



Sports Grounds – Application procedure for a Safety Certificate

A safety certificate is required, under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975, for a whole ground that is known as a designated ground; or Part III of the Fire Safety and Places of Sport Act 1987 for a covered stand at a sports ground known as a regulated stand, in order for spectators to be admitted for sporting or other spectator events within those grounds.

Nottinghamshire County Council (*hereafter known as the Council*) is the issuing authority for certificates for sports grounds within the County of Nottinghamshire.

A Safety Certificate contains terms and conditions as required by the Council, according to legislation and national guidance, stating the specified activities permitted at the sports ground, maximum capacities allowed and any other specific requirements to ensure public safety.

Do I require a Safety Certificate?

There are 2 types of Safety Certificates which are required by law to be issued under the following criteria:

General Safety Certificate

- a) for the whole ground where a sports ground/stadium holds a designated sporting event (football, rugby, cricket) and provides accommodation for more than 10,000 spectators (more than 5,000 in the case of association football matches in the Premier League or the Football League). This is known as a **Designated Ground** under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 and requires a safety certificate;
- b) for a stand at any sports ground/stadium which provides covered accommodation in stands for 500 or more spectators (and is not within a designated sports ground as in a) above). This is known as a **Regulated Stand** under the Fire Safety and Places of Sport Act 1987 and requires a safety certificate.

Both these certificates will contain the specified activities permitted to be held at the ground e.g. football, rugby, speedway, cricket, athletics, motor/horse racing, etc. for an indefinite period and will stipulate the maximum number of spectators allowed.

For all other sports grounds/stands a Safety Certificate is not required to be issued, however, **all** outdoor sports grounds are subject to enforcement of spectator safety under the above and other associated legislation where artificial accommodation is provided for spectators to view the activities. This also applies to any natural structures artificially modified for the purpose.

Special Safety Certificate

- c) to hold a special event at a designated sports ground/stadium or involve a regulated stand, other than that which is listed as a specified activity in the General Safety Certificate already in force for that sports ground/stand. The event can be a 'one off' event or a series of events.

These events might be activities which are in addition to the specified activities listed above in the General Safety Certificate, for which a Special Safety Certificate application is required, such as:

- (i) the playing of music or singing, or pop concert;
- (ii) any firework, pyrotechnic, special effects, or similar display;
- (iii) carnival, circus, fair, fun day, or similar open day event;
- (iv) any events involving the display or exhibition of vehicles or animals;
- (v) any other sporting event, apart from the specified activities above, involving track or field, athletics, ball games, physical prowess, or competitions of any description;
- (vi) any other use in addition to a specified activity which may require the prior approval in writing of the Council e.g. public meetings, etc.

A General Safety Certificate must be already in force for a Designated Ground or Regulated Stand before a Special Safety Certificate can be issued by the Council for this type of event.

The Applicant

General Safety Certificate

The person to whom the General Safety Certificate is issued will be known as the Holder. Any person can apply for a General Safety Certificate, subject to the following:

- For a regulated stand, the holder of the safety certificate should be the person responsible for managing the ground
- For a designated ground, the holder of the safety certificate should be in a position to prevent contravention of the terms and conditions of the safety certificate.

Prior to issuing the Certificate, this person must provide their name, address and date of birth to the Council, and consent to it being shared with the police in order to ascertain that the applicant is of good character and would be unlikely to contravene the terms and conditions of the license.

In determining the validity of the application, the Council will make preliminary enquiries and inspections, following which the Council will issue its final determination.

Special Safety Certificate

The person who is responsible for organising the activity is the person who should apply for a special safety certificate at a regulated stand.

The Holder of a General Safety Certificate is the person who should apply for a Special Safety Certificate at a designated ground.

Where an event promoter wishes to hold an event at a designated ground or regulated stand, they should approach the ground management before applying to the Council.

Procedure

1. The applicant should decide what type of Certificate is required as detailed above – General or Special Safety Certificate;
2. Discuss the event/application with the Board or Holder;
3. Once decided to proceed, use the Safety Certificate application form to apply to the Council for the issuing of a safety certificate. Please complete only the sections relevant to your type of application. The form can be found at [\(insert link\)](#) ;
4. In the case of an application for a Special Safety Certificate the applicant should give at least **2 months** notice to the Council;

5. In the case of an application for a new General Safety Certificate, the applicant should give at least **4 months** notice to the Council. In the case of a new designated ground, the Council will need to approach the Department of Culture Media and Sport and a Statutory Instrument in Parliament will be required – this will take longer than 4 months.
6. A council officer will review the application, consult with the other interested parties such as the police, fire, ambulance, building authority and any other relevant organisation involved, call any Safety Advisory Group meetings, arrange any site visits, or request any further documentation before the certificate is approved by a senior officer and issued.

Appeal

Any applicant that is refused the issuing of a certificate by the Council has a right of appeal against the refusal to a Magistrates Court, within 28 days in the case of a General Safety Certificate and 7 days for a Special Safety Certificate.

Fees

Where a new General or Special Safety Certificate is issued, a fee will be charged for '*commensurate work actually and reasonably done*' by the Council. As each application is different, this fee will be discussed with the applicant following receipt of the application form.

Application time

We would encourage any potential applicant to contact the emergency planning team to discuss the application and timeframe at the earliest opportunity.

Following receipt of a completed application form, the applicant will receive an acknowledgement within **2 working days**. This acknowledgement is the start of the application process and does not indicate automatic issue of the certificate. It is in the public interest that the Council must process the application before it can be granted.

Prior to issue, application details will be confirmed through dialogue and discussion with the applicant, meeting(s) or on site inspections where applicable.

Following verification of the above to the satisfaction of the Council, a safety certificate will be issued to the applicant. This document will contain such terms and conditions that the applicant will have to abide by in order to meet the requirements of the certificate.

Please note that each application is different, and the time period between the commencement of the application process and final issue of the certificate will vary between applicants. However, during this period, contact and dialogue will be maintained between the applicant and the Council, and time allowed for the applicant to carry out any remedial work required.

If you have not heard from Nottinghamshire County Council within the 2 working days of sending in an application, please contact us using the details below.

Contact

For further information or advice, or submitting an application for a Safety Certificate, contact:

Emergency Planning Team
Nottinghamshire County Council
County Hall

West Bridgford
Nottingham
NG2 7QP

Call: 0115 9773471

Email: emergency.planning@nottinghamshire.gov.uk