



NEWSLETTER

FSOA launches security industry survey amid staffing concerns

The FSOA has launched an industry-wide survey to identify the current and future levels of resources within the Security Industry.

The survey has been developed in conjunction with the Security Industry Authority (SIA) and United Kingdom Crowd Management Association (UKCMA).

Mark Harding, Chairman of the UKCMA, said: "There are growing concerns about numbers of SIA-licensed staff throughout the industry, so we want this survey to benchmark the current situation.

"We are canvassing both purchasers and suppliers for information and urge all to participate in the survey to provide us with a comprehensive result to help shape the way the industry moves forwards."

The survey is split in two - one for Suppliers and one for Purchasers. Everyone within the industry is urged to complete the survey to ensure our information is as accurate as possible.

Thank you in advance.

To take part, visit <https://www.fsoa.org.uk/survey/>

Showsec agrees five-year FSOA sponsorship deal

Crowd management specialist, Showsec, will continue as the FSOA's main sponsor for the next five years.

The partnership with the FSOA has already made a significant contribution to the enhancement of public safety at sports stadiums across the UK and the new long-term agreement means Showsec will continue to work on initiatives with the FSOA focusing on crowd safety techniques.

John Newsham, FSOA Business Development and Membership Manager, said: "This new agreement with Showsec means we can look at helping the lower 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 presents challenges in terms of crowd control.

"The excellence Showsec delivers in safety and security to many stadiums and the excellence they can still bring to other stadiums is of great benefit to us."

Alan Wallace, Showsec's Regional Manager for the North, said: "This is much more than just a sponsorship - it is a partnership in which we are very committed to making a big contribution in further advances in crowd safety so supporters get the maximum amount of enjoyment out of the game."



No place for pyrotechnics in the Beautiful Game



Some fans claim there's no party without pyro. But FSOA Business Development Manager, John Newsham, explains why there's no place in football for pyrotechnics

Tune into any European football game and it's likely that at some point you will see burning flares and brightly coloured smoke billowing from the stands.

Setting off smoke devices and flares inside football stadiums is the norm in most European countries, where fans argue their presence adds to the atmosphere and raucous carnival spirit.

But is it really the case that no pyro means no party? Absolutely not. And a quick look at the facts behind flares should be enough to convince fans that the huge risk posed by these party tricks is one not worth taking just to ramp up the excitement levels a notch.

Given that flares can burn at temperatures of up to 1600C (the temperature required to melt steel), these burning missiles pose a serious threat to the safety of anyone in the stadium. And a brief glimpse into horrific incidents involving flares at football matches over the years is proof of the devastation they can cause.

There have been countless incidents involving flares in football. In 2013, for example, a 14-year-old boy was killed by a flare thrown during a match in Bolivia, whilst a 15-year-old boy suffered lung damage from a smoke devices thrown during Villa's trip to Wigan in the same year. Last year, fans threw a pyrotechnic flare at a steward which exploded underneath him amid sickening scenes during a Euro 2016 game against the Czech Republic.

In 1992 a 13-year-old Spanish boy was killed when he was hit in the chest by a flare at a stadium in Barcelona, whilst Russian

goalkeeper Igor Akinfeev was struck on the back of the head with a flare during a match between Montenegro and Russia in 2015 and back in 1993 fan John Hill died after being hit by a marine distress flare at the end of an international game in Cardiff.

The list goes on.

Those burning missiles that some fans insist help to create a high-octane atmosphere have the potential to cause devastation for fans and players - as well as the stewards tasked with dealing with them.

English football has come a long way since the 1980s when hooliganism was rife. From an era typified by fans meeting to fight and brawl, the Beautiful Game now celebrates a family-friendly image as clubs welcome old and young to join together to watch their teams play in safe and secure surroundings.

But the possibility of fans using pyrotechnics to spice up the atmosphere at games is one that threatens to unsettle this family-friendly spirit and causes a constant headache for Safety Officers.

Football is a game filled with passion and nobody wants stadiums on match days to resemble libraries where fans sit silently in support of their team. But adrenalin-filled atmospheres are not reliant on smoke devices or flares. Just ask a Liverpool fan on a European night at Anfield.

The law agrees and it is an offence for anybody to enter or attempt to enter a

football ground while in possession of a flare, firework or smoke device.

Part of the job of a Safety Officer is to continually monitor the behaviour of visiting fans, one area in particular being if those visiting supporters having a reputation for setting off smoke devices or flares at matches.

The Safety Officer will have a standard risk assessment and procedures in place for this event but if the information gathered indicates a likely increase in this activity then an enhanced risk assessment is undertaken to reduce the potential for these unwanted and dangerous items being carried into the stadium.

The majority of supporters who do set off flares or smoke devices are usually caught on CCTV as there are some very sophisticated CCTV equipment being used in grounds these days. But, unfortunately, not all offenders who are arrested for this are dealt with by the courts in the same way and it is down to the CPS to have a consistent approach with regard to this type of offence.

As a fan, is setting off a flare to show support for your team really worth the risk of a prison sentence? And, more importantly, is it worth causing a fellow fan serious injury or even death?

Football is a sport that should be enjoyed by all. There's no place for pyrotechnics in the Beautiful Game.

Top tips for Safety Officers

The role of a Safety Officer does not start and end on match day. There's a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes every day to ensure matches run smoothly and safely for spectators, staff and players alike.

Consultation with spectators:

There is lots of evidence to suggest that fans behave better when they feel included so it is vital that clubs consult regularly with supporters' organisations/groups. Clubs are encouraged to work with fans to tackle issues arising out of incidents of spectator misconduct inside stadiums and encourage supporters to contribute to the discussions on how to improve fan behaviour. Their input during talks - and their encouragement to fellow fans to follow the rules - will help to more effectively communicate the club's message that responsible behaviour is vital at matches.

Clubs are encouraged to regularly make supporters aware of what is considered to be unacceptable behaviour at both home and away matches, whilst reminding them of the penalties they could face for misconduct.

As well as face-to-face meetings with supporters' groups, Safety Officers - through supporter Liaison officers - should make use of other communications tools to keep fans informed, including the stadium PA, giant screens, signage, media, club website and match programmes.

Taking a multi-agency approach:

It is crucial that there is an effective partnership between football clubs and the local police force to ensure match day safety. An agreed statement of intent should be in place so each has their respective match day responsibilities set out in order, to maintain stadium safety and law & order.

Joint planning should take place before the start of each season so each game is categorised at a risk level, with further planning ahead of each match to review specific risks. This will include the number of police officers to be deployed, if any, as pre-predicted categorisations can go up or down according to intelligence.

Risk Assessments:

A Risk Assessment should be carried out for every match - whatever the size of the ground and regardless of how many fans are attending. They should be drawn up based on a number of factors, including police intelligence and information about the behaviour of visiting supporters at other matches. Risk Assessments should include a range of considerations, such as whether alcohol should be restricted, whether stewards from the visiting club should be used, whether food kiosk closures could have an effect on behaviour of spectators, whether spectator standing is likely to be an issue - and the control measures proposed to handle this - whether special arrangements need to be made for the visiting team coach to ensure safe entry and exit to the ground or if special arrangements need to be for match officials.

A multi-agency approach may also be considered on the Risk Assessment along with the general health and safety requirement. Access arrangements for press/photographers need to be considered and, if the fixture is to be televised, agreements made between the broadcaster and the club regarding camera positions and access & egress for broadcast staff. Method statements should be requested by the club from the broadcaster, whilst permits to-work may be required to be issued with regard to working at height. Identification badges should be worn by all external personnel who might require access to the ground which states which areas they are permitted to enter.

Information sharing/ Reporting procedures:

There is much to be gained from sharing information and intelligence, both with police and other clubs. Sharing intelligence with police can allow the detection and exclusion of any fans trying to enter the stadium that are subject to a ban, for example, whilst co-operation ahead of games can prove a vital aid in the drawing up of accurate Risk Assessments to ensure the correct number of stewards/police officers are available for match day.

Safety Officers can gain an awful lot by sharing information with their counterparts from other clubs and every club's Safety Officer is recommended to file an accurate match report within 72 hours of the match taking place to the FSOA. These reports greatly assist other Safety Officers planning for their home matches by giving them an insight into the behaviour of spectators and any areas of safety which they feel could be improved in future.

It is essential that there is co-operation between both clubs ahead of, and during, match day. The Safety Officer from both the home and visiting team should discuss details such as the anticipated number of spectators attending, the number of coaches expected, police intelligence, the potential for fans arriving without tickets, whether fans should only be allowed entry if tickets were purchased in advance, or even whether players are likely to be a target for verbal abuse? Clubs can liaise via phone calls and email exchanges, although face-to-face meetings alongside police are recommended for big matches or local derby matches with a history of rivalry.

Making sure everyone is on the same page:

Much behind-the-scenes planning takes place ahead of every match but, in order for the resulting plan to be effective, it is vital that the Safety Officer communicates the details of the safety operation properly to staff. Before every match, the Safety Officer or Deputy should provide a briefing for supervisors/stewards and anyone involved in the safety operation - including first aid and turnstile operators - to provide them with sufficient information to ensure they are prepared. A written record of each briefing should be kept.



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Member News

Steve Fanthorpe left Stevenage FC on January 7th, whilst Chris Baker has taken over at Gillingham FC from Tony Payne, who is reducing his hours.

John Bradbury has retired from Telford United after 38 years of service to the club. Despite his retirement, John will still be in a position to support the club should the need arise. Mark Walters takes over as the Safety Officer going forward.

The FSOA would like to thank Steve, Tony and John for their contribution to the organisation over the years and wish them all the very best for the future.

Nigel Flint has moved from Alfreton to Mansfield Town as Deputy Safety Officer. We wish him well in the role.

Regional Meetings

The next EM regional meeting will take place on January 26th at Leicester City FC.

The NW region will meet on February 14th at Manchester City's Etihad Stadium.

All other regional meetings to be confirmed. They will all take place at least 28 days before the AGM in March to give members chance to submit their nominations for national Chair/Vice Chair roles.

New members

Karen Randall (Swindon Town FC)
Ian Coulton (Leicester City FC)
Kathryn Williams (Leicester City FC)
Clare Buckley (Birmingham City FC)
Sam Newman (Slough Town FC)

New corporate partners

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