club or any connected person or company has a financial interest in the ground;
- (e) Whether the club's occupation of the ground is subject to any third party option;
- (f) If any applicable planning consents are subject to restrictions; and
- (g) Whether the ground is charged by way of security.

The club must provide copies of any documents so disclosed and The Football Conference reserves the right to call for further information.

The club is to be responsible for the maintenance of the pitch and for the general maintenance of the ground, including (but not limited to) ground safety.

1.2 Ground Share

Ground sharing is permitted, but not in order to gain promotion or to retain Membership at a particular Step. A ground sharing agreement must have been in place for at least one full season prior to promotion.

Where there is a ground share between two football clubs, priority of fixtures will be given to the club playing at the higher level within the National League System unless otherwise approved by the respective leagues.

Where a ground share is in place with another sport i.e. Athletics, Cricket, Rugby Union, Rugby League etc, the club must have full use of all facilities on match days.

1.3 Capacity

The Stadium must have a minimum operational capacity of 3,000 calculated in accordance with the guidance given in the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (Fourth Edition) and where practical certified by a competent authority. There must also be potential to increase the capacity to 4,000 in the future.

It must be possible for spectators to view the match either seated or standing for the full length of all 4 sides of the playing area, unless a different configuration has been agreed (see paragraph 1).

1.4 Boundary of Ground

The ground must be enclosed by a permanent boundary, which will prevent individuals from viewing the game from outside the ground. The boundary should be of sound construction of pre cast concrete, brick, breeze block or metal cladding with steel or concrete posts and be of a minimum height of 1.83 metres as measured from outside the ground.

Whilst lapped timber, latch panel wood fences and wire mesh fences with wooden posts might be acceptable, hedges, shrubs and/or trees will not be accepted.

In certain circumstances one side of the ground, which adjoins private land/property, may be exempt from the need for a permanent boundary.

1.5 Clubhouse

There must be a clubhouse facility either on or adjacent to the ground, which should be open on match days to provide refreshments to spectators.

A telephone (not mobile) must be available in the clubhouse.

1.6 Car Parking

There should be adequate car parking facilities at or adjacent to the ground, or a Park & Ride scheme in operation. In addition, there must be safe parking arrangements for a visiting team bus and parking facilities for match officials.

1.7 Pitch Perimeter Barrier

There must be a permanent fixed barrier of sound construction (concrete and steel) and free from all sharp edges surrounding the pitch on all 4 sides. Ideally the height should not exceed 1.1 metres.

The barrier, if other than solid wall type of construction, must be infilled. Advertising boards may be acceptable as a means of infill.

There must be a minimum of 1.83 metres, ideally 2 metres between the touchline, goal line and the pitch perimeter barrier. (National Grade A (The Football Conference national competition) requires ideally 2.75 metres, but no less than 2.25 metres.)

1.8 Pitch Standards

The playing surface will be grass, unless authorised by the respective Board of Directors or Management Committee, and must be of a high standard. It must be level and free from surface depressions and excessive undulations.

The maximum slope allowable shall not exceed an even gradient of vertical to horizontal 1 : 41 in any direction.

The playing surface must be maintained to the highest possible standards.

Artificial playing surfaces are not currently permitted in competitions under the control of The Football Association.

Set out below is the view of the International FA Board and FIFA with regard to artificial surfaces:

“The Board recognised the advances in artificial surface technology and the major benefits of using artificial surfaces in areas of climatic problems. It also recognised that artificial surfaces allowed multiple and extended use of facilities in urban environments. The Board mandated FIFA to create clear procedures for the use of artificial surfaces, to unify the quality system and apply it worldwide, taking into consideration the best resources and knowledge available.”

The matter is therefore under review.

1.9 Playing Area

The playing area to be a minimum of 100 metres x 64 metres (110 yards x 70 yards) and should conform to the requirements of the Laws of the Game.

Goalposts and goal net supports should be of professional manufacture and conform to the current safety requirements and to the requirements of the Laws of the Game.

The Football Association are looking to ban the use of metal cup hooks in line with its Goalpost Safety initiative. This may form part of the ground grading criteria in subsequent seasons. Clubs should bear this in mind when reviewing their facilities in line with this document. Goals manufactured to current British Standards do not permit the use of metal cup hooks.

Reference should be made to the Goalpost Safety information published by The Football Association.

1.10 Technical Area

Seating provided in the Technical Area must be separated and clearly marked HOME and AWAY. They should be an equal distance either side of the halfway line, a minimum of 3 metres apart. Each of the seating areas must be able to accommodate a minimum of 11 adults.

The Technical Area, as defined in Law 3 of the Laws of the Game must be clearly marked.

1.11 Secure Walkway

Clubs are to provide for safe passage for players and match officials between the dressing rooms and the field of play, which should be adequately stewarded. The passage onto and off the pitch must be suitably enclosed when players and match officials are entering or leaving the field of play. The use of protection designed products such as retractable tunnels or permanent structures to separate players and spectators are acceptable.

1.12 Floodlighting

Floodlights must be provided to an average lux reading of 180. No single reading can be less than one quarter of the highest reading so as to ensure an even spread of light.

Reading shall be on a grid of 88 markings evenly spaced with the outside readings falling on the pitch boundary line. The average of all the readings is taken to be the average illumination level in lux of the floodlighting installation.

The lux values must be tested every two years in accordance with current guidelines by an approved independent contractor.

An "approved" contractor is one which is in possession of the NICEIC (National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting) Approved Contractors' award or ISO 9000/BS 5750 (International Standards Organisation/British Standard) or is a member of the Electrical Contractors' Association.

The contractor must, when detailing the lux values, give confirmation in writing of the date when the illumination test equipment used was last calibrated.

1.13 Public Address System

A public address system must be provided with adequate output to convey information through loudspeakers in all spectator areas.

1.14 Entrances

There should be at least 6 fully operational turnstiles, which must be of the revolving type, which should be placed in such positions around the ground to meet segregation requirements when needed.

1.15 Exits

The location and number of ground exits must be approved by a relevant authority and comply with the requirements of the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds.

All exits must be clearly signed with "running man" signs.

1.16 Emergency Lighting

There must be a working emergency lighting system in all spectator areas if required by a relevant authority.

1.17 Adjoining Pitches

Where deemed that they are likely to interfere with the playing of a match, ball games will not be played on adjoining pitches whilst league or cup matches are in progress. An adjoining pitch is deemed to be where there is no barrier between pitches.

1.18 Emergency Access

Access for emergency services must be provided.

2. SPECTATOR FACILITIES

2.1 Spectator Accommodation

Covered accommodation, which must be on at least 2 sides of the ground, must be of sound construction of timber/steel/brick/concrete or any combination of these materials. Open timber stepped stands are not permissible.

The minimum covered accommodation must be 500 seated. These 500 seats, in not more than 2 stands, may be inclusive of Directors/Committee and press seating. Whilst individual seats are preferred, existing marked bench seating may be permitted.

There must be a minimum of 24 seats provided for Directors/Committee and guests with a minimum of 12 seats provided for the visiting club. These seats must be clearly marked "Home" and "Away Directors".

Standing spectators are not allowed in a seated spectator stand where they can obstruct views.

Hard standing to a minimum width of 1 metre must be provided on 4 sides of the ground, unless a different configuration has been agreed (see paragraph 1).

Clubs must be able to demonstrate that visiting supporters can be segregated when necessary.

Development must be on more than one side of the ground.

2.2 Press Seating

A minimum of 6 seats must be provided with lighting and writing facilities for use by the press and other media.

2.3 Terracing

Where terracing is provided it must comply with the requirements of the Guide to Safety at Sports Ground, with crush barriers if/or as required by or found acceptable by a relevant authority. All terracing must be in a sound condition. Terracing that is crumbling, has grass/weeds growing through it or has broken or loose concrete will not be accepted. Under such circumstances, clubs will not qualify for this Grade.

Any level surface within the ground must be hard standing, i.e. tarmac, concrete, concrete paving or other approved materials. Grass banking, areas of grass or other forms of soft spectator standing areas (e.g. ash, pebbles, gravel etc) will not be accepted anywhere in the ground.

2.4 Toilets

Toilets must be located within the ground and must be accessible to both male and female spectators.

The following minimum toilet facilities must be provided in each segregated area, excluding those located in any clubhouse:

Male:	4 urinals or equivalent and 2 WC's
Female:	2 WC's

In addition, wash hand basins, warm air hand driers and/or paper towels together with a supply of toilet paper must be provided in each toilet area.

All toilet areas to be in working order and maintained to a high level of cleanliness.

2.5 Refreshment Facilities

2.5.1 Directors/Committee/Guests

A separate room shall be made available in which refreshments for Directors/Committee and guests can be served. These areas must be able to accommodate a minimum of 24 persons with nearby toilet facilities.

2.5.2 Ground Refreshment Facilities

Refreshment facilities must be provided in each segregated area of the ground. These facilities may be of a temporary or mobile type.

2.6 Disabled Facilities

The club must take full account of the needs of disabled spectators. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 refers.

Reference should be made to the Publications/Data Sheets issued by both The Football Association and the Football Foundation.

3. DRESSING ROOM FACILITIES

3.1 Players

Separate dressing rooms must be provided for both teams within the enclosed area of the ground. The dressing rooms must be of sound construction of brick or concrete and be of a permanent nature. Existing dressing rooms must be of a minimum size of 18 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas.

Each dressing room must have the following:

- A shower area comprising of at least 4 showerheads

- At least 1 WC and 1 wash hand basin

- All must have hot and cold running water

There must be a treatment table in each dressing room.

3.2 Match Officials

The size of the match official's dressing room must be a minimum of 4 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas. When new dressing rooms are being constructed the match officials room should be a minimum of 6 square metres in size, excluding shower and toilet areas.

Each match officials dressing room must have the following:

- At least 1 shower

- At least 1 WC and 1 wash hand basin

Provision should be made for separate dressing rooms for both male and female match officials.

Where new dressing rooms are being constructed or existing are being re-designed, separate purpose built facilities for both male and female match officials must be provided.

There must be an audible warning device located in the match official's dressing room, which is linked to the player's dressing rooms.

All dressing room areas must be maintained to a high level of cleanliness and be secure on match days.

4. MEDICAL

There must be a suitably equipped medical treatment room for players use located in the vicinity of the players dressing rooms. Access to this room must not be via the home or away dressing rooms.

A stretcher for the removal of injured players from the field of play must be provided.

The club must provide a suitable treatment room for spectators within the boundary of the ground, which meets with Health and Safety requirements.

There must be a suitably qualified person (minimum F.A. Emergency Aid Course) in attendance to assist with spectator problems unless the St John Ambulance Brigade, Red Cross Society or other capable voluntary agency are in attendance.

GRADING CATEGORY – C

1. GROUND

The ground must give an overall appearance and impression of being a football ground suitable for the highest levels of the National League System.

It must be possible for spectators to view the match, either standing or seated, for the full length of all 4 sides of the playing area. However, at the discretion of the Board of Directors or Management Committee of the league concerned, any other configuration for spectators to view the match may be considered. Any approved configuration must meet the minimum capacity requirements.

The name of the club must reflect the area in which it operates. The location of the ground, in so far as its relation to the conurbation whose name the club bears, or is traditionally associated with, must meet with the approval of the Board of Directors or Management Committee of the league to which the club seeks membership.

The club must disclose plans and details of any proposed future move to a new stadium. The location of the proposed new stadium must meet with the approval of the Board of Directors or Management Committee of the league to which the club seeks membership.

The proposed merger of two clubs in contention for possible admission into any league within the National League System will be dealt with on its merits.

1.1 Security of Tenure

The club must either:

- (a) Own the freehold of the ground, or
- (b) Have a leasehold interest of which the renewal provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 have not been excluded from that lease, or
- (c) Possess an acceptable licence or agreement for the use of the ground for a minimum period of 10 (ten) years unexpired.

In the event of a club having a leasehold interest of less than 10 (ten) years unexpired then the renewal provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 must not have been excluded from that lease.

1.2 Ground Share

Ground sharing is permitted, but not in order to gain promotion or to retain membership at a particular Step. A ground sharing agreement must have been in place for at least one full season prior to promotion.

Where there is a ground share between two football clubs, priority of fixtures will be given to the club playing at the higher level within the National League System unless otherwise approved by the respective leagues.

Where a ground share is in place with another sport i.e. Athletics, Cricket, Rugby Union, Rugby League etc, the club must have full use of all facilities on match days.

1.3 Capacity

The Stadium must have a minimum operational capacity of 2,000 calculated in accordance with the guidance given in the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (Green Guide) and where practical certified by a competent authority. There must also be potential to increase the capacity to 4,000 in the future.

It must be possible for spectators to view the match either seated or standing for the full length of all 4 sides of the playing area, unless a different configuration has been agreed (see paragraph 1).

1.4 Boundary of Ground

The ground must be enclosed by a permanent boundary, which will prevent individuals from viewing the game from outside the ground. The boundary should be of sound construction of pre cast concrete, brick, breeze block or metal cladding with steel or concrete posts and be of a minimum height of 1.83 metres as measured from outside the ground.

Whilst lapped timber, latch panel wood fences and wire mesh fences with wooden posts might be acceptable, hedges, shrubs and/or trees will not be accepted.

In certain circumstances one side of the ground, which adjoins private land/property, may be exempt from the need for a permanent boundary.

1.5 Clubhouse

There must be a clubhouse facility either on or adjacent to the ground, which should be open on match days to provide refreshments to spectators.

A telephone (not mobile) must be available in the clubhouse.

1.6 Car Parking

There should be adequate car parking facilities at or adjacent to the ground, or a Park & Ride scheme in operation. In addition, there must be safe parking arrangements for a visiting team bus and parking facilities for match officials.

1.7 Pitch Perimeter Barrier

There must be a permanent fixed barrier of sound construction (concrete and steel) and free from all sharp edges surrounding the pitch on all 4 sides. Ideally the height should not exceed 1.1 metres.

The barrier, if other than solid wall type of construction, must be infilled. Advertising boards may be acceptable as a means of infill.

There must be a minimum of 1.83 metres, ideally 2 metres between the touchline, goal line and the pitch perimeter barrier. (National Grade A (The Football Conference national competition) requires ideally 2.75 metres, but no less than 2.25 metres.)

1.8 Pitch Standards

The playing surface will be grass, unless authorised by the respective Board of Directors or Management Committee, and must be of a high standard. It must be level and free from surface depressions and excessive undulations.

The maximum slope allowable shall not exceed an even gradient of vertical to horizontal 1 : 41 in any direction.

The playing surface must be maintained to the highest possible standards.

Artificial playing surfaces are not currently permitted in competitions under the control of The Football Association.

Set out below is the view of the International FA Board and FIFA with regard to artificial surfaces:

“The Board recognised the advances in artificial surface technology and the major benefits of using artificial surfaces in areas of climatic problems. It also recognised that artificial surfaces allowed multiple and extended use of facilities in urban environments. The Board mandated FIFA to create clear procedures for the use of artificial surfaces, to unify the quality system and apply it worldwide, taking into consideration the best resources and knowledge available.”

The matter is therefore under review.

1.9 Playing Area

The playing area to be a minimum of 100 metres x 64 metres (110 yards x 70 yards) and should conform to the requirements of the Laws of the Game.

Goalposts and goal net supports should be of professional manufacture and conform to the current safety requirements and to the requirements of the Laws of the Game.

The Football Association are looking to ban the use of metal cup hooks in line with its Goalpost Safety initiative. This may form part of the ground grading criteria in subsequent seasons. Clubs should bear this in mind when reviewing their facilities in line with this document. Goals manufactured to current British Standards do not permit the use of metal cup hooks.

Reference should be made to the Goalpost Safety information published by The Football Association.

1.10 Technical Area

Two covered trainers boxes clearly marked “Home” and “Away” must be provided. They should be an equal distance either side of the halfway line, a minimum of 3 metres apart. Each box must be able to accommodate 8 adults under cover on fixed seats or benches.

Portable trainers’ boxes are permitted and must be securely fixed when in use.

The Technical Area, as defined within the Laws of the Game, must be marked out.

1.11 Secure Walkway

Clubs are to provide for safe passage for players and match officials between the dressing rooms and the field of play, which should be adequately stewarded. The passage onto and off the pitch must be suitably enclosed when players and match officials are entering or leaving the field of play. The use of protection designed products such as retractable tunnels or permanent structures to separate players and spectators are acceptable.

1.12 Floodlighting

Floodlights must be provided to an average lux reading of 120. No single reading can be less than one quarter of the highest reading so as to ensure an even spread of light.

Reading shall be on a grid of 88 markings (8 across, 11 down) evenly spaced with the outside readings falling on the pitch boundary line. The average of all the readings is taken to be the average illumination level in lux of the floodlighting installation.

The lux values must be tested every two years in accordance with current guidelines by an approved independent contractor.

An "approved" contractor is one which is in possession of the NICEIC (National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting) Approved Contractors' award or ISO 9000/BS 5750 (International Standards Organisation/British Standard) or is a member of the Electrical Contractors' Association.

The contractor must, when detailing the lux values, give confirmation in writing of the date when the illumination test equipment used was last calibrated.

When new or improved installations are being planned, an average lux reading of 180 should be provided.

1.13 Public Address System

A public address system must be provided with adequate output to convey information through loudspeakers in all spectator areas.

1.14 Entrances

There should be at least 4 fully operational turnstiles, which must be of the revolving type, which should be placed in such positions around the ground to meet segregation requirements when needed.

1.15 Exits

The location and number of ground exits must be approved by a relevant authority and comply with the requirements of the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds.

All exits must be clearly signed with "running man" signs.

1.16 Emergency Lighting

There must be a working emergency lighting system in all spectator areas as required by a relevant authority.

1.17 Adjoining Pitches

Where deemed that they are likely to interfere with the playing of a match, ball games will not be played on adjoining pitches whilst league or cup matches are in progress. An adjoining pitch is deemed to be where there is no barrier between pitches.

1.18 Emergency Access

Access for emergency services must be provided.

2. SPECTATOR FACILITIES

2.1 Spectator Accommodation

Covered accommodation, which should preferably be on at least 2 sides of the ground, must be of sound construction of timber/steel/brick/concrete or any combination of these materials. Open timber stepped stands are not permissible.

The minimum covered accommodation must be 500, of which at least 250 must be seated. These 250 seats, in not more than 2 stands, may be inclusive of Directors/Committee and press seating. Whilst individual seats are preferred, existing bench seating may be permitted. In each case, all seats are to be clearly numbered.

There must be a minimum of 24 seats provided for Directors/Committee and guests with a minimum of 12 seats provided for the visiting club. These seats must be clearly marked "Home" and "Away Directors".

Standing spectators are not allowed in a seated spectator stand where they can obstruct views.

Hard standing to a minimum width of 1 metre must be provided on 4 sides of the ground, unless a different configuration has been agreed (see paragraph 1).

Clubs must be able to demonstrate that visiting supporters can be segregated when necessary.

Development must be on more than one side of the ground.

2.2 Press Seating

A minimum of 4 seats must be provided with lighting and writing facilities for use by the press and other media.

2.3 Terracing

Where terracing is provided it must comply with the requirements of the Guide to Safety at Sports Ground, with crush barriers if/or as required by or found acceptable by a relevant authority. All terracing must be in a sound condition. Terracing that is crumbling, has grass/weeds growing through it or has broken or loose concrete will not be accepted. Under such circumstances, clubs will not qualify for this Grade.

Any level surface within the ground must be hard standing, i.e. tarmac, concrete, concrete paving or other approved materials. Grass banking, areas of grass or other forms of soft spectator standing areas (e.g. ash, pebbles, gravel etc) will not be accepted anywhere in the ground.

2.4 Toilets

Toilets must be located within the ground and must be accessible to both male and female spectators.

The following minimum toilet facilities must be provided in total, excluding those located in any clubhouse:

Male:	4 urinals or equivalent and 2 WC's
Female:	2 WC's

In addition, wash hand basins, warm air hand driers and/or paper towels together with a supply of toilet paper must be provided in each toilet area.

All toilet areas to be in working order and maintained to a high level of cleanliness.

2.5 Refreshment Facilities

2.5.1 Directors/Committee/Guests

A separate room shall be made available in which refreshments for Directors/Committee and guests can be served. These areas must be able to accommodate a minimum of 24 persons with nearby toilet facilities.

2.5.2 Ground Refreshment Facilities

Refreshment facilities must be provided in each segregated area of the ground. These facilities may be of a temporary or mobile type.

2.6 Disabled Facilities

The club must take full account of the needs of disabled spectators. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 refers.

Reference should be made to the Publications/Data Sheets issued by both The Football Association and the Football Foundation.

3. DRESSING ROOM FACILITIES

3.1 Players

Separate dressing rooms must be provided for both teams within the enclosed area of the ground. The dressing rooms must be of sound construction of brick or concrete and be of a permanent nature. Existing dressing room dimensions will be acceptable provided they are a minimum of 12 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas. However clubs wishing to progress beyond this Grade should be aware of the need to increase to a minimum size of 18 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas. Where clubs are planning to build new dressing rooms these must be a minimum size of 18 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas.

Each dressing room must have the following:

- A shower area comprising of at least 4 showerheads

- At least 1 WC and 1 wash hand basin

- All must have hot and cold running water

There must be a treatment table in each dressing room unless there is a separate medical room.

3.2 Match Officials

The size of the match official's dressing room must be a minimum of 4 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas. When new dressing rooms are being constructed the match officials room should be a minimum of 6 square metres in size, excluding shower and toilet areas.

Each match officials dressing room must have the following:

- At least 1 shower

- At least 1 WC and 1 wash hand basin

Provision should be made for separate dressing rooms for both male and female match officials.

Where new dressing rooms are being constructed or existing are being re-designed, separate purpose built facilities for both male and female match officials must be provided.

There must be an audible warning device located in the match official's dressing room, which is linked to the player's dressing rooms.

All dressing room areas must be maintained to a high level of cleanliness and be secure on match days.

4. MEDICAL

There must be a suitably equipped medical treatment room for players use located in the vicinity of the players dressing rooms. Access to this room must not be via the home or away dressing rooms.

A stretcher for the removal of injured players from the field of play must be provided.

The club must provide a suitable treatment room for spectators within the boundary of the ground, which meets with Health and Safety requirements.

There must be a suitably qualified person (minimum F.A. Emergency Aid Course) in attendance to assist with spectator problems unless the St John Ambulance Brigade, Red Cross Society or other capable voluntary agency are in attendance.

GRADING CATEGORY – D

1. GROUND

The ground must give an overall appearance and impression of being a football ground suitable for the highest levels of the National League System.

It must be possible for spectators to view the match, either standing or seated, for the full length of all 4 sides of the playing area. However, at the discretion of the Board of Directors or Management Committee of the league concerned, any other configuration for spectators to view the match may be considered. Any approved configuration must meet the minimum capacity requirements.

The name of the club must reflect the area in which it operates. The location of the ground, in so far as its relation to the conurbation whose name the club bears, or is traditionally associated with, must meet with the approval of the Board of Directors or Management Committee of the league to which the club seeks membership.

The club must disclose plans and details of any proposed future move to a new stadium. The location of the proposed new stadium must meet with the approval of the Board of Directors or Management Committee of the league to which the club seeks membership.

The proposed merger of two clubs in contention for possible admission into any league within the National League System will be dealt with on its merits.

1.1 Security of Tenure

The club must either:

- (a) Own the freehold of the ground, or
- (b) Have a leasehold interest of which the renewal provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 have not been excluded from that lease, or
- (c) Possess an acceptable licence or agreement for the use of the ground for a minimum period of 10 (ten) years unexpired.

In the event of a club having a leasehold interest of less than 10 (ten) years unexpired then the renewal provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 must not have been excluded from that lease.

1.2 Ground Share

Ground sharing is permitted, but not in order to gain promotion or to retain membership at a particular Step. A ground sharing agreement must have been in place for at least one full season prior to promotion.

Where there is a ground share between two football clubs, priority of fixtures will be given to the club playing at the higher level within the National League System unless otherwise approved by the respective leagues.

Where a ground share is in place with another sport i.e. Athletics, Cricket, Rugby Union, Rugby League etc, the club must have full use of all facilities on match days.

1.3 Capacity

The Stadium must have a minimum operational capacity of 1,500 calculated in accordance with the guidance given in the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds and where practical certified by a competent authority. There must also be potential to increase the capacity to 3,000 in the future.

It must be possible for spectators to view the match either seated or standing for the full length of all 4 sides of the playing area, unless a different configuration has been agreed (see paragraph 1).

1.4 Boundary of Ground

The ground must be enclosed by a permanent boundary, which will prevent individuals from viewing the game from outside the ground. The boundary must be of sound construction of pre cast concrete, brick, breeze block or metal cladding with steel or concrete posts and be of a minimum height of 1.83 metres as measured from outside the ground.

Whilst lapped timber, latch panel wood fences and wire mesh fences with wooden posts might be acceptable, hedges, shrubs and/or trees will not be accepted.

In certain circumstances one side of the ground, which adjoins private land/property, may be exempt from the need for a permanent boundary.

1.5 Clubhouse

There must be a clubhouse facility either on or adjacent to the ground, which should be open on match days to provide refreshments to spectators.

1.6 Car Parking

There should be adequate car parking facilities at or adjacent to the ground.

1.7 Pitch Perimeter Barrier

There must be a permanent fixed barrier of sound construction (concrete and steel) and free from all sharp edges surrounding the pitch on all 4 sides. Ideally the height should not exceed 1.1 metres.

The barrier, if other than solid wall type of construction, must be infilled. Advertising boards may be acceptable as a means of infill.

There must be a minimum of 1.83 metres, ideally 2 metres between the touchline, goal line and the pitch perimeter barrier.

1.8 Pitch Standards

The playing surface will be grass, unless authorised by the respective Board of Directors or Management Committee, and must be of a high standard. It must be level and free from surface depressions and excessive undulations.

The maximum slope allowable shall not exceed an even gradient of vertical to horizontal 1 : 41 in any direction.

The playing surface must be maintained to the highest possible standards.

Artificial playing surfaces are not currently permitted in competitions under the control of The Football Association.

Set out below is the view of the International FA Board and FIFA with regard to artificial surfaces:

“The Board recognised the advances in artificial surface technology and the major benefits of using artificial surfaces in areas of climatic problems. It also recognised that artificial surfaces allowed multiple and extended use of facilities in urban environments. The Board mandated FIFA to create clear procedures for the use of artificial surfaces, to unify the quality system and apply it worldwide, taking into consideration the best resources and knowledge available.”

The matter is therefore under review.

1.9 Playing Area

The playing area to be a minimum of 100 metres x 64 metres (110 yards x 70 yards) and should conform to the requirements of the Laws of the Game.

Goalposts and goal net supports should be of professional manufacture and conform to the current safety requirements and to the requirements of the Laws of the Game.

The Football Association are looking to ban the use of metal cup hooks in line with its Goalpost Safety initiative. This may form part of the ground grading criteria in subsequent seasons. Clubs should bear this in mind when reviewing their facilities in line with this document. Goals manufactured to current British Standards do not permit the use of metal cup hooks.

Reference should be made to the Goalpost Safety information published by The Football Association.

1.10 Technical Area

Two covered trainers boxes clearly marked “Home” and “Away” must be provided. They should be an equal distance either side of the halfway line, a minimum of 3 metres apart. Each box must be able to accommodate 8 persons under cover on fixed seats or benches.

Portable trainers’ boxes are permitted and must be securely fixed when in use.

The Technical Area, as defined within the Laws of the Game, must be marked out.

1.11 Secure Walkway

Clubs are to provide for safe passage for players and match officials between the dressing rooms and the field of play, which should be adequately stewarded. The passage onto and off the pitch must be suitably enclosed when players and match officials are entering or leaving the field of play. The use of protection designed products such as retractable tunnels or permanent structures to separate players and spectators are acceptable.

1.12 Floodlighting

Floodlights must be provided to an average lux reading of 120. No single reading can be less than one quarter of the highest reading so as to ensure an even spread of light.

Reading shall be on a grid of 88 markings (8 across, 11 down) evenly spaced with the outside readings falling on the pitch boundary line. The average of all the readings is taken to be the average illumination level in lux of the floodlighting installation.

The lux values must be tested every two years in accordance with current guidelines by an approved independent contractor.

An "approved" contractor is one which is in possession of the NICEIC (National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting) Approved Contractors' award or ISO 9000/BS 5750 (International Standards Organisation/British Standard) or is a member of the Electrical Contractors' Association.

The contractor must, when detailing the lux values, give confirmation in writing of the date when the illumination test equipment used was last calibrated.

When new or improved installations are being planned, an average lux reading of 180 should be provided.

1.13 Public Address System

A public address system must be provided with adequate output to convey information through loudspeakers in all spectator areas.

1.14 Entrances

There should be at least 3 fully operational turnstiles, which must be of the revolving type, which should be placed in such positions around the ground to meet segregation requirements when needed.

1.15 Exits

The location and number of ground exits must be approved by a relevant authority and comply with the requirements of the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds.

All exits must be clearly signed with "running man" signs.

1.16 Emergency Lighting

There must be a working emergency lighting system in all spectator areas as required by a relevant authority.

1.17 Adjoining Pitches

Where deemed that they are likely to interfere with the playing of a match, ball games will not be played on adjoining pitches whilst league or cup matches are in progress. An adjoining pitch is deemed to be where there is no barrier between pitches.

1.18 Emergency Access

Access for emergency services must be provided.

2. SPECTATOR FACILITIES

2.1 Spectator Accommodation

Covered accommodation, which should preferably be on 2 sides of the ground, must be of sound construction of timber/steel/brick/concrete or any combination of these materials. Open timber stepped stands are not permissible.

The minimum covered accommodation must be 300, of which at least 150 must be seated. There should be a minimum of 150 seats located in one stand which may be inclusive of Directors/Committee and press seating. Whilst individual seats are preferred, existing marked bench seating may be permitted.

There must be a minimum of 24 seats provided for Directors/Committee and guests with a minimum of 12 seats provided for the visiting club. These seats must be clearly marked "Home" and "Away Directors".

Additional seating may be provided in other areas of the ground. However, these seats are not to be classed as being "in lieu" of the number shown above.

Standing spectators are not allowed in a seated spectator stand where they can obstruct views.

Hard standing to a minimum width of 1 metre must be provided on 4 sides of the ground, unless a different configuration has been agreed (see paragraph 1).

Development must be on more than one side of the ground.

2.2 Press Seating

A minimum of 2 seats must be provided with lighting and writing facilities for use by the press and other media.

2.3 Toilets

Toilets must be located within the ground and must be accessible to both male and female spectators. The following minimum toilet facilities must be provided in total, excluding those located in any clubhouse:

Male:	2 urinals or equivalent and 1 WC's
Female:	2 WC's

In addition, wash hand basins, warm air hand driers and/or paper towels together with a supply of toilet paper must be provided in each toilet area.

All toilet areas to be in working order and maintained to a high level of cleanliness.

2.4 Refreshment Facilities

2.4.1 Directors/Committee/Guests

A separate room shall be made available in which refreshments for Directors/Committee and guests can be served. These areas must be able to accommodate a minimum of 24 persons with nearby toilet facilities.

2.4.2 Ground Refreshment Facilities

Refreshment facilities must be provided in each segregated area of the ground. These facilities may be of a temporary or mobile type.

2.5 Disabled Facilities

The club must take full account of the needs of disabled spectators. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 refers.

Reference should be made to the Publications/Data Sheets issued by both The Football Association and the Football Foundation.

3. DRESSING ROOM FACILITIES

3.1 Players

Separate dressing rooms must be provided for both teams within the enclosed area of the ground. The dressing rooms must be of sound construction of brick or concrete and be of a permanent nature. Existing dressing room dimensions will be acceptable provided they are a minimum of 12 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas. However clubs wishing to progress should be aware of the need to increase to a minimum size of 18 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas. Where clubs are planning to build new dressing rooms these must be a minimum size of 18 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas.

Each dressing room must have the following:

A shower area comprising of at least 4 showerheads

At least 1 WC and 1 wash hand basin

All must have hot and cold running water

There must be a treatment table in each dressing room unless there is a separate medical room.

3.2 Match Officials

The size of the match official's dressing room must be a minimum of 5 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas. When new dressing rooms are being constructed the match officials room should be a minimum of 6 square metres in size, excluding shower and toilet areas.

Each match officials dressing room must have the following:

At least 1 shower

At least 1 WC and 1 wash hand basin

Provision should be made for separate dressing rooms for both male and female match officials.

Where new dressing rooms are being constructed or existing are being re-designed, separate purpose built facilities for both male and female match officials must be provided.

There must be an audible warning device located in the match official's dressing room, which is linked to the player's dressing rooms.

All dressing room areas must be maintained to a high level of cleanliness and be secure on match days.

4. MEDICAL

There must be a suitably equipped medical treatment room for players use located in the vicinity of the players dressing rooms. Access to this room must not be via the home or away dressing rooms.

A stretcher for the removal of injured players from the field of play must be provided.

The club must provide a suitable treatment room for spectators within the boundary of the ground, which meets with Health and Safety requirements.

There must be a suitably qualified person (minimum F.A. Emergency Aid Course) in attendance to assist with spectator problems unless the St John Ambulance Brigade, Red Cross Society or other capable voluntary agency are in attendance.

GRADING CATEGORY – E

1. GROUND

The ground must give an overall appearance and impression of being a football ground suitable for the highest levels of the National League System.

It must be possible for spectators to view the match, either standing or seated, for the full length of all 4 sides of the playing area. However, at the discretion of the Board of Directors or Management Committee of the league concerned, any other configuration for spectators to view the match may be considered. Any approved configuration must meet the minimum capacity requirements.

The name of the club must reflect the area in which it operates. The location of the ground, in so far as its relation to the conurbation whose name the club bears, or is traditionally associated with, must meet with the approval of the Board of Directors or Management Committee of the league to which the club seeks membership.

The club must disclose plans and details of any proposed future move to a new stadium. The location of the proposed new stadium must meet with the approval of the Board of Directors or Management Committee of the league to which the club seeks membership.

The proposed merger of two clubs in contention for possible admission into any league within the National League System will be dealt with on its merits.

1.1 Security of Tenure

The club must either:

- (a) Own the freehold of the ground, or
- (b) Have a leasehold interest of which the renewal provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 have not been excluded from that lease, or
- (c) Possess an acceptable licence or agreement for the use of the ground for a minimum period of 10 (ten) years unexpired.

In the event of a club having a leasehold interest of less than 10 (ten) years unexpired then the renewal provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 must not have been excluded from that lease.

1.2 Ground Share

Ground sharing is permitted, but not in order to gain promotion or to retain membership at a particular Step. A ground sharing agreement must have been in place for at least one full season prior to promotion.

Where there is a ground share between two football clubs, priority of fixtures will be given to the club playing at the higher level within the National League System unless otherwise approved by the respective leagues.

Where a ground share is in place with another sport i.e. Athletic, Cricket, Rugby Union, Rugby League etc, the club must have full use of all facilities on match days.

1.3 Capacity

The Stadium must have a minimum operational capacity of 1,000 calculated in accordance with the guidance given in the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds and where practical certified by a relevant authority.

It must be possible for spectators to view the match either seated or standing for the full length of all 4 sides of the playing area, unless a different configuration has been agreed (see paragraph 1).

1.4 Boundary of Ground

The ground must be enclosed by a permanent boundary, which will prevent individuals from viewing the game from outside the ground. The boundary must be of sound construction of pre cast concrete, brick, breeze block or metal cladding with steel or concrete posts and be of a minimum height of 1.83 metres as measured from outside the ground.

Whilst lapped timber, latch panel wood fences and wire mesh fences with wooden posts might be acceptable, hedges, shrubs and/or trees will not normally be accepted.

In certain circumstances one side of the ground, which adjoins private land/property, may be exempt from the need for a permanent boundary.

1.5 Clubhouse

There must be a clubhouse facility either on or adjacent to the ground, which should be open on match days to provide refreshments to spectators.

1.6 Car Parking

There should be adequate car parking facilities at or adjacent to the ground.

1.7 Pitch Perimeter Barrier

There must be a permanent fixed barrier of sound construction (concrete and steel) and free from all sharp edges surrounding the pitch on all 4 sides. Ideally the height should not exceed 1.1 metres.

Existing barriers will be accepted.

The barrier, if other than solid wall type of construction, may be infilled. Advertising boards may be acceptable as a means of infill.

There must be a minimum of 1.83 metres, ideally 2 metres between the touchline, goal line and the pitch perimeter barrier.

Barriers need not be erected on sides not open to the public.

1.8 Pitch Standards

The playing surface will be grass, unless authorised by the respective Board of Directors or Management Committee, and must be of a high standard. It must be level and free from surface depressions and excessive undulations.

The maximum slope allowable shall not exceed an even gradient of vertical to horizontal 1 : 41 in any direction.

The playing surface must be maintained to the highest possible standards.

Artificial playing surfaces are not currently permitted in competitions under the control of The Football Association.

Set out below is the view of the International FA Board and FIFA with regard to artificial surfaces:

“The Board recognised the advances in artificial surface technology and the major benefits of using artificial surfaces in areas of climatic problems. It also recognised that artificial surfaces allowed multiple and extended use of facilities in urban environments. The Board mandated FIFA to create clear procedures for the use of artificial surfaces, to unify the quality system and apply it worldwide, taking into consideration the best resources and knowledge available.”

The matter is therefore under review.

1.9 Playing Area

The playing area to be a minimum of 100 metres x 64 metres (110 yards x 70 yards) and should conform to the requirements of the Laws of the Game.

Goalposts and goal net supports should be of professional manufacture and conform to the current safety requirements and to the requirements of the Laws of the Game.

The Football Association are looking to ban the use of metal cup hooks in line with its Goalpost Safety initiative. This may form part of the ground grading criteria in subsequent seasons. Clubs should bear this in mind when reviewing their facilities in line with this document. Goals manufactured to current British Standards do not permit the use of metal cup hooks.

Reference should be made to the Goalpost Safety information published by The Football Association.

1.10 Technical Area

Two covered trainers boxes clearly marked “Home” and “Away” must be provided. They should be an equal distance either side of the halfway line, a minimum of 3 metres apart. Each box must be able to accommodate 8 adults under cover on fixed seats or benches.

Portable trainers’ boxes are permitted and must be securely fixed when in use.

The Technical Area, as defined within the Laws of the Game, must be marked out.

1.11 Secure Walkway

Clubs are to provide for safe passage for players and match officials between the dressing rooms and the field of play, which should be adequately stewarded. The passage onto and off the pitch must be suitably enclosed when players and match officials are entering or leaving the field of play. The use of protection designed products such as retractable tunnels or permanent structures to separate players and spectators are acceptable.

1.12 Floodlighting

Floodlights must be provided to an average lux reading of 120. No single reading can be less than one quarter of the highest reading so as to ensure an even spread of light.

Reading shall be on a grid of 88 markings evenly spaced with the outside readings falling on the pitch boundary line. The average of all the readings is taken to be the average illumination level in lux of the floodlighting installation.

The lux values must be tested every two years in accordance with current guidelines by an approved independent contractor.

An "approved" contractor is one which is in possession of the NICEIC (National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting) Approved Contractors' award or ISO 9000/BS 5750 (International Standards Organisation/British Standard) or is a member of the Electrical Contractors' Association.

The contractor must, when detailing the lux values, give confirmation in writing of the date when the illumination test equipment used was last calibrated.

When new or improved installations are being planned, an average lux reading of 180 should be provided.

1.13 Public Address System

A public address system must be provided with adequate output to convey information through loudspeakers in all spectator areas.

1.14 Entrances

There should be at least 2 fully operational turnstiles, which must be of the revolving type.

1.15 Exits

The location and number of ground exits must be approved by a relevant authority and comply with the requirements of the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds.

All exits must be clearly signed with "running man" signs.

1.16 Emergency Lighting

There must be a working emergency lighting system in all spectator areas as required by a relevant authority.

1.17 Adjoining Pitches

Where deemed that they are likely to interfere with the playing of a match, ball games will not be played on adjoining pitches whilst league or cup matches are in progress. An adjoining pitch is deemed to be where there is no barrier between pitches.

1.18 Emergency Access

Access for emergency services must be provided.

2. SPECTATOR FACILITIES

2.1 Spectator Accommodation

Covered accommodation, which should preferably be on 2 sides of the ground, must be of sound construction of timber/steel/brick/concrete or any combination of these materials. Open timber stepped stands are not permissible.

The minimum covered accommodation must be 250, of which at least 150 must be seated. There should be a minimum of 150 seats located in one stand which may be inclusive of Directors/Committee and press seating. Whilst individual seats are preferred, existing bench seating may be permitted. In each case, all seats are to be clearly numbered.

There must be a minimum of 16 seats provided for Directors/Committee and guests with a minimum of 8 seats provided for the visiting club. These seats must be clearly marked "Home" and "Away Directors".

Additional seating may be provided in other areas of the ground. However, these seats are not to be classed as being "in lieu" of the number shown above.

Standing spectators are not allowed in a seated spectator stand where they can obstruct views.

Hard standing to a minimum width of 1 metre must be provided on 4 sides of the ground, unless a different configuration has been agreed (see paragraph 1).

Development must be on more than one side of the ground.

2.2 Press Seating

A minimum of 2 seats must be provided with lighting and writing facilities for use by the press and other media.

2.3 Toilets

Toilets must be located within the ground and must be accessible to both male and female spectators. The following minimum toilet facilities must be provided in total, excluding those located in any clubhouse:

Male:	2 urinals or equivalent and 1 WC's
Female:	2 WC's

In addition, wash hand basins, warm air hand driers and/or paper towels together with a supply of toilet paper must be provided in each toilet area.

All toilet areas to be in working order and maintained to a high level of cleanliness.

2.4 Refreshment Facilities

2.4.1 Directors/Committee/Guests

A separate room shall be made available in which refreshments for Directors/Committee and guests can be served. These areas must be able to accommodate a minimum of 16 persons with nearby toilet facilities.

2.4.2 Spectators

Refreshment facilities must be provided at the ground. These facilities may be of a temporary or mobile type.

2.5 Disabled Facilities

The club must take full account of the needs of disabled spectators. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 refers.

Reference should be made to the Publications/Data Sheets issued by both The Football Association and the Football Foundation.

3. DRESSING ROOM FACILITIES

3.1 Players

Separate dressing rooms must be provided for both teams within the enclosed area of the ground. The dressing rooms must be of sound construction and be of a permanent nature. Existing dressing room dimensions will be acceptable provided they are a minimum of 12 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas. However clubs wishing to progress should be aware of the need to increase to a minimum size of 18 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas. Where clubs are planning to build new dressing rooms these must be a minimum size of 18 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas.

Each dressing room must have the following:

A shower area comprising of at least 4 showerheads

At least 1 WC and 1 wash hand basin

All must have hot and cold running water

There must be a treatment table in each dressing room unless there is a separate medical room.

3.2 Match Officials

The size of the match official's dressing room must be a minimum of 4 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas. When new dressing rooms are being constructed the match officials room should be a minimum of 6 square metres in size, excluding shower and toilet areas.

Each match officials dressing room must have the following:

At least 1 shower

At least 1 WC and 1 wash hand basin

Provision should be made for separate dressing rooms for both male and female match officials.

Where new dressing rooms are being constructed or existing are being re-designed, separate purpose built facilities for both male and female match officials must be provided.

There must be an audible warning device located in the match official's dressing room, which is linked to the player's dressing rooms.

All dressing room areas must be maintained to a high level of cleanliness and be secure on match days.

4. MEDICAL

There must be a treatment table located in each of the players dressing rooms unless there is a separate medical room.

There must be a suitably qualified person (minimum F.A. Emergency Aid Course) in attendance to assist with spectator problems unless the St John Ambulance Brigade, Red Cross Society or other capable voluntary agency are in attendance. This person may be the club physiotherapist.

All clubs must provide first aid equipment at their ground including a stretcher, the location of which shall be clearly marked by notices placed in each players dressing room and match officials room.

GRADING CATEGORY – F

1. GROUND

The ground must give an overall appearance and impression of being a football ground suitable for the National League System.

It must be possible for spectators to view the match, either standing or seated, for the full length of all 4 sides of the playing area. However, at the discretion of the Board of Directors or Management Committee of the league concerned, any other configuration for spectators to view the match may be considered. Any approved configuration must meet the minimum capacity requirements.

The club must disclose plans and details of any proposed future move to a new stadium. The location of the proposed new stadium must meet with the approval of the Board of Directors or Management Committee of the league to which the club seeks membership.

The proposed merger of two clubs in contention for possible admission into any league within the National League System will be dealt with on its merits.

1.1 Security of Tenure

Where a club does not own the freehold of their ground then evidence of adequate security of tenure must be provided.

1.2 Ground Share

Ground sharing is permitted, but not in order to gain promotion or to retain membership at a particular Step. A ground sharing agreement must have been in place for at least one full season prior to promotion.

Where there is a ground share between two football clubs, priority of fixtures will be given to the club playing at the higher level within the National League System unless otherwise approved by the respective leagues.

Where a ground share is in place with another sport i.e. Athletic, Cricket, Rugby Union, Rugby League etc, the club must have full use of all facilities on match days.

1.3 Capacity

The ground capacity at this level is not relevant.

1.4 Boundary of Ground

The ground must be enclosed by a permanent boundary, which will prevent spectators from viewing the game from outside the ground.

In certain circumstances one side of the ground, which adjoins private land/property, may be exempt from the need for a permanent boundary.

1.5 Clubhouse

There must be a clubhouse facility either on or adjacent to the ground, which should be open on match days to provide refreshments to spectators.

1.6 Car Parking

There should be adequate car parking facilities on or adjacent to the ground.

1.7 Pitch Perimeter Barrier

There must be a permanent fixed barrier of sound construction (concrete and steel) and free from all sharp edges surrounding the pitch on all 4 sides. Ideally the height should not exceed 1.1 metres.

Existing barriers will be accepted.

The barrier, if other than solid wall type of construction may be infilled. Advertising boards may be acceptable as a means of infill.

There must be a minimum of 1.83 metres, ideally 2 metres between the touchline, goal line and the pitch perimeter barrier.

1.8 Pitch Standards

The playing surface will be grass, unless otherwise authorised by the respective Board of Directors or Management Committee, and must be of a high standard. It must be level and free from surface depressions and excessive undulations.

The maximum slope allowable shall not exceed an even gradient of vertical to horizontal 1 : 41 in any direction.

The playing surface must be maintained to the highest possible standards.

Artificial playing surfaces are not currently permitted in competitions under the control of The Football Association.

Set out below is the view of the International FA Board and FIFA with regard to artificial surfaces:

“The Board recognised the advances in artificial surface technology and the major benefits of using artificial surfaces in areas of climatic problems. It also recognised that artificial surfaces allowed multiple and extended use of facilities in urban environments. The Board mandated FIFA to create clear procedures for the use of artificial surfaces, to unify the quality system and apply it worldwide, taking into consideration the best resources and knowledge available.”

The matter is therefore under review.

1.9 Playing Area

The playing area to be a minimum of 100 metres x 64 metres (110 yards x 70 yards) and should conform to the requirements of the Laws of the Game.

Goalposts and goal net supports should be of professional manufacture and conform to the current safety requirements and to the requirements of the Laws of the Game.

The Football Association are looking to ban the use of metal cup hooks in line with its Goalpost Safety initiative. This may form part of the ground grading criteria in subsequent seasons. Clubs should bear this in mind when reviewing their facilities in line with this document. Goals manufactured to current British Standards do not permit the use of metal cup hooks.

Reference should be made to the Goalpost Safety information published by The Football Association.

1.10 Technical Area

Two covered trainers benches clearly marked “Home” and “Away” are to be provided. They should be equal distance either side of the halfway line a minimum of at least 3 metres apart. Each box should accommodate at least 8 persons on fixed seats or benches.

Portable trainers’ boxes are permitted and must be securely fixed when in use..

A Technical Area, as defined within the Laws of the Game, should be marked out round each trainers’ box.

1.11 Secure Walkway

Clubs are to provide for safe passage for players and match officials between the dressing rooms and the field of play, which should be adequately stewarded. The passage onto and off the pitch must be suitably enclosed when players and match officials are entering or leaving the field of play. The use of protection designed products such as retractable tunnels or permanent structures to separate players and spectators are acceptable.

1.12 Floodlighting

Floodlights must be provided to an average lux reading of 120. No single reading can be less than one quarter of the highest reading so as to ensure an even spread of light.

Reading shall be on a grid of 88 markings (8 across, 11 down) evenly spaced with the outside readings falling on the pitch boundary line. The average of all the readings is taken to be the average illumination level in lux of the floodlighting installation.

The lux values must be tested every two years in accordance with current guidelines by an approved independent contractor.

An "approved" contractor is one which is in possession of the NICEIC (National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting) Approved Contractors' award or ISO 9000/BS 5750 (International Standards Organisation/British Standard) or is a member of the Electrical Contractors' Association.

The contractor must, when detailing the lux values, gives confirmation in writing of the date when the illumination test equipment used was last calibrated.

When new or improved installations are being planned, an average lux reading of 180 should be provided.

1.13 Public Address System

A public address system must be provided with adequate output to convey information to all spectator areas.

1.14 Entrances

There should be at least 1 fully operational turnstile, which must be of the revolving type or a pay box where a charge for entry to the ground can be taken.

1.15 Exits

The location and number of ground exits must be approved by a relevant authority and comply with the requirements of the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds.

All exits must be clearly signed with “running man” signs.

1.16 Emergency Lighting

There must be a working emergency lighting system in any spectator seating or standing areas if required by a relevant authority.

1.17 Adjoining Pitches

Where deemed that they are likely to interfere with the playing of a match, ball games will not be played on adjoining pitches whilst league or cup matches are in progress. An adjoining pitch is deemed to be where there is no barrier between pitches.

1.18 Emergency Access

Access for emergency services must be provided

2. SPECTATOR FACILITIES

2.1 Spectator Accommodation

Covered accommodation, which should preferably be on 2 sides of the ground, must be of sound construction of timber/steel/brick/concrete or any combination of these materials. Open timber stepped stands are not permissible.

The minimum covered accommodation must be 200, of which at least 100 must be seated. There should be a minimum of 100 seats located in one stand which may be inclusive of Directors/Committee seating. Whilst individual seats are preferred, existing bench seating may be permitted. In each case, all seats are to be clearly numbered.

There must be a minimum of 16 seats provided for Directors/Committee and guests. These seats must be clearly marked "Home" and "Away Directors".

Additional seating may be provided in other areas of the ground. However, these seats are not to be classed as being "in lieu" of the number shown above.

Standing spectators are not allowed in a seated spectator stand where they can obstruct views.

Hard standing to a minimum width of 1 metre must be provided on 4 sides of the ground, unless a different configuration has been agreed (see paragraph 1).

Development must be on more than one side of the ground.

2.2 Press Seating

There is no requirement for dedicated press seating.

2.3 Toilets

Toilets must be located within the ground and must be accessible to both male and female spectators.

The following minimum toilet facilities must be provided:

Male:	2 urinals or equivalent and 1 WC's
Female:	2 WC's

In addition, wash hand basins, warm air hand driers and/or paper towels together with a supply of toilet paper must be provided in each toilet area.

The provision of toilet facilities within a clubhouse will be acceptable if these are available at all times on match days.

All toilet areas to be in working order and maintained to a high level of cleanliness.

2.4 Refreshment Facilities

2.4.1 Directors/Committee/Guests

A separate room or reserved area shall be made available in which refreshments for Directors/Committee and guests can be served.

2.4.2 Ground Refreshment Facilities

Refreshment facilities shall be provided at the ground. These facilities may be of a temporary or mobile type.

2.5 Disabled Facilities

The club must take full account of the needs of disabled spectators. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 refers.

Reference should be made to the Publications/Data Sheets issued by both The Football Association and the Football Foundation.

3. DRESSING ROOM FACILITIES

3.1 Players

Separate dressing rooms must be provided for both teams within the enclosed area of the ground. The dressing rooms must be of sound construction and be of a permanent nature. Existing dressing room dimensions will be acceptable provided they are a minimum of 12 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas. However clubs wishing to progress should be aware of the need to increase to a minimum size of 18 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas. Where clubs are planning to build new dressing rooms these must be a minimum size of 18 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas.

Each dressing room must have the following:

- A shower area comprising of at least 4 showerheads

- At least 1 WC and 1 wash hand basin

- All must have hot and cold running water

There must be a treatment table in each dressing room unless there is a separate medical room.

3.2 Match Officials

The size of the match official's dressing room must be a minimum of 4 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas. When new dressing rooms are being constructed the match officials room should be a minimum of 6 square metres in size, excluding shower and toilet areas.

Each match officials dressing room must have the following:

At least 1 shower

At least 1 WC and 1 wash hand basin

Provision should be made for separate dressing rooms for both male and female match officials.

Where new dressing rooms are being constructed or existing are being re-designed, separate purpose built facilities for both male and female match officials must be provided.

There must be an audible warning device located in the match official's dressing room, which is linked to the player's dressing rooms.

All dressing room areas must be maintained to a high level of cleanliness and be secure on match days.

4. MEDICAL

There must be a treatment table located in each of the players dressing rooms unless there is a separate medical room.

There must be a suitably qualified person (minimum F.A. Emergency Aid Course) in attendance to assist with spectator problems unless the St John Ambulance Brigade, Red Cross Society or other capable voluntary agency are in attendance. This person may be the club physiotherapist.

All clubs must provide first aid equipment at their ground including a stretcher, the location of which shall be clearly marked by notices placed in each players dressing room and match officials room.

GRADING CATEGORY – G

1. GROUND

The ground must give an overall appearance and impression of being a football ground suitable for the National League System.

It must be possible for spectators to view the match, either standing or seated, for the full length of all 4 sides of the playing area. However, at the discretion of the Board of Directors or Management Committee of the league concerned, any other configuration for spectators to view the match may be considered. Any approved configuration must meet the minimum capacity requirements.

The club must disclose plans and details of any proposed future move to a new stadium. The location of the proposed new stadium must meet with the approval of the Board of Directors or Management Committee of the league to which the club seeks membership.

The proposed merger of two clubs in contention for possible admission into any league within the National League System will be dealt with on its merits.

1.1 Security of Tenure

Where a club does not own the freehold of their ground then evidence of adequate security of tenure must be provided.

1.2 Ground Share

Ground sharing is permitted, but not in order to gain promotion or to retain membership at a particular Step. A ground sharing agreement must have been in place for at least one full season prior to promotion.

Where there is a ground share between two football clubs, priority of fixtures will be given to the club playing at the higher level within the National League System unless otherwise approved by the respective leagues.

Where a ground share is in place with another sport i.e. Athletic, Cricket, Rugby Union, Rugby League etc, the club must have full use of all facilities on match days.

1.3 Capacity

The ground capacity at this level is not relevant.

1.4 Boundary of Ground

The ground must be enclosed by a permanent boundary, which will prevent spectators from viewing the game from outside the ground.

In certain circumstances one side of the ground, which adjoins private land/property may be exempt from the need for a permanent boundary.

1.5 Clubhouse

There should be a facility, ideally a clubhouse, on or adjacent to the ground, which should be open on match days to provide refreshments to spectators.

1.6 Car Parking

There should be adequate car parking facilities on or adjacent to the ground.

1.7 Pitch Perimeter Barrier

There must be a permanent fixed barrier of sound construction (concrete and steel) and free from all sharp edges surrounding the pitch on all 4 sides. Ideally the height should not exceed 1.1 metres.

Existing barriers will be accepted.

The barrier, if other than solid wall type of construction may be infilled. Advertising boards may be acceptable as a means of infill.

There must be a minimum of 1.83 metres, ideally 2 metres between the touchline, goal line and the pitch perimeter barrier.

1.8 Pitch Standards

The playing surface will be grass, unless otherwise authorised by the respective league Management Committee, and must be of a high standard. It must be level and free from surface depressions and excessive undulations.

The maximum slope allowable shall not exceed an even gradient of vertical to horizontal 1 : 41 in any direction.

The playing surface must be maintained to the highest possible standards.

Artificial playing surfaces are not currently permitted in competitions under the control of The Football Association.

Set out below is the view of the International FA Board and FIFA with regard to artificial surfaces:

“The Board recognised the advances in artificial surface technology and the major benefits of using artificial surfaces in areas of climatic problems. It also recognised that artificial surfaces allowed multiple and extended use of facilities in urban environments. The Board mandated FIFA to create clear procedures for the use of artificial surfaces, to unify the quality system and apply it worldwide, taking into consideration the best resources and knowledge available.”

The matter is therefore under review

1.9 Playing Area

The playing area to be a minimum of 100 metres x 64 metres (110 yards x 70 yards) and should conform to the requirements of the Laws of the Game.

Goalposts and goal net supports should be of professional manufacture and conform to the current safety requirements and to the requirements of the Laws of the Game.

The Football Association are looking to ban the use of metal cup hooks in line with its Goalpost Safety initiative. This may form part of the ground grading criteria in subsequent seasons. Clubs should bear this in mind when reviewing their facilities in line with this document. Goals manufactured to current British Standards do not permit the use of metal cup hooks.

Reference should be made to the Goalpost Safety information published by The Football Association

1.10 Technical Area

Two covered trainers benches clearly marked “Home” and “Away” must be provided. They should be equal distance either side of the halfway line at least 3 metres apart. Each box should accommodate at least 8 persons on fixed seats or benches.

Portable trainers’ boxes are permitted and must be securely fixed when in use.

A Technical Area, as defined within the Laws of the Game should be marked out round each trainers’ box.

1.11 Secure Walkway

Clubs are to provide for safe passage for players and match officials between the dressing rooms and the field of play, which should be adequately stewarded.

1.12 Floodlighting

Floodlights must be provided to an average lux reading of 120. No single reading can be less than one quarter of the highest reading so as to ensure an even spread of light.

Reading shall be on a grid of 88 markings (8 across, 11 down) evenly spaced with the outside readings falling on the pitch boundary line. The average of all the readings is taken to be the average illumination level in lux of the floodlighting installation.

The lux values must be tested every two years in accordance with current guidelines by an approved independent contractor.

An "approved" contractor is one which is in possession of the NICEIC (National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting) Approved Contractors' award or ISO 9000/BS 5750 (International Standards Organisation/British Standard) or is a member of the Electrical Contractors' Association.

The contractor must, when detailing the lux values, give confirmation in writing of the date when the illumination test equipment used was last calibrated.

When new or improved installations are being planned, an average lux reading of 180 should be provided.

1.13 Public Address System

A public address system is not compulsory at this level.

1.14 Entrances

There should be at least 1 fully operational turnstile, which should be a revolving type or a pay box where a charge for entry to the ground can be taken.

1.15 Exits

The location and number of ground exits must be approved by a relevant and comply with the requirements of the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds.

All exits must be clearly signed with “running man” signs.

1.16 Emergency Lighting

There must be an emergency lighting system in all spectator seated and standing areas if required by a relevant authority.

1.17 Adjoining Pitches

Where deemed that they are likely to interfere with the playing of a match, ball games will not be played on adjoining pitches whilst league or cup matches are in progress. An adjoining pitch is deemed to be where there is no barrier between pitches.

1.18 Emergency Access

Access for emergency services must be provided

2. SPECTATOR FACILITIES

2.1 Spectator Accommodation

Covered accommodation, which should preferably be on 2 sides of the ground, must be of sound construction of timber/steel/brick/concrete or any combination of these materials. Open timber stepped stands are not permissible.

The minimum covered accommodation must be 100, of which at least 50 must be seated and located in one stand. Whilst individual seats are preferred, existing bench seating may be permitted. In each case, all seats are to be clearly numbered.

Separate seating for Directors/Committee and guests is not compulsory at this level.

Standing spectators are not allowed in a seated spectator stand where they can obstruct views.

Hard standing to a minimum width of 1 metre must be provided on 4 sides of the ground, unless a different configuration has been agreed (see paragraph 1).

2.2 Press Seating

There is no requirement for dedicated press seating.

2.3 Toilets

Toilets must be located within the ground and must be accessible to both male and female spectators.

The following minimum toilet facilities must be provided:

Male:	2 urinals or equivalent and 1 WC's
Female:	2 WC's

In addition, wash hand basins, warm air hand driers and/or paper towels together with a supply of toilet paper must be provided in each toilet area.

The provision of toilet facilities within a clubhouse will be acceptable if these are available at all times on match days.

All toilet areas to be in working order and maintained to a high level of cleanliness.

2.4 Refreshment Facilities

2.4.1 Directors/Committee/Guests

Refreshments may be made available for Directors/Committee and guests.

2.4.2 Ground Refreshment Facilities

Refreshment facilities shall be provided at the ground. These facilities may be of a temporary or mobile type.

2.5 Disabled Facilities

The club must take full account of the needs of disabled spectators. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 refers.

Reference should be made to the Publications/Data Sheets issued by both The Football Association and the Football Foundation.

3. DRESSING ROOM FACILITIES

3.1 Players

Separate dressing rooms must be provided for both teams within the enclosed area of the ground. The dressing rooms must be of sound construction and be of a permanent nature. Existing dressing room dimensions will be acceptable provided they are a minimum of 12 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas. However clubs wishing to progress should be aware of the need to increase to a minimum size of 18 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas. Where clubs are planning to build new dressing rooms these must be a minimum size of 18 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas.

Each dressing room must have the following:

- A shower area comprising of at least 4 showerheads

- At least 1 WC and 1 wash hand basin

- All must have hot and cold running water

There must be a treatment table in each dressing room unless there is a separate medical room.

3.2 Match Officials

The size of the match official's dressing room must be a minimum of 4 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas. When new dressing rooms are being constructed the match officials room should be a minimum of 6 square metres in size, excluding shower and toilet areas.

Each match officials dressing room must have the following:

- At least 1 shower

- At least 1 WC and 1 wash hand basin

Provision should be made for separate dressing rooms for both male and female match officials.

Where new dressing rooms are being constructed or existing are being re-designed, separate purpose built facilities for both male and female match officials must be provided.

There must be an audible warning device located in the match official's dressing room, which is linked to the player's dressing rooms.

All dressing room areas must be maintained to a high level of cleanliness and be secure on match days.

4. MEDICAL

There must be a treatment table located in each of the players dressing rooms unless there is a separate medical room.

There must be a suitably qualified person (minimum F.A. Emergency Aid Course) in attendance to assist with spectator problems unless the St John Ambulance Brigade, Red Cross Society or other capable voluntary agency are in attendance. This person may be the club physiotherapist.

All clubs must provide first aid equipment at their ground including a stretcher, the location of which shall be clearly marked by notices placed in each players dressing room and match officials room.