

## **GUIDANCE NOTES ON LINE MARKING OF FOOTBALL PITCHES**

Various practices have been used in the past for the application of white, or other coloured, lines to football pitches. The objectives of such practices has been to both reduce labour and materials costs whilst endeavouring to keep the lines visible for a greater length of time. Some of these practices have led to injury and subsequent court action being taken against managers and clubs. You are therefore advised to study the following notes carefully.

### **A. LEGISLATION**

The main governing factors for marking out white lines are the same as that for other routine tasks in the workplace.

1. Duty of Care  
Under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 every employer has a duty of care to ensure the workplace is safe for their employees, contractors, visitors, players, and spectators.
2. The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)  
Regulations to prevent ill health from exposure to any hazardous substances present in the workplace.
3. Risk Assessment  
You are required to carry out assessments on all tasks carried out in the workplace in relation to the nature of hazard, worst outcome, person(s) at risk, current precautions, estimated risk and further precautions.

If a risk assessment is correctly carried out this will ensure an appropriate line marking material is applied, ensuring best practice and, above all, safety of the groundsperson and players.

It is the duty of all Managers to ensure that all the regulations are adhered to as they are ultimately responsible in the eyes of the law. If line marking is carried out by contractors then a specification should be drawn up to include all the safeguards outlined in these guidance notes. This might also extend to include specifying a particular product however, the contractor should also provide a written risk assessment on the day of the line marking activity.

### **B. SUITABLE LINE MARKING COMPOUNDS**

1. Permanent paints  
Based on pigmented viscous liquid. These "paints" can be applied either in a diluted form or neat.
2. Powders  
There are various non-toxic whitening powders available which are based on ground natural calcium carbonate and can be used wet or dry. They are safe to use provided COSHH regulations are adhered to. Under COSHH the user would eliminate the risk as much as possible, although in practice this might require the user to wear gloves and eye protection and to wash off any contact with the skin as a precautionary measure. Most powders are supplied in a fine form.

Only materials approved for use as a line marking material on a grass surfaces can be used on football pitches. An example of an illegal material is hydrated Lime (Calcium hydroxide). This should never be used for line marking. It is toxic and can give rise to chemical skin burns and irritations. It can cause serious damage to the eyes and skin on contact in both its dry or wet form. Its use is not approved or recommended under any circumstances.

### **C. USE OF HERBICIDES TO REINFORCE LINE MARKINGS**

Until The Food and Environment Protection Act, 1985 (FEPA) was introduced many groundsmen and club members used various herbicides mixed in with whitening compounds to keep the lines in longer and more visible during the winter playing season.

It is, however, only permissible to use a herbicide which is approved for use on sports turf, and this is likely to be a total herbicide. COSHH and a suitable Risk Assessment must be carried out prior to any application. A further legal consideration is that the user must have successfully obtained his/her Certificate of Competence in the Safe Use of Pesticides (PA1, PA2A or PA6A).

Any herbicide product for line marking must be used within the conditions of approval granted under The Control of Pesticide Regulations, 1986 (COPR), and subsequent amendments, and as outlined on the product label. There should be no risk to players by contact or transfer of the active herbicide to any part of the body. A Risk Assessment must always be carried out prior to any use of these materials to a grass surface.

The addition of herbicides to whitening materials is not a recommended practice however, there may be approved products available which might be considered in some circumstances.

Play safe – use only safe and approved materials. Do not use old materials as they may no longer be approved for use.

### **D. MACHINES AVAILABLE TO MARK LINES**

Marking machines fall into the following categories.

1. Dry Line Markers  
As the name implies, these are for applying dry powder compounds.
2. Pressure Pump Markers  
A wheel driven pump forces marking fluid through a jet or spout directly onto the turf surface.
3. Electric Pump Markers  
These are battery driven to constantly maintain the required pressure and direct the liquid onto the turf surface.

#### 4. Belt Feed Markers

These have a moving belt system which conveys a continual supply of liquid onto the turf surface by contact

#### 5. Wheel Transfer Markers

These convey the liquid via rotating wheel onto a tray and then via a sponge wheel directly onto the turf surface.

All of the above markers are obtainable from most sports ground suppliers. Before purchasing any marker have a demonstration first, and ensure you get the right marker for your requirements.

### **E. USEFUL CONTACTS & INFORMATION**

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2002/2677/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2002/2677/contents/made)

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37/contents)

Food and Environment Protection Act 1985  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1985/48](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1985/48)

The Control of Pesticides (Amendment) Regulations 1997  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1997/188/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1997/188/contents/made)

Guidance for those affected by the Plant Protection Products (Sustainable Use) Regulations 2012  
[www.pesticides.gov.uk/guidance/industries/pesticides/topics/using-pesticides/codes-of-practice/Guidance\\_Sustainable\\_Use\\_PPP\\_Regs\\_2012.htm](http://www.pesticides.gov.uk/guidance/industries/pesticides/topics/using-pesticides/codes-of-practice/Guidance_Sustainable_Use_PPP_Regs_2012.htm)

Code of Practice for Using Plant Protection Products available from  
[www.pesticides.gov.uk/guidance/industries/pesticides/topics/using-pesticides/codes-of-practice/code-of-practice-for-using-plant-protection-products](http://www.pesticides.gov.uk/guidance/industries/pesticides/topics/using-pesticides/codes-of-practice/code-of-practice-for-using-plant-protection-products)

Institute of Groundsmanship (Training Courses) Tel: 01908 312511  
[www.iog.org](http://www.iog.org)

Health & Safety Executive  
[www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

The Amenity Forum  
[www.amenityforum.co.uk](http://www.amenityforum.co.uk)

Suppliers of products  
[www.iog.org/directory-and-shop/industry-directory/companies](http://www.iog.org/directory-and-shop/industry-directory/companies)

### **F. IMPORTANT NOTE**

These notes are, intended solely to provide helpful guidance for club managers and groundsmen.

The information may vary or change from time to time, as a result of directives issued by governing bodies or government departments.

### **LINE MARKING**

#### Multi-line Marking on Single Pitches

FIFA rules stipulate (Law 1 The field of play) that where 3G Football Turf pitches are being used 11v11 adult pitch should be marked in white. Other lines are permitted provided that they are of a different colour and clearly distinguishable. The lines must be of the same width which must not be more than (12cm) 5 inches. The FA have produced guidance documents for natural and football turf pitches that include recommended colours and how pitch dimensions and layouts can be implemented. These documents are available on The FA website.

As a quick guide the following colours are recommended when marking pitches:

Red - Mini Soccer U7 & U8 (5v5)  
Yellow - Mini Soccer U9 & U10 (7v7)  
Blue - U11 & U12 (9v9)  
White - other age groups & adult (11v11)