# Section 5 INFRASTRUCTURE & OPERATIONS

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Introduction

Section 5 explains two areas of operations, event management and health and safety. Health and safety is fundamental to every football club. All members are responsible for Health and Safety and should always be conscious of their responsibility.

Event management is necessary for clubs, whether the club has a fundraiser or a big match, knowing how to run a safe and well-organised event is critical. Developing volunteers experience in event management can improve and increase the scale and size of events the club is capable of hosting. Section 5 will discuss both Health and Safety and Event Management in more detail.

Event Management

All clubs run events of some kind. Events can be a fantastic way to promote your club in the community, and they help get people involved. Most of the work for an event is in the planning. This section will cover the key steps to delivering a successful event.

Although every match could be considered an ‘event’, when we talk about events we generally mean something that is a little out of the ordinary. Examples of common events in clubs include:

- Larger football event than normal (e.g. Cup final).
- Awards night.
- ‘Legends’ match.
- Blitz days.
- Fundraising event.
- Invitational tournament.

Regardless of the type of event the key principles are the same. Developing a culture of effective goal setting, planning, delegation, and team work will not only help your club run better events, it will make it easier for club volunteers to do so.

Planning your event

Planning is about deciding what kind of event your club wants and making it happen. To begin with you need to ask and answer the six main questions:

1. **What** is the event we want to run?
2. **Why** is the event taking place? It is essential that you know what you want to achieve out of the event and how it will benefit the club.
3. **When** is the best time for it to take place?
4. **Where** is the best location for the event?
5. **Who** is the event for? Who will organise it?
6. **How** are we going to make this event happen and how much will it cost?

By answering these questions, you can decide if it is worth the time, effort and money it takes to makes it a success. If you have answered all these questions and still want to go ahead, then it is time to start developing your **Action Plan** (or project plan) and your **Event Day Plan**.
Action Plan
Your event action plan is the list of tasks that need to be completed for the event to proceed and run safely and successfully. There are four simple steps:

1. Identify the tasks or actions that have to be done.
2. Decide when the tasks need to be completed.
3. Decide who is going to undertake each task.
4. Document the tasks, timelines and responsibilities in a pre-event action plan.

The structure of an action plan matches the first three steps above. In relation to getting equipment for your event, for example, the relevant section of the event plan might look like the following:

<table>
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<th>Task</th>
<th>By when</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
<th>Done</th>
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<td>Talk to event team to identify what equipment is needed (e.g. tables, chairs, loudspeaker, etc.)</td>
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When this has been done for each area of your event, the task lists can be combined into an overall plan.

The main benefits of documenting an action plan are that:

- It ensures that nothing is forgotten about.
- It is more easily communicated and is no longer 'in someone's head'.
- It can be tracked in the weeks coming up to your event so that the event team can see how preparations are progressing.
- It helps to ensure that there are no overlaps with people doing the same thing.

Event Day Plan
As progress is made through the tasks in the action plan, information and decisions will be clarified and made. These will determine how the event will be run on the day.

The event day plan should cover the same areas worked on as part of the Action Plan such as equipment, parking, catering and so on. Rather than tasks or open questions, however, the event day plan should state what will actually happen. For example, the parking section of the event day plan, based on the outcomes of the tasks outlined above, might read as follows:

Parking
There will be 30 spaces reserved for affiliated group buses in the visitors’ car park. A further 20 spaces will be available for family members and volunteers, on a first-come first-served basis. The car park will be staffed by event services volunteers from 9am – 6pm.

Please see Section 7, Appendix U for a sample event day plan.
Using & Tracking your Action Plan
Implementing a pre-event action plan is the key to a successful event, which means it needs to be actively used and monitored throughout the planning phase. There are a number of ways this can be achieved:

- Ensure every member of the team has the action plan.
- Check that everyone who has a task to undertake, understands the task fully.
- Meet regularly to review the plan, cross off completed tasks and identify what has to be done to finalise incomplete tasks.
- In the same meetings, look ahead at upcoming tasks, again ensuring that they are clear and understood.
- If possible, redistribute the plan once it has been updated.

Contingency planning
It is always important to put some thought into contingency plans. Ask the ‘What if?’ questions.

- What if the pitch is flooded?
- What if we don’t sell enough tickets?
- What if we don’t have enough car parking spaces?

It is good practice to ask these questions, identify the ones that could potentially have the biggest impact on your event and, where possible, put a backup plan in place.

Event team

Teamwork enables ordinary people to achieve extraordinary results. Nowhere better does this apply than to the running of events. In some cases, one or two individuals could plan, manage and deliver an event. However, depending on the size of the event it may be a huge workload for those people, and it may not achieve the same result as what a team could. Most events require a team of people, working together, to make it a success. They should each have a specific job, or jobs, and should be included in the planning process as early as possible.

For small, straightforward events, the event team can simply be a group of people with equal responsibility and authority:
However, it is often better to have an ‘Event Manager’. Someone who will coordinate and drive the planning, lead the team and be the decision maker when necessary:

For bigger or slightly more complicated events it might be better to use a functional structure that is role based. Each individual has a responsibility and potentially a small team of their own. It may look something like this:

A structure of this type has many benefits:

- Shared workload.
- Reduce the dependency on any one person.
- Defined roles and responsibilities.
- Better communication – making it clear who can be contacted on a particular issue.
- A clearly identified management structure.
- No single point of failure – if any member of the team needs to leave there are others who can continue their work.

Whatever structure you use the most important thing is that each member of the team knows what their job is and that the team work well together.
Venue

Planning your venue is a critical part of the planning process. The first step in this process is choosing the right venue. Most events will take place at the club’s own grounds but if not then there are many factors to consider when making this decision, including:

- Space available or number and quality of pitches.
- Cost of the venue.
- Parking facilities.
- Ease of access.
- Spectator viewing areas.
- Toilet facilities.
- Disability access.

Once you have decided on the location for the event, it’s time to start thinking about where exactly everything will happen. Clubs are usually good at organising the laying out the field of play, i.e. the pitches. However, there are also many other spaces that need to be planned and laid out correctly. This can be done using a venue layout drawing. Venue layout drawings can be as simple as a hand-drawn sketch with all the different spaces identified on it. If the location, you are using already has venue plans or drawings then it will make it even more straightforward.

Using a venue layout drawing allows you to:

- Ensure in advance that you have identified the best location for each component of the event.
- Make the best use of space.
- Plan the flow of people around the venue.
- Utilise it for demonstration purposes – easier to show someone on a drawing where everything is happening rather than describing it.
- Assist in the set-up on the event day.

The following are examples of the spaces you should identify on your venue layout drawing (where applicable):

1. Main entry & exit points.
2. Pitches to be used.
3. Spectator viewing area.
4. Changing areas (players, officials).
5. Toilets (players, officials, public, disabled).
7. Medical/First Aid Centre.
8. Information/Fixtures/Results area.
9. PA announcement area.
10. Check-in desks (teams, staff/vols).
11. Eating areas (teams, public, staff/vols).
12. Storage area.
13. Parking (teams, public, staff/vols, guests, disabled, emergency).

Running the event

The most hectic part of the whole event process is the day itself. However, the more time and effort that is put into the planning and preparation the more likely things will run smoothly on the day. Having a clear plan for what will be taking place is essential.

Regardless of the type or size of event you should have a running order that lists everything that will be taking place and where. Everyone involved on the day should have a copy.
Regardless of the amount of preparation work there will always be tasks to be done on the day before the start of the event. These may include:

- Setting up the pitch (markings, goals, flags, etc.).
- Putting up signage.
- Setting up the check in desk.
- Designating parking spaces.
- Risk assessment/safety checks.

Make sure the event team get there early enough to get these completed in plenty of time. It makes things much more difficult if participants or spectators arrive while you are still trying to set up.

Another essential task before the event starts is the volunteer briefing. The briefing should:

- Be given by the Event Manager (or in some cases by other managers to their team).
- Be held in an area large enough for everyone and where they can all hear.
- Thank the team for the help.
- Explain what will happen during the day (the running order).
- Explain their roles.
- Allow time for questions.

Success is very much dependent on every individual understanding what their role is on the day and have the knowledge to do it. Also, if anyone has an issue, they need to know who to contact to get it resolved. For small events, this information can be included in the briefing but often it will require providing them with information in advance of the day, or shorter briefings on the day specific to the people undertaking a particular job.

Post event
A volunteer debriefing should also take place at the end of the event. It should:

- Take place once the participants have left, and the clear up is completed.
- Discuss what went well.
- Discuss what could have gone better and needs improvement for next time.
- Include recognition for and thanks to the team.

**Evaluation**

The debriefing on the day should provide useful feedback, but ideally you should undertake a more detailed evaluation. Get the event team together and discuss what worked well and what could be done better next time. Take the time to review your event and think about any changes that you could make for the next one. For example, ask yourself where did things go wrong? What were the successes? How could it be improved? Finally, did the event achieve its goal or purpose? The aim of carrying out the evaluation should not be to criticise but to capture key lessons to help you in the future.

**Main problems when running events**

When an event does not go well, there are usually clear reasons for this that can be identified. Some pitfalls to avoid include:

- Not being clear on the aims or objectives of the event.
- Not appointing an Event Manager.
- No event team, lack of delegation to the team or the team not being clear on their responsibilities.
- Not writing down the actions or plans (the event managers having it “all in their head”).
- Not monitoring progress to ensure plans are on track.
Not allowing enough planning time.
- Not communicating properly with the club or with others involved in the event.
- Not allowing enough time for set up on the day.
- Volunteers on the day not knowing the full plan or exactly what they need to do.

**HEALTH & SAFETY**

**Note:** The information covered in this section is only an overview of Safety, Health and Welfare, and is not designed to be a comprehensive guide to the club’s safety responsibility or its duties at law. Clubs will require professional advice appropriate to the legal formation of the club, and the scale, scope and complexity of their activities.

Considerations include:
- Clubs with employees have a legal obligation under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and related legislation, and should ensure that they have the suitable and necessary Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare expertise in order for them to discharge their duties sufficiently.
- Some clubs are tenants in the facility / grounds and may be required to adhere to terms and conditions of the tenant agreement, including stipulated Safety, Health and Welfare arrangements.
- Insurance policies generally include some condition(s) regarding the Safety, Health and Welfare arrangements and documentation.

**Club’s Responsibilities**

As well as Statutory responsibilities, all clubs must address their individual arrangements in regards to safety, health and welfare, and ensure they are sufficient to create and maintain a safe environment within the club for all involved, whether an employee, a volunteer, a member and/or a visitor, and for all activities. One method of doing so is to establish a Club Safety Statement which, as a minimum, should define roles and arrangements for establishing and maintaining safety, health and welfare within the club.

Everyone involved in the club has a part to play in ensuring a safe environment in the club, for the benefit of the club. There are specific duties in regards to the safety, health and welfare, including duties for management level through to those involved with activities on the ground, and these should be documented in the club’s Safety Statement, however, it is important that a safe culture is established / maintained and delegated from the Board / Management to all involved in the club.

This shared responsibility is a culture that should be promoted, that everyone, working together, must ensure the safe day to day running of the club. In order to assist with this, it may be beneficial to assign a committee to update and maintain the club’s safety arrangements in line with the club’s Safety Statement and assign a Safety Coordinator to encourage the club to keep health and safety on the Agenda.

*Please see Section 7, Appendix V for a sample role description for a Safety Coordinator.*

A key piece of legislation in regards to health and safety in the workplace is the Safety, Health and Welfare Act 2005, and one purpose of this legislation is to ensure the safety, health and welfare of employees, contractors and visitors in the workplaces. Whilst this legislation is aimed at workplaces it establishes the principles required in relation to health, safety and welfare which will assist all clubs in managing risk and minimising liability. Clubs have a duty of care to ensure the health, safety and welfare of everyone involved.
Safety Statement

A Safety Statement may include:

- Safety Policy – an outline of the club’s intentions in regards to safety, health and welfare within the club.
- Duties and responsibilities – identifies the specific duties for some individuals.
- Safety arrangements – the policies and procedures of the club in regards to safety, health and welfare. These will include normal operations and in times of an emergency.
- Risk assessment – the identification of applicable hazards and control measures required to eliminate / minimise the risks.

Please see Section 7, Appendix W for a sample of Health & Safety Statement.

Risk Assessment

There are some safety arrangements which the club has a statutory obligation to implement, for example first aid and accident reporting etc. In addition to these each club must identify what hazards are applicable to their respective club activities and grounds and determine the necessary controls to eliminate / minimise the risk. In order to do this a comprehensive risk assessment must be carried out by a competent person. The risk assessment should:

- Identify the hazards.
- Assess the applicable risk.
- Determine the necessary control measure(s) to eliminate or at least minimise the risk.

The risk assessment then forms part of the Safety Statement and should be reviewed regularly and updated as required.

Safety Arrangements

In general, the safety arrangements are dependent on the clubs size and activities however there are generic ones that are applicable to all clubs and include, but are not limited to:

- Coaching Policy
- Accidents and Incidents
- Access
- Fire Safety
- Electricity
- Equipment
- Emergency procedures
- Underage Players
- Visitors to the Club
- Traffic Management
- First Aid
- Manual Handling
- Maintenance
- Players Welfare

Other necessary arrangements will be identified through the risk assessment process. Once determined these arrangements should be developed in consultations with those applicable and then communicated to all relevant.
Insurance

To safeguard all, the club must be properly insured. The insurance policy / cover required will depend on the
club’s size, the range of activities that take place and the value of insured property. Different types of policies
include but are not limited to:

- Occupiers Liability
- Public Liability
- Employers Liability (if applicable)

And examples of scenarios included but not limited to;

- Theft
- Damage to and/or loss of equipment
- Personal injury
- Fire

Therefore, whatever the size or type of club it is strongly recommended that the club seek professional advice from
an insurance company or broker.

FACILITIES

Introduction

Taking on a facility development project requires a concentrated effort from a club. The FAI Facility Development
Unit exists to support the development of quality football facilities locally, regionally and nationally. It works in
partnership with stakeholders by offering advice on quality standards and assisting with technical queries, master
planning and design advice at every stage of development of football infrastructure projects.

Natural Turf

With increased levels of participation in recent years, there is more activity on football pitches. The extra demand
can lead to deterioration of playing surfaces. To facilitate this demand and to ensure ongoing playing surface quali-
ty, many clubs are undertaking new pitch developments.

Before developing a natural turf pitch, a club should do the following:

- Carry out a user analysis, who, where, when and how often the club will be using the pitch?
- Establish if the pitch is to be used for other events shows/concerts/car parking.
- Engage professional advice i.e. an agronomist.
- Establish the need for floodlighting; if so are there funds to do it all in one phase?
- If it’s a new pitch location, soil profile and site characteristics are critical issues that need to be
  considered.
Artificial Turf

With ongoing advances in research and development, the option of using artificial turf for football is becoming more popular. The FAI strongly advises clubs to seek expert advice and get all relevant questions answered before the project commences. Questions include:

- Who will be using it?
- Is it for competitive or recreational use?
- What should it cost?
- Do I need a shock pad?
- How do I maintain it?

Floodlighting

The advent of floodlighting can lead to a more flexible approach to the organisation of training and competitive fixtures. When considering the installation of floodlights expert advice is essential to answer the following questions:

- Will they be used for competitive games or just training?
- What Lux level do I need for this?
- What is the most suitable column arrangement for our club?
- Do we need planning permission?
- What will the running cost be?
- Do I need to maintain them?
- What are the options for energy conservation?
- Is a generator required?

Clubhouse & Dressing Rooms

When planning a clubhouse and dressing rooms, it is important that the layout of your dressing rooms and supporting facilities are of high quality and designed to best suit your clubs needs in the long term. When planning such a project, consider the following areas:

- Designing for quality and sustainability.
- Recommended dimensions.
- Changing rooms.
- Storage area.
- Toilets/disabled access.
- Meeting rooms.
- Showers.
- Floor surfaces.
- Getting value for money.

Irrigation systems, Goalposts & Dugouts

The Facility Development Unit will aim to answer any queries on the sources and procurement of:

- Irrigation systems.
- Goalposts.
- Dugouts.
- Boundary fencing.
- Spectator facilities.
Funding

Where can I source funding for capital projects?

- Sports capital grant programme
- Fundraising
- Contact your Local Authority - They may be able to advise on any recreation, community or sports funding available

Guidance Documents

A suite of guidance documents is developed on each of the areas outlined which provide detailed information about the development of facilities. If you, your club, your professional advisor or developer require a copy of any of these, please contact the FAI Facility Development Unit.

Phone 01-89999 500   Email: facilities@fai.ie   Web www.fai.ie