



# NEWSLETTER

## Early bookings being taken for October conference after sell-out spring event

**Early bookings are now being taken for the FSOA's Autumn Conference & Exhibition, which will mark the 25th anniversary of the organisation.**

Bookings have been opened for the event in October after exhibition space and guest places for the spring conference & exhibition completely sold out.

The next event will take place on October 3rd and 4th at a venue to be confirmed, giving organisations in the events industry the chance to showcase their products and services whilst networking with experts. As it marks the milestone 25th anniversary of the FSOA, the event will include celebrations to honour the organisation's invaluable and ever-evolving work to improve safety procedures at stadiums across the UK.

Final preparations are now being made for the sold-out Spring event, which will take place at The Stratford Manor Hotel, in Stratford-upon-Avon on March 28th and 29th.

A packed programme of talks and activities has been lined up, focusing on a range of relevant issues such as national terrorism threats, real-life insights into football stadium safety and Q&As with high-profile speakers.

An evening dinner will take place following the conference, which will feature football legend Dean Saunders as the special guest speaker, reliving tales about his achievements as a footballer. The evening celebrations will be compered by Andy Ashworth and will also feature comedian Ian Irving.

Award-winning events and venue security specialist, Showsec, is once again the main sponsor of the event whilst leading surveillance company, Dallmeier, is continuing its support of the FSOA as associate sponsor.

## New qualifications considered for football stewards

The NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Spectator and Public Safety in Crowded Places may now be considered as a suitable alternative to the NVQ Level 2 in Spectator Safety qualification for stewards. The qualification has been mapped to the National Occupational Standards, Level 2, for Spectator Safety and requires assessment of occupational competency as part of its specification.

All stewards working at a sports ground where a general safety certificate has been issued should be trained, assessed for occupational competence and have obtained a qualification within 12 months of starting work as an unaccompanied steward.

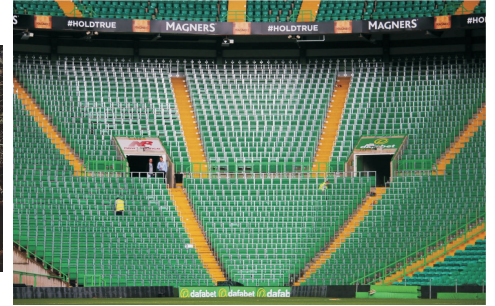


This qualification should be a Level 2 NVQ in Spectator Safety or an acceptable alternative. In order for an alternative to be acceptable it must cover all of the units in the National Occupational Standards for Spectator Safety, include an assessment of occupational competence by a qualified assessor

and be issued by an awarding organisation regulated by Ofqual. This requirement applies equally to stewards employed directly or working through an agency.

The SGSA was asked to approve the new qualification, developed by NCFE, and agreed it meets the requirements to be considered as a suitable alternative qualification.

# The ever-evolving world of football safety



The Hillsborough disaster changed British football forever. Other British football stadia, including Bolton, Ibrox and Bradford, had witnessed tragedies over the years. But the Hillsborough crushing tragedy of April 15, 1989, finally convinced authorities of the inadequacies of British grounds. Lord Justice Taylor's report into the disaster recommending all major sports stadia in Britain convert to an all-seater model by August 1994 transformed the safety landscape of football. Despite the recommendation ultimately being limited to clubs in the top two divisions, the move to all-seater stadium - plus the introduction of new laws making it illegal to sell or give away a football ticket second hand without the consent of the original seller - went some way to reducing and controlling the hooliganism that had marred English football grounds in the 1970s and 80s.

Whilst a safety revolution was taking place in terms of stadium design, much was also happening behind-the-scenes to bring safety practices, policies and procedures at football grounds up to an acceptable standard. The creation of the FSOA came about during this flurry of activities that followed Lord Justice Taylor's report into the Hillsborough disaster. The police seriously examined their role at sports grounds and football authorities were forced to face up to their responsibilities for ensuring the care, safety and wellbeing of spectators. In particular, they were forced to look at how their grounds were managed with one of the main concerns being the variance in safety management performances at football grounds in England and Wales. Safety systems and practices had been evolved locally but in a piece-meal fashion and with very little consistency or uniformity of purpose. Such inconsistency included the appointment of safety officers, which before Hillsborough was not an established post at the majority of clubs.

Even in the immediate post-Hillsborough era there were many clubs that felt that they could still manage safety with club secretaries, carrying out a match day-only role.

The Football Safety Officers Association (FSOA) of England and Wales was therefore formed in 1992 by a small group of Football Safety Officers to help develop and improve all aspects of stadium safety. As a not-for-profit organisation that works to improve all aspects of safety at football grounds the organisation continues to maintain its position at the forefront of football safety by promoting best safety management practices, enhancing the role of stewards and continually developing the expertise of safety officers, in a dynamic and ever-evolving landscape.

The FSOA remains at the forefront of the industry by keeping up-to-date with the developments in technology, stadium design and issues affecting the wider industry to ensure safety officers are equipped with the knowledge required to carry out their role effectively and keep spectators safe. The technical advancement in relation to stadium access, the availability of CCTV and other software

programmes for grounds have changed the way clubs can monitor and deal with fans who break the rules, whilst the introduction of Football Banning Orders have given clubs the powers to ban supporters for unruly behaviour without a criminal charge being brought. But, as the technology supports clubs and safety officers in their endeavours, so too does the technology available to those with less honourable intentions. Drones, for example, are now high on the risk assessment agenda for clubs for many reasons including the all-too-real threat of terrorism.

We are currently on the verge of another big transformation at football grounds, relating to the issue of standing for fans.

Appalled by the horrors of Hillsborough, there was little fight when seating in stadia became compulsory in the 1990s. People were so shocked by the poor quality of some grounds that the opinion formed that standing could just not be done safely.

But, the tide is now turning. Any football fan attending an emotionally-charged match will testify that when the ball hits the back of the net, the temptation to stand proves too much. It is the same story for fans at every club up and down the country and therefore then, it is the status quo that is potentially more dangerous as thousands of fans choose to stand - or spend the game being told not to - at Premier League and Championship grounds every weekend.

Survey after survey has found that the majority of fans would like to be given the option to stand and the mood amongst clubs has now started to shift and the arguments made by a small group of campaigners over the years that the most logical way to keep fans safe - whilst giving in to their desires to stand at matches - by introducing safe standing terraces have slowly become mainstream. Following years of outright dismissal to entertain the idea of any reintroduction of standing in any form, the issue of safe standing is now one that is getting serious consideration at most Premier League club. The tide is turning thanks to Celtic FC, which has blazed the trail for other clubs by introducing rail seating for 2,975 fans. It is an example of the ever-evolving nature of the industry, and one which may again ultimately transform the landscape of football - and the way safety at football is maintained.

The future will continue to present many challenges to stadium and spectator safety but experience has shown our ability to respond effectively to whatever issues have arisen. Over the years, as safety legislation, safety regulation, safety guidance and safety expectations have evolved, so has the need for the FSOA and its members to keep pace with change as it happens. Football should be fun and, whatever the next chapter brings, we'll remain at the forefront of keeping the beautiful game as safe as possible for everyone. What we do today can only improve our tomorrows.



# News from the world of football

## Russian politician proposes legalising football hooliganism

A Russian politician has proposed legalising football hooliganism and turning it into a sport. Igor Lebedev has drawn up rules for "draka" - the Russian word for fight - which he said would involve 20 unarmed competitors on each side in an organised brawl. Groups of Russia fans were deported from France after repeated scenes of violence at Euro 2016.

Russia will host the next World Cup in summer 2018.

Lebedev, who represents the opposition Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, is also on the board of the Russian Football Union.

He published the proposal on his party's website, stating: "Russia would be a pioneer in a new sport. Fans arrive, for example, and start picking fights. And they get the answer - challenge accepted. A meeting in a stadium at a set time."

Following clashes between his country's fans and England supporters at Euro 2016, Lebedev said he "did not see anything terrible about fans fighting".

## Fans to be issued with identity cards at World Cup 2018

Fans will need special identity cards to attend the 2018 World Cup and this summer's Confederation Cup in Russia in a move to combat football hooliganism.

At Euro 2016, there were violent clashes between Russian and English supporters in Marseille. Russia will issue the cards which will be needed to enter the stadiums and can be used as a visa to enter the country. Fifa president Gianni Infantino says he is "not at all concerned" by the threat of hooliganism at the tournament.

## Match abandoned after pitch invasion

Two men were arrested after a violent pitch invasion caused a football match to be abandoned.

About 100 people were involved in the incident towards the end of Didcot Town's Southern Football League game against Hereford FC. Didcot said it was "very disappointed", while Hereford - leading 2-1 at the time of the abandonment - said it was "deeply concerned". BBC commentator Bill Rennells said "fists were flying everywhere".

A 19-year-old man from Hereford was arrested on suspicion of a public order offence, and a 19-year-old man from Hereford was arrested on suspicion of common assault.

## Disciplinary proceedings launched over Saint-Etienne fans' behaviour

Uefa has opened disciplinary proceedings against Saint-Etienne over the behaviour of their fans during the defeat by Manchester United at Old Trafford.

The French side lost 3-0 in the Europa League round of 32 first-leg.

The case refers to improper conduct among the visiting supporters, including setting off fireworks and throwing objects. European football's governing body will deal with the case later this month.

*A word from our main conference sponsor...*

## Showsec: stadium crowd management specialists



Showsec has reached an agreement to continue as the FSOA's main sponsor for the next five years.

Their ongoing support for the FSOA will take the now long established relationship beyond 2022.

The partnership with the FSOA has already made a significant contribution to the enhancement of public safety at sports stadiums the length and breadth of the United Kingdom, and therefore helped to improve the match day experience for football supporters.

With a new long term agreement now in place, Showsec will continue to work on initiatives with the FSOA which are focused on crowd safety techniques.

It will also give them a platform on which to develop a presence in the national game most notable for the fact that they have varying degrees of involvement with a number of Premier League clubs, Football League clubs.

The new agreement with Showsec will also mean that the FSOA can look at helping the lower league and non-league clubs to benefit from being a member of this association.

It is not just the safety and security advice which they can offer to our members, they can also provide operational support on occasions when these clubs may be faced with a big match that present new crowd management challenges.

Showsec's association with the FSOA over the past five years has seen dramatic changes to their operating environment, driven by the needs of an ever changing security challenges presented to the clubs it works for. Couple this with the increased

demand from fans for a quality service that reflects the significant personal outlay, this drives up the need for a dynamic resilient and flexible workforce, in tune with the people they serve.

That workforce faces its own interesting future. The introduction of the national living wage in 2015 has now started to take effect on the people it was designed to help. It's now possible, with the rise in the 'gig economy', for the same group of workers traditionally associated with event stewarding and security to find work in previously closed off markets. From taxi driving with Uber to multi-tasking with Task Rabbit it's never been easier to earn a few extra quid at the weekend, all paid at the national living wage or more. The workforce is in demand, of that there is no doubt.

The journey continues with the FSOA and Showsec's aim over the next 5 years to deliver a fit-for-purpose workforce reinforced with up to date and the most relevant underpinning knowledge we can give them. Staying ahead of the competition is in every worthy company's mantra, but the pressure to improve a product with fewer resources intensifies the need for a renewed look at how we as a security industry bring in, skill up and keep a labour pool who will be responsible for the safety and security of your clubs and your fans. There can be only a few trades commanding the same remuneration with greater responsibility than that of an event steward. Understanding this, along with pay and conditions, recognising the weaknesses therein and addressing them has to be at the top of the industry's agenda of change. Showsec's ambition is to drive this with the FSOA during the course of its newly extended agreement.





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For more information about the FSOA, to learn more about the benefits of being a member, to book your place at our October conference or to enquire about advertising in this newsletter for as little as £50 per month (+VAT), visit [www.fsoa.org.uk](http://www.fsoa.org.uk), email [info@fsoa.org.uk](mailto:info@fsoa.org.uk) or call 01254 841771.

## Details of upcoming regional meetings

The East Midlands region will meet at Chesterfield FC on April 27<sup>th</sup>

The meeting of the North East region will be held at Middlesbrough on a date to be confirmed

The next North West region will be held at Liverpool FC on a date to be confirmed and will include a tour of the new stand

The South East region will meet at Tottenham Hotspur FC on April 20<sup>th</sup> (A goodbye to White Hart Lane)

## New FSOA Members

The FSOA is delighted to welcome new corporate member, Regency Security Services (UK) Ltd and new associate member, Carl Krueger, from Tranmere Rovers FC.



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