

ESSEX COUNTY REFEREES' ASSOCIATION

The Essex County Referees' Association (ECRA) is affiliated to the national body, the Referees Association (RA). For over 100 years our association has looked after the interests of referees within the county and helped in providing post-graduate training to cover the finer aspects of the laws of the game, giving assistance whenever needed.

The main aims of the association are to:

- (i) recruit new members
- (ii) improve the status and standard of referees
- (iii) protect members from injustice or unfair treatment
- (iv) assist and take action, legal or otherwise (with the assistance of the RA where necessary), on behalf of any member who has been unfairly treated
- (v) promote the interests of referees in general

Both The FA and the Essex County FA strongly recommend that every referee should become a member of the RA. The first year is free, and the County RA will automatically enrol new referees!

In Essex there are seven Local RAs affiliated to the County RA, and they hold monthly meetings throughout the season. At these meetings, guest speakers are invited, in-service training is held to give members the opportunity to refresh and improve their knowledge of the laws, and opportunities are given for members to discuss any problems that they may have encountered during the course of their games.

If you are already a member of the RA then you will not need to be told of the advantages of belonging, and we look forward to you renewing your membership again this season. Even if you are unable to attend meetings on a regular basis, you will be on the mailing list of your local referees' society so that contact can be made to get any changes in the laws and their interpretation to you. Members can open doors for colleagues, providing opportunities non-members will never get.

Included in your annual subscription to your local RA is your affiliation to the national RA and the County RA. This will provide you with automatic cover under the RA Personal Accident Insurance Policy. This policy covers you whilst actually refereeing, travelling to and from matches, attending meetings, organised training and loss of refereeing equipment whilst at a game plus loss of personal clothing and effects. Full details of the benefits are shown later in this section of the handbook.

Members can also purchase a wide selection of referee kit and accessories at much lower prices than can be bought locally in sports shops. This kit is worn by referees at all levels of the game, from the Premier League to the local parks.

Most local RAs have an active social side. Assistance may also be given to members who are unable to work through an accident or illness, upon application to the Benevolent Fund. For the cost of one match fee, you can belong to the RA by contacting the Hon. Secretary of your local society or the Hon. Secretary of ECRA at the addresses in the next section.

ALL NEWLY-QUALIFIED REFEREES, AND NEW MEMBERS JOINING THE RA FOR THE FIRST TIME, HAVE FREE MEMBERSHIP OF THE RA IN THEIR FIRST SEASON.

OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION – SEASON 2016/17

President:

BRIAN CHALLIS, 191 Prospect Road, WOODFORD GREEN, IG8 7NF
Tel: (020) 8504 9088

Vice Presidents:

EM FAIRCHILD, DF POND, TE THACKER

Life Members:

BM CHALLIS, FM SMITH, JR QUILTER

Chairman:

ANDY FRENCH 16 Kestrel Rise, Halstead, CO9 2TU
Tel: (07841) 538976

Hon. Secretary:

JOE WRIGLEY, Cosy Cottage, Church Road, Great Yeldham, CO9 4PT
Tel: (01787) 283212 (H), (07450) 027148 (M)

Hon. Treasurer:

REG HARRIS, 89 St Peter's Road, Chadwell St Mary, GRAYS, RM16 4LA
Tel: (01375) 850531

IN-SERVICE TRAINING COORDINATOR

STEPHEN GLEESON, 95 The Hoo, Harlow, CM17 0HR
Tel: (01279) 304562

MEMBERSHIP & RECRUITMENT SECRETARY:

Brian CHALLIS (see above for details)

IN-SERVICE TRAINING COMMITTEE:

TBA

BENEVOLENT FUND SECRETARY/TREASURER:

Jim QUILTER, 1 Lynton Drive, CHELMSFORD, CM1 6NE
Tel: (01245) 258501

BENEVOLENT FUND TRUSTEES:

JR QUILTER, E OSBORNE, BM CHALLIS, FM SMITH, RS HARRIS

HON. AUDITORS: GENERAL FUND:

Jim HAYNES and Terry WEEKES

HON. AUDITORS BENEVOLENT FUND:

ALAN FRIEND and DOUGLAS HUTCHISON

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVES:

TBA

ESSEX COUNTY FA REPRESENTATIVE:

Chris Lee, 35 Davenants, Pitsea, Basildon, SS13 1QX
Tel: (07980) 928708

ESSEX COUNTY REFEREES' ASSOCIATION - SOCIETIES 2017/18

Barking & Dagenham

Secretary: Charlie Duggins-Jones, 1 Tiverton Grove, Romford, RM3 9UA
Tel: (07480) 233872, E-Mail: charliedugginsjones@outlook.com
Meeting Venue: Dagenham & Redbridge FC, Victoria Road, Dagenham
Meeting Dates: First and third Thursday in each month at 8:00pm from August to May

Basildon

Secretary: Peter Cubley, 21 Douglas Drive, Wickford, SS12 9HU
Tel: (01268) 570159, E-Mail: petercubley@aol.com
Meeting Venue: Basildon Sport & Leisure Club, Gardiners Way, Gardiners Lane South, Basildon
Meeting Dates: Third Thursday in each month at 7:30pm from August to May

Chelmsford

Secretary: Dean Willsher, 13 The Spinnaker, St Lawrence Bay, Southminster, CM0 7GR
Tel: (01621) 779843 or (07976) 227309, E-Mail: dean.willsher@essexhighways.org
Meeting Venue: Old Chelmsfordians FC, Roxwell Road, Chelmsford
Meeting Dates: Fourth Thursday of each month at 7:30pm

Colchester

Secretary: Wendy Townsend, 12 Alexandra Road, Weeley Village, Weeley, CO16 9HS
Tel: (07810) 805414, E-Mail: wendyreferee@yahoo.co.uk
Meeting Venue: Stanway Rovers FC, The Hawthorns, New Farm Road, Stanway, Colchester
Meeting Dates: Second Thursday in each month between September and April, and third Thursday in May only at 7:45pm

Halstead & District

Secretary: Joe Wrigley, Cosy Cottage, Church Road, Great Yeldham, Essex, CO9 4PT
Tel: (01787) 238212 or (07450) 027148, E-Mail: joewrigley21@gmail.com
Meeting Venue: Black Notley Village Hall, Faulkbourne Road, Black Notley, Braintree
Meeting Dates: Fourth Thursday in each month at 7:30pm

Harlow

Secretary: Carl Whay, 124 Fir Park, Harlow, CM19 4JZ
Tel: (01279) 626154 or (07905) 421487, E-Mail: c.whay@sky.com
Meeting Venue: Harlow Town Cricket Club, Ashtree Field, Harlow
Meeting Dates: Second Thursday in each month at 8:00pm from August

Southend & District

Secretary: Ray Parmenter, 82 Victor Gardens, Hawkwell, Hockley, SS5 4DS
Tel: (01702) 202041 or (07854) 350235, E-Mail: parmenterray@aol.com
Meeting Venue: Len Forge Centre, Eastwoodbury Lane, Southend-on-Sea
Meeting Dates: First Thursday in each month (except for August and January, when there is no meeting) at 7:30pm

Thurrock

Secretary: Graham Monk, 10 Fleethall Grove, Stifford Clays, Grays, RM16 2DZ
Tel: (01375) 400819 or (07932) 622914, E-Mail: graham.monk@blueyonder.co.uk
Meeting Venue: Lakeside Complex, Arterial Road, West Thurrock (A1306)
Meeting Dates: Third Monday of each month at 8:00pm from August to May

Please Note: Any referee wishing to attend any of the above Society meetings should firstly contact the Secretary of that Society before travelling as dates and venues are subject to alteration since going to print.

CONSTITUTION OF THE ESSEX COUNTY REFEREES ASSOCIATION

1. TITLE

The association shall be called the Essex County Referee' Association (ECRA).

2. OBJECTIVES

- to represent the interests of members of any Local Referees Association (LRA) who are registered with their County Football Association (CFA) or officiating in football under its auspices or control
- to act as a channel of communication between member LRAs and the Essex County Football Association (ECFA).
- to recruit and retain football referees as members
- to protect and promote the interests of members
- to provide guidance, advice and support for members
- to support and protect members from injustice and unfair treatment in matters related to refereeing
- to ensure that the assets of the association are economically managed
- to ensure the provision of a Benevolent Fund to provide financial support for members and their dependents in need

3. MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the ECRA shall be open to all LRAs whose headquarters are within the territory of ECFA. Membership may also be admitted to LRAs from adjacent CFA areas, provided that they are also members of their local CRA and have paid the necessary fees to both associations. LRAs shall annually provide the ECRA with a copy of their current constitution.

4. OFFICERS

The officers of the ECRA shall be: President, Vice Presidents, Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership and Recruitment Secretary, In-Service Training Coordinator, Benevolent Fund Secretary/Treasurer and ECRA Representative on the Essex County FA. All officers must be full members of The RA via their LRA or Life Members of the RA or CRA and will be elected to serve for twelve months from the Annual General Meeting (AGM). No one officer may hold more than two (2) positions.

5. ELECTION

All officers (as defined in Rule 4) shall be elected annually. Retiring officers shall be eligible for re-election without nomination. All other nominations for officers shall be submitted to the secretary of the association by an LRA on the appropriate form by no later than the 30th April each year. The nomination form must include the signature of the proposing and seconding LRA and the nominees' consent must also be incorporated. All new nominees for officers will be invited to attend a meeting of the management committee in order to brief them on the duties involved in the post for which they have been nominated. A job description shall be made available to all nominees.

6. LIFE MEMBERS AND VICE-PRESIDENTS

Life Members and Vice-Presidents may be created in appreciation of exceptional services rendered to the association. Nominations need to be submitted in writing to the secretary of the ECRA by 30th April, for approval at the AGM.

7. COUNTY COMMITTEE

The County Committee shall consist of the officers of the association and two delegates/representatives from each LRA, both of whom shall be full members of the RA or a Life Member of the RA or CRA. A delegate/representative must attend all meetings or appoint a deputy to attend in their unavoidable absence. Delegates/representatives shall be members of their LRA Committee.

8. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Management Committee shall consist of: President, Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership & Recruitment Secretary, Benevolent Fund Secretary/Treasurer, In-Service Training Coordinator, ECRA Representative on the Essex County FA plus two (2) delegates, one of whom shall be a youth member with a maximum age of 25 years and both must be full members of the RA and members of the committee of their LRA. The committee shall have the power to co-opt.

9. MEETINGS

A County Committee/Delegates meeting shall be held in November of each year. An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) will be called as the Management Committee may decide for a specific purpose. An EGM shall also be convened upon the written request of at least two (2) LRAs to the Association Secretary. At least fourteen (14) days' clear notice shall be given for an EGM. An Emergency Meeting (EM) may also be convened at the discretion of the Chairperson and Secretary, to which all Officers and Delegates will be invited by the most expeditious manner available, but waiving the fourteen days' notice. Voting shall be in accordance with Rule 11.

10. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) shall be held during the month of June, at which the Officers and two Verifiers shall be elected and when the Annual Reports and Statements of Accounts shall be presented. Members of LRAs shall be entitled to attend the AGM and speak thereat, but voting shall be in accordance with Rule 11. Not less than twenty-one (21) days' notice shall be given to LRAs of the meeting. Standing Orders and Rules for the Conduct of Debate shall be approved at the commencement of the meeting.

11. VOTING

Voting on all matters shall be by the show of hands, unless the majority of delegates/representatives present decide that voting shall be by means of a ballot. Each LRA shall have TWO (2) votes that will be counted at the meeting. LRAs not present can only vote by postal proxy, to be received by the Association Secretary at least three (3) days prior to the meeting. The Officers of the Association shall also be afforded ONE (1) vote each, with the Chairperson having the casting vote if necessary. Voting on all matters shall be decided by a simple majority. Where the Delegates decide that voting shall be by Ballot, the meeting shall appoint two (2) scrutineers.

12. FINANCE

An affiliation fee (to be decided at the Annual General Meeting) shall be paid by each member of the LRA for the current season. The affiliation fee, and any increase, shall be due as from the 30th September in each year. The definition of a member to cover: Active Referees, Life Members and Vice Presidents of a LRA. A statement of accounts shall be presented annually by the Association Treasurer and a costings review presented monthly to the Management Committee. Duly verified copies of the accounts to be sent to each LRA at least twenty-one (21) days prior to the AGM. Any deficit at the end of the season shall be paid pro-rata by each LRA in accordance with its paid-up members as at 29thⁿ September of the current season. LRAs must maintain a register of their members.

A Membership Renewal Form (provided by the ECRA) for each member must be submitted by the LRA Treasurer to the ECRA when remitting fees together with the remittance advice form containing details of the amount remitted. Affiliation fees must be forwarded to the ECRA within fourteen (14) days of them being paid by the member to their LRA. Any purchase of equipment for use by the ECRA over the amount of £150, must be firstly authorised by the ECRA Management Committee. The financial year of the Association shall end at the 31st December in each year.

13. ALTERATION TO THE CONSTITUTION

Any proposed alteration or addition to the Constitution shall be submitted in writing to the ECRA Secretary by no later than 28th February in each year. The Secretary will forward any such proposals to each LRA for consideration, and any amendments must reach him/her no later than 30th April. Amended proposals will be sent to each soon after this date and not less than twenty-one (21) days before the AGM.

14. EXPENSES

The travelling expenses incurred by the Officers and Delegates in attending meetings arranged by the ECRA may be reimbursed by the ECRA. Any other expenses incurred must be supported by itemised receipts and authorised by the ECRA Management Committee.

15. BANKING

Accounts in the names of the Essex Referees Association and the Essex Referees Benevolent Fund shall be opened at a convenient branch of a bank as designated by the Management Committee. The drawings from the account(s) shall bear the signatures of two (2) of any three (3) Officers elected at the AGM. An Investment Account(s) shall also be opened and maintained as required.

16. QUORUM

One third of the members of the County Committee shall form a quorum at the AGM and Delegates Meeting. Four (4) members shall form a quorum at a Management Committee Meeting.

17. AWARDS

(a) Long and Meritorious Service Award

This award may be awarded to those members of LRAs who have rendered meritorious service to the LRA or ECRA for a period of not less than fifteen (15) years (not necessarily consecutive), as an elected Officer or Committeeperson. Applications must be made on the form provided and returned to the ECRA Secretary by no later than 1st March in each year for consideration by the Management Committee and for ratification at the AGM. Those members whose names are approved shall be the recipient of an engraved memento, to be presented by an Officer of the ECRA.

(b) Long Service Certificate

This certificate shall be awarded to any person who has been a member of their LRA for a period of not less than fifteen (15) years (not necessarily consecutive). Nominations shall be submitted on the application form provided and returned to the Secretary of the ECRA for the consideration of the Management Committee. Those members approved shall be the recipient of a certificate, to be presented by an Officer of the ECRA.

18. IN-SERVICE TRAINING COMMITTEE

The Committee shall consist of the In-Service Training Coordinator and three (3) other members to be elected annually at the AGM. The Committee shall have the power to co-opt. The objects of this committee are:

- to review the requirements for progressional training at LRA level and make appropriate recommendations to the ECRA Management Committee
- no basic training is to be looked at by the committee as this will be dealt with by The FA and the County FA respectively unless delegated in writing by The FA or the County FA
- to agree what training will benefit the members of the LRAs
- to prepare model instruction details on subjects agreed by the Committee for all Tutors to use
- to look at the frequency of the training required to be undertaken by the LRAs to help their members and make appropriate recommendations
- to assist LRAs where required or asked for in providing progressional training

19. EXCLUSION OF MEMBERS

The Association may refuse admission to any person, or exclude any member, whose conduct makes it desirable that such a member's name should not be on the roll of members. The ECRA shall not exclude a person or member under this Rule unless:

- the motion to exclude is recommended by the Management Committee and agreed at a Delegates' Meeting
- at least four (4) days' notice has been given to the member's LRA of any proposal to exclude the member concerned has received, by recorded delivery, a letter giving at least ten (10) days' clear notice that such motion for exclusion is on the agenda of a Delegates' Meeting in order for he or she to present their case.

An excluded member may not be re-admitted without the approval at the AGM.

20. EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

The Management Committee shall have the authority to deal and make decisions on any matters not covered in the Constitution.

21. APPEALS AGAINST DECISIONS OF THIS ASSOCIATION

Any member of a LRA dissatisfied with any decision of the County Committee, other than a decision of the Committee to amend or not to amend the constitution, may appeal against the decision in writing to the Board of the RA within four (4) weeks of the decision, in accordance with RA rules.

A copy of any appeal lodged with the RA. must be sent to the Secretary of the ECRA within seven (7) working days.

All parties shall be bound by the decision of the Appeal Panel appointed by the Board of the RA.

22. DISSOLUTION OF A LOCAL REFEREES ASSOCIATION.

Should a LRA be disbanded following a vote of its members at an AGM or EGM, details of how the funds and assets have been distributed shall be made available to the ECRA. In the event of the dissolution of the ECRA, the Management Committee will have the authority to distribute the funds and assets to LRAs in membership at the time of dissolution.

June 2015

THE REFEREES' ASSOCIATION GROUP PERSONAL ACCIDENT INSURANCE POLICY

The Association operates a block group personal accident policy as a compulsory part of membership for those aged between 17 and 75 years inclusive. The premium of £4 per year is included in the RA Membership fee.

These notes do not form part of the policy and are for guidance purposes only. Please refer to the policy wording for specific details which can be viewed on www.the-ra.org.

The Insured is The Referees' Association. The persons insured are each member of the Association up to and including the age of 75. Members aged 75 or over can pay an enhanced premium of 100% (£8) and must complete a medical declaration form. This will enable cover to be granted.

If, as a direct result of an accident within the British Isles while:

1. undertaking a direct journey to and from, officiating or attending a game in a recognised capacity sanctioned by a UK Football Association;
2. attending a meeting or undertaking work for the insured as authorised by a local society, National Association or the RA.;
3. training organised by a local society (individual training is NOT covered);
4. playing in the insured's five-a-side competition;

a)	death)	
b)	loss of eye(s)	)	£15,000
c)	loss of limb (s))	
d)	permanent disablement)	
e)	paralysis of eyes or limbs)	
f)	temporary total disablement	)	£200.00 per week (14 day excess period)
g)	medical expenses	)	See policy schedule (Twenty per cent of any claim for temporary total disablement to a maximum of £100)
h)	theft of Refereeing equipment, spectacles and contact lenses	)	up to £350 .subject to £25 excess up to £200 subject to £25 excess
i)	dental expenses following assault	)	up to £250 subject to £25 excess
j)	Victim support / Counselling	)	refer to Policy Summary – up to 3 sessions
k)	Loss of Personal Clothing and Effects	)	up to £350 subject to £25 excess.
l)	Motor Legal Cover (average cost £30)	)	free
m)	physiotherapy	)	resulting from accident or injury.
n)	broken bones	)	£100
o)	hospitalisation	)	£25 per day up to 30 days.
p)	life cover – funeral expenses	)	up to £500.

Pre-existing medical conditions are NOT covered under this policy.

Members between the ages of 14-16 inclusive, not in gainful occupation as an employment will be covered for a limited range of benefits as specified on the policy schedule a) to j) above but excluding f). Where members have an income the benefits payable will be equal to that income, or £100 per week, whichever is the lesser amount. Proof of earnings will be required.

Members over the age of 75 (76 and older) are excluded from this policy but, providing they are in good health and upon completion of a proposal form and payment of an additional premium of £8, they could be accepted.

Whilst there is an excess period of 14 days (under f)) members should register their claim immediately in case of a future re-occurrence of any injury. All claims must be submitted to the Association within 60 days of the event occurring. Claims submitted after this time are not covered under the policy.

Claim forms are available from Head Office or from the RA Website and all correspondence should be sent to our insurance broker, contact details are available from Local RA Secretaries or from the RA Website, www.the-ra.org.

Where a serious accident has occurred and injury or incapacity continues, ongoing medical certification, when obtained from your doctor, should be sent directly to the insurance broker, contact details are with Local RA Secretaries.

For any query after a claim has been submitted, please contact the insurance broker, contact details are with Local RA Secretaries.

Claims not requiring further information, medical reports or clarification are paid monthly, on or around the 20th of the month after submission, i.e. a claim received by the Association in January will be paid around the 20th February.

Members should be aware that this is a "personal accident" policy *not* an "all risks" policy and does not cover such items as jewellery, cash, watches, mobile phones, keys or damage to vehicles, which are often covered under other Insurance policies.

Members are expected to take all reasonable care and precautions to safeguard their equipment.

If in doubt about changing room security, lock any valuables and other items where they cannot be seen, such as in the boot of your car or in the car of someone you know.

Whenever possible, members should keep kit with them and should not leave it unattended. Leaving kit unattended after the game could render cover inoperative, especially if left in unsecured reception areas of clubs, such as clubrooms.

If in doubt about the validity of a claim, send it in. A claim will be judged on the information contained on the Form

UPGRADE. Full members have the opportunity to upgrade their insurance to include:

Standard Motor Accident Assistance
Young Driver Cover
Gadget Cover
Hometyre
Health Cashplans
Private Medical Cover

ADVICE AND INFORMATION FOR REFEREES

MISCONDUCT REPORTS

Referees are reminded that, in accordance with The FA's Rule E15, they must submit reports concerning cautions, dismissals and other misconduct only to the appropriate CFA or The FA. Copies of such reports must not be submitted to leagues or other bodies. These reports may be completed on a computer.

REQUESTS FROM CLUBS, PLAYERS AND SOLICITORS

There has been an increase generally in instances where referees have been approached by clubs, players and their respective solicitors acting in connection with possible legal action on behalf of players relating to injuries on the field of play, and the police in relation to potential criminal proceedings. The Essex County FA advises referees, if they are contacted by a club, a player or their solicitor, to release a copy of their misconduct report. Then they should be referred to the County FA Office.

The FA has been advised by its lawyers that clubs, players and their solicitors have no power to require the provision of evidence from a witness without first obtaining a court order to this effect. Therefore, in the absence of any such order, referees are advised there is no legal obligation either to answer questions or provide documents or other evidence. Furthermore, referees are advised that provision of a report to persons other than to those specified in FA Rule E15 may constitute a breach of the rule. Where a referee is approached to give evidence, it is a matter for him or her to decide what to do. However, a referee should not disclose a report without first seeking the approval of the relevant CFA or The FA.

REQUESTS FROM THE POLICE

Other than in the case of evidence relating to the commission of serious criminal offences, or in circumstances where a police constable has reasonable grounds for believing that it is necessary to seize evidence in relation to an offence which they are investigating in order to prevent it being concealed, lost, altered or destroyed, there is no legal obligation on a witness to answer the enquiries of the police. However, the police may require the production of evidence or appearance of a witness where a warrant or a witness summons is issued. The FA considers, where possible, referees should seek to assist the police in any enquiries. This is a matter for each individual referee. The FA would advise referees to obtain their own legal advice in connection with any police request and, where appropriate, consult with The FA or appropriate CFA.

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT-WRITING PROCEDURE

1. Quote the **full name** of the player and their club, the competition and the date.
2. State clearly the **offence** for which the player was cautioned or dismissed, as listed in 'The Laws of Association Football' or as in the introduction to these notes. **Note:** These are also listed on the official FA Misconduct Report Form.
3. Remember that the report must state clearly what happened. Do not confuse the **offence** and the **incident**.
4. It is helpful to state the time at which the incident occurred in the report, and where it occurred.
5. Please check your spelling! Almost every important word you will need to use is in 'The Laws of Association Football'. Remember, a copy of your report goes to the club concerned.
6. Your report may be required in duplicate. If you have access to carbon paper this will ensure both copies are always exactly the same. Always make a third copy for your own future reference.

7. If you are an assistant referee, make out a report on the incident as you saw it and submit two copies, as usual, when a player is dismissed. In the case of a caution, prepare a report and retain it in the case of an appeal by a player, although there is no need to submit it initially.
8. Remember that each incident meriting a report must have a separate report. Two players that have been dismissed means there should be two separate reports.

Remember, a well-written report means:

- a) there is less likelihood of an appeal by the player
- b) a service has been properly performed for the Disciplinary Committee, which has to deal with your report
- c) the standing of referees has been enhanced by the standard of your report
- d) you have indicated you intend to be as efficient off the field of play as you are on it

INJURIES TO PLAYERS ON THE FIELD OF PLAY (DUE TO PITCH CONDITION)
(A GUIDE FOR REFEREES, CLUBS AND LEAGUES)

The Responsibilities of Referees

This applies to both registered and substitute referees. As a referee, you should do all you reasonably can to prevent injuries from happening on the field of play.

You have the authority to ask for a pitch to be made safe, or to cancel a game if you feel the pitch conditions are unsuitable for play. This may be an unpopular decision to make in some circumstances, particularly at the end of the season, but it is vital that you exercise this authority at all times. Claims have been made against referees where injuries have allegedly been suffered due to:

- o poorly prepared pitches, where there are large or excessive tufts of grass, or sizeable ruts or holes in the pitch
- o the effects of weather such as excessive water, mud or particularly hard grounds

Referees must take their responsibilities very seriously in relation to a thorough pitch inspection before kick-off.

Referees should not rely on protection from a civil claim on Decision 1 of the 'Decisions of the International Board in respect of Law 5 - The Referee'. This is unlikely to be upheld in English law as giving referees immunity in the way it states. Referees should certainly not see it as an alternative to carrying-out a full inspection prior to each game.

The Responsibility of Clubs and Leagues

Clubs and leagues also have a duty of care, and must take all reasonable steps to minimise the risk of injury to their players and those on the opposition's team. Furthermore, this must be explained clearly to everyone involved at the club.

More specifically, a club must ensure nothing is done, or omitted to be done, which is likely to cause bodily injury to the public, club members or others. This, of course extends, to the preparation of any pitches for which it is responsible. Clubs should also take great care that any obligations under pitch hire agreements are complied with.

Assaults on Match Officials

Members of the RA Board are concerned at the number of assaults suffered by members of the association before, during or after matches whilst carrying out their duties in accordance with the laws of the game.

It is acknowledged that The FA collates statistics on assaults supplied by CFAs which include details of assaults on non-RA members. The RA Board believe it is important that every case of an assault on a member should be reported to the member's LRA, the ECRA and to the RA. Board, using the form prepared by the RA Board available from CRA Secretaries, because it will enable immediate and ongoing assistance, counselling, support and advice to be offered. It will also enable the RA's F&GP Committee to accurately monitor this unwanted aspect of the game so appropriate recommendations can be made to the Board to allow strong representations to be made to The FA.

A reportable assault is any form of unwanted and unwarranted physical contact upon a victim by an assailant. Technically, highly aggressive, non-contact violent conduct towards a victim may also constitute an assault. At its mildest, it may just be a poke in the chest with a pointed finger. More serious assaults go as far as inflicting grievous bodily harm or worse.

Secretaries are requested to recommend that members adopt the following procedure:

1. If a member is assaulted before or during a game, they should decide whether to postpone or abandon the match. As a general guide, unless the official can be absolutely certain that continuing with the match places him or her under no undue pressure, **always discontinue**.
2. Written details of the assailant(s) and witnesses should be obtained and reported.
3. The ground should be left as soon as possible by the safest means, seeking assistance in this from anyone who is, or may be, supportive.
4. Seek immediate medical attention if there is any form of physical or mental injury (shock).
5. The incident should be reported to the nearest police station, and a case number should be obtained. In the case of bodily harm, the police may decide that there is sufficient evidence to prosecute the offender, but this may take some time. A copy of correspondence should be maintained.

6. The LRA Secretary or other senior LRA and County RA Officers should be informed as soon as possible.
7. The LRA Secretary and other colleagues should offer immediate and ongoing assistance, counselling, support and advice. Consider whether an insurance claim on the RA policy might be appropriate.
8. The incident should be reported to the relevant CFA/The FA as soon as possible. The LRA Secretary or another senior member may be able to help write this.
9. Compose, if the competition's rules require it, a report to the relevant competition officer.
10. The report should describe the circumstances of the assault and its effects on the victim. Those details that must remain confidential between the referee and the CFA/The FA and the police (when involved) should **not** be included. Legally, the alleged assailant(s) are innocent until found guilty by the CFA and/or the courts and premature disclosure of the details might prejudice any disciplinary hearing or court case.
11. List all the additional expenditure incurred as a result of the assault in case it can be recompensed under the Criminal Injuries Compensation regulations.
12. It is recommended that members do not return to officiating until mentally and physically ready.
13. Appointments Secretaries should be advised of any possible non-availability.
14. Any injuries sustained should be monitored and, if there is any deterioration in their condition, medical advice should be sought.
15. Await correspondence from the CFA to whom the incident was reported.
16. Await a call from the police if the incident was reported to them.
17. If any threatening or abusive treatment, letters or telephone calls from the assailant, or what could be his/her associates, are received, the police should be informed immediately and comprehensive details should be given.
18. Members are reminded that, although they are the victim, as far as the authorities are concerned (that's the CFA, the FA and the police), as referees we are just a witness. As such, we are required to provide clear, concise and truthful evidence for use against the assailant(s). It is up to the authorities to make a judgement on how to proceed in the case.
19. The LRA Secretary should monitor proceedings and, if considered appropriate, refer to the CFA, asking them to intervene.
20. If the police decide not to prosecute, members may be able to mount a private prosecution for assault and to seek compensation. Expert legal advice should be sought in this scenario. This might be possible with assistance from The FA or CFA and legal advice can be obtained through the RA.
21. CFAs are required to report all cases that have been proven, giving the decision of the commission, together with any reasons for variation of the recommended punishments, to The FA. If the match official who reported the assault makes a written request to The FA or relevant CFA for the decision and punishment awarded, that information must be made available to him/her at the earliest opportunity.

The FA, as the governing body of football in England, are responsible for discipline within the game and the following is an extract from The FA Handbook.

FA Disciplinary Procedures - Assaults on Match Officials

The following regulations shall apply at all levels of the game (excluding the six designated leagues which are The FA Premier League, the Football League, the Football Conference, the Northern Premier League, the Southern League and the Isthmian League).

In addition to assisting a match official who has reported an assault against him, the Football Association or appropriate association shall, without delay, investigate the match official's report and if, after such investigation, the chairman and secretary of the association or their nominees are satisfied that a prima facie case can be made out against the alleged offender they shall take such steps as are necessary to ensure that a charge is preferred and that a disciplinary commission meets to consider the charge within 28 days of the date of the charge letter. The alleged offender shall not participate in any football activity from the date when they are notified of the charge until a disciplinary commission has heard and adjudicated on the matter.

There shall be three categories of assault:

- a) common assault
- b) assault causing bodily harm
- c) assault causing serious bodily harm

All assaults on match officials in the above three categories must be reported to The FA within fourteen days of the completion of a case which has been proven, giving the decision of the commission together with any reasons for variation of the recommended punishments. If a match official who has reported a participant for an assault upon their person makes a written request for the decision and punishment awarded, such must be made available to them at the earliest opportunity.

Recommended punishments for a person found guilty of an assault upon a match official are made by The FA. They are printed in CFA handbooks and reviewed periodically.

Constant: Legal help is at the end of the phone, 24/7. Constant is an exciting service from top UK law firm, Stephenson. This is in partnership with Spencer Hayes Insurance, and is available to Referees Association members. Call (0800) 694 0190 and please quote 'Constant = The Referees Association'.