

Dorset & Wiltshire

Rugby Safe

This PowerPoint has been created by Dorset & Wilts Rugby Safe Lead on 01/09/2026. This has been created to provide clarity to Club Rugby Safe Leads / Assistants regarding the requirements of their role. There are Hyperlinks throughout this PowerPoint, designed to direct you directly to the relevant section of England RFU Website.

This is not an England RFU Resource, and Club Rugby Safe Leads / Assistants are encouraged to review England RFU Regulation 09 and Pitch Side Care Standards directly from the England Rugby Website as this will reflect the most up to date requirements.

Last Reviewed: 1st September 2026.

What is Rugby Safe?

- Rugby Safe is England Rugby's main **Player Welfare Programme**, with the aim to focus on **Player Safety and Wellbeing**. It puts Player Welfare at the heart of the game and covers how to organise and manage the game so that it is played in a safe and enjoyable manor.
- It aims to put **Physical and Mental Health first for Players, Coaches and Volunteers**. Clubs and all organisers of rugby activities have a responsibility towards this.
- Rugby Safe is detailed in [England RFU, Regulation 09](#).
- It sets Standards for First Aid and Emergency Plans, such as the [Pitch Side Care Standards](#) and [Medical Emergency Action Plan Template](#) (pg 54).
- Rugby Safe promotes managing Head Injuries and Concussions safely, via the [Headcase Campaign](#).
- As part of Rugby Safe, guidelines are shared to lower the risk of injuries during practice and matches, such as [Activate](#).

Regulation 09

- [Regulation 09](#) is England RFU's official policy which Rugby Safe is categorised in.
- Regulation 09 covers things like Player Safety, Medical Provisions, Risk Assessments and Concussion Management.
- A Club's Rugby Safe Lead should familiarise themselves with the components and requirements of Regulation 09 and Appendix 1 (Sanctions Framework) to ensure their Club remains compliant and Player Safety is prioritised.

Pitch Side Care Standards

- [Pitch Side Care Standards](#) outline the minimum mandatory Medical and First Aid Cover required for all training sessions and matches. These rules ensure that all contact rugby takes place in a safe environment.

Critical Elements:

- First Aid Risk Assessment Annual Review
- Dynamic Planning and Live Risk Assessments
- Baseline Qualification for an Emergency First Aider is a Level 3 First Aid Qualification.
- First Aiders must be located directly pitch side and be equipped to assess and manage dynamic match injuries immediately. Equipment should be tailored directly to the First Aiders Qualification level,
- The general standard for community / grassroots clubs mandates a minimum ratio of 1 Qualified Level 3 Emergency First Aider : 40 Players. Having one Level 3 Emergency First Aider per team is highly recommended as best practice.
- Every venue must have an active and visible Medical Emergency Action Plan.
- In full alignment with the government's grassroots concussion policies, anyone exhibiting any suspected signs of a head injury must be immediately and permanently removed from play. They are strictly prohibited from returning to the field that day and must enter the structured RFU Headcase Return-to-Play Pathway.

Key Tasks Include:

- Act as a Rugby Safe Champion, promoting the best practice as advised by the RFU's Rugby Safe Resources and Guidelines. Laise with any Health Care Professionals / Medical Cover, Committee Members and Coaches to promote a positive Player Welfare culture across the whole of the club.
- **First Aid Risk Assessment**: Carry out an Annual Review and First Aid Specific Risk Assessment (Howdens) to ensure every training session and match have the appropriate First Aid and Immediate Care provision. **(Complete within the months of July – Sept every year, this can be found on the Rugby Safe / Player Welfare page on GMS.)** For support with accessing the risk assessment tool via GMS go to the [Community Rugby Help support page](#). **Deadline for Annual Review – 30th September.**
- Ensure the Rugby Safe & Player Welfare section on GMS is kept up to date, including Number of First Aiders, Qualifications, Equipment and the current Club's Rugby Safe Lead details.
- Organise training to ensure all appointed First Aiders and Immediate Care Practitioners are trained and up-to-date with an appropriate level of qualification, in line with RFU Guidelines.
- Have a process in place for the management of First Aid and Immediate Care Supplies.
- Work with other key personnel in your club to ensure there is a Medical Emergency Action Plan, which is described further on another slide.
- Ensure there is a process in place to keep records of Player Medical Conditions, Monitor Injuries and Report Incident / Injuries in line with RFU Guidelines, including RFU Reportable Events.

Medical Emergency Action Plan (MEAP)

- This should be a clear process in the event of an incident/injury which should be reviewed regularly. It is advised to review this alongside your First Aid Risk Assessment every **July – Sept.**
- There must be a process to ensure that these procedures are communicated and understood amongst all appropriate individuals in the club.
- Good practice would be to display this somewhere where it can be clearly seen and actioned if necessary.
- A template can be found [here](#) (pg 54).
- **Deadline for Annual Review – 30th September.**

RFU Injury Reporting

- Club Officials and those involved in arranging any activity must ensure that any injury which results in an individual being admitted overnight to hospital (save those initially taken to an Accident & Emergency Department but subsequently sent home after treatment).
- Any death occurring during any rugby activity, or within 6 hours of the game or training ending, must also be reported to RFU in accordance with RFU's Injury Reporting System.
- It can be reported [here](#) or via the Proactive App.
- This ensures the RFU Injured Players Foundation can provide as much as support as possible, as quickly as possible.

When a RFU reportable event occurs, the following procedures and reporting protocols should be followed:

1. Provide immediate first aid and arrange ambulance transfer as needed.
 2. Complete the online Reportable Injury Event Form or use the Proactive App (if available).
 3. Contact the RFU Injury Reporting Helpline (0800 298 0102) once the seriousness of the player's condition is confirmed, and certainly within 48 hours of the injury event.
 4. Notify your insurance provider.
 5. Collect factual witness statements (signed, dated) and store them securely. Where a potential insurance or personal injury claim may arise, clubs and schools are advised to retain witness statements on file. These statements must confine themselves to the facts and not include opinion, hearsay or apportion or infer blame. They must be signed and dated by the person making the statement.
- In the event of a potentially catastrophic injury or fatality, once notified, the RFU Injured Players Foundation (IPF) will get in touch with the club and/or player or next of kin to confirm the injury and identify any immediate welfare needs.

GMS:

- GMS Stands for Game Management System.
- It is recommended that Club Rugby Safe Leads are given Level 2 or 4 permissions to access GMS to enable completion of the Rugby Safe & Player Welfare Section, which can be found in a Club's GMS profile under 'Organisational Details'.

Sanctions for Non-Compliance:

- There is a new Sanctions Framework for Non-Compliance for the 2026-2027 Season.
- This can be found [here](#).