

National League System Ground Grading Requirements

This document is only intended to be a summary of the National Ground Grading Document dated February 2005 (as amended). Clubs are advised to refer to the current FA grading document(s) for full information and in particular before undertaking any ground improvements or submitting plans for grant aid. In circumstances where the FA Grading Document(s) differ from the information below, the FA Grading Document(s) will apply.

- To be in membership of the UCL Premier Division (Step 5) Clubs will need a Category F grading
- To be eligible for promotion to Step 4 Clubs will need a Category E grading by 31 March in the year they are promoted
- To be eligible for continued membership at Step 4 Clubs will need a Category D grading by 31 March following their promotion

Clubs who wish to progress to Step 4 should refer to the Regulations for the Establishment and Operation of the National League System for the process to follow.

- To be in membership of UCL Division One (Step 6) Clubs will need a Category G grading
- To be eligible for promotion to the Premier Division (Step 5) Clubs will need a Category G grading by 31 March and must attain a Category F grading by 31 March following their promotion
- To apply for membership of UCL Division One Clubs will need a category H grading by 31 March prior to admission and a Category G grading by 31 March in the year following admission

From the end of Season 2009/10, a club relegated for failing to meet the required grading requirements will not be allowed a second or subsequent promotion until they achieve the required Membership Grade for the Step to which they seek promotion. These procedures will apply to any club relegated from any Step within the National League System.

Clubs who wish to be considered for promotion to the Premier Division must notify the League Secretary in order that a facilities inspection can be arranged at the earliest opportunity. Final inspection and acceptance must be completed by 31 March at the latest.

Clubs who wish to enter the United Counties Football League must notify their own League Secretary and the Football Association by 31 December in the year prior to proposed membership. Further information can be found in the Regulations for the Establishment and Operation of the National League System.

A non-returnable Grading Fee of £100 will be charged to all clubs visited by the UCFL Grading Committee. In any instance where the League's requirements conflict with those of the local Safety Authority the latter will prevail. Clubs must keep records of all tests and inspections carried out on any part of their ground.

Clubs are also advised to refer to the "Guide for Safety at Sports Grounds" book - ISBN 978 0 11 702074 0.

Floodlight Grids

It is an FA requirement for floodlights to be checked every 2 years in order to ensure the minimum lux standard is being complied with. The League recommends that Clubs use one of the following companies:

Musco Lighting Europe Limited

Address: Unit 1005, Great Bank Road, Wingates Industrial Estate, Westhoughton, Bolton BL5 3XU E Mail eurosales@musco.com Telephone 01942 811777, Fax 01942 811389

Preferential rates available from Musco Lighting Europe Limited if contact is made via League Facilities & Development Adviser, Ian Hughes

Highlights Floodlighting Ltd

Address: Newbury House, One London Road, Luton, Beds LU1 3UE E mail mail@highlights.co.uk Telephone 01582 730729, Fax 01582 726658, Mobile 07885 672722

		Category D	Category E	Category F	Category G	Category H
1.0	Ground					
	The Ground must give the impression of being a football ground suitable for the National League System	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not compulsory
	Viewing possible from the entire length of four sides of the ground, or three sides if no unauthorised access to fourth side. At Category F, hard standing on a minimum of two and a half sides may be acceptable where the facility is shared with cricket	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not compulsory	Not compulsory
	Viewing possible from the entire length of at least two sides of the ground, if no unauthorised access to other side(s). At Category G these must be adjacent sides of the ground	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
	Name of Club must reflect the area in which it operates and ground location must be approved by the League	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
1.1	Security of Tenure					
	Ownership of the Freehold of the Ground or Lease/Agreement that extends for minimum of the next full playing season or Adequate Security of Tenure	Preferable	Preferable	Preferable	Preferable	Preferable
		Acceptable	Acceptable	Not compulsory	Not compulsory	Not compulsory
1.2	Ground Sharing					
	Ground Sharing permitted providing full use of facilities available on Match Days (in accordance with the provisions of individual league rules and the Regulations for the Establishment and Operation of the National League System)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
1.3	Capacity					
	Ground Capacity requirements	Minimum 1500 (potential to be 2000)	Minimum 1000	N/A	N/A	N/A
1.4	Boundary of Ground - Where any side of the ground is bounded by private land/property, the fixed boundary of that private land / property may be acceptable as the boundary of the ground					
	Permanent boundary required which must prevent viewing from outside ground (unless exemption agreed), and be of pre cast concrete, brick, breeze block or metal cladding with steel or concrete posts and be a minimum of 1.83 metres measured from outside ground. Lapped timber, latch panel wood fences with wooden posts and wire mesh fences may be acceptable but hedges, shrubs and /or trees not normally accepted.	Yes	Yes	Not compulsory	Not compulsory	Not compulsory
	Permanent boundary required with minimum height, when measured from outside the ground, of 1.83 metres	No	No	Yes	Yes	Not compulsory
	The ground must be enclosed by a boundary, not necessarily of a permanent nature, The minimum height, when measured from outside the ground, should be 1.83 metres.	No	No	No	No	Yes

		Category D	Category E	Category F	Category G	Category H	
1.5	Clubhouse Facilities						
	Clubhouse on or adjacent to the ground (At Grade H the club house may be in near vicinity)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	Clubhouse/Other Facility open on match days to provide spectator refreshments	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not compulsory	
1.6	Car Parking						
	Adequate Car Parking on or adjacent to Ground. Car parking within the ground may not be acceptable	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
1.7	Pitch Perimeter Barrier						
	Fixed Barrier of sound constriction (Concrete or Steel) free from sharp edges on all sides occupied by spectators,. ideally 1.1 metres high as measured from the spectator side . (existing barriers / rails not at 1.1m high may be acceptable). The barrier, if other than solid wall type of construction may be infilled. (Advertising boards are acceptable as a means of infill at Category H).	Yes - ball should not pass through or under it.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	There must be post and rope surrounding the pitch on all those sides that may be occupied by spectators	No	No	No	No	Yes	
	Distance between pitch and barrier to be not less than 1.83 metres, and ideally 2 metres	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
1.8	Pitch Standards <i>(Also Rule 24 applies)</i>						
	Grass	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	Or Artificial Surface - Where an artificial surface is installed, the FIFA Performance Test must be completed by no later than 28 th February each year and details submitted to the league by 31 st March, with the Performance Test Certificate submitted by 31 May	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	Pitch to be well maintained, free from surface depressions and excessive undulations	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	Maximum slope allowed – New developments to meet the FA performance quality standards	1:41	1:41	1:41	1:41	1:41	
1.9	Playing Area						
	Size of Pitch to be a minimum 100 x 64 metres (110 x 70 yards) and a Maximum 110 x 75 metres (120 x 80 yards)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	Goalposts and Nets to meet safety standards (Note the use of metal cup hooks is prohibited)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

		Category D	Category E	Category F	Category G	Category H	
1.10	Technical Area						
	Two covered trainers boxes to be marked Home and Away or Visitors - may be a designated part of the main stand		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Portable boxes permitted – to be securely fixed when in use		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Boxes must be on the same side of the pitch, ideally either side of and equidistant to the halfway line, ideally be a minimum of 3 metres apart and give an unobstructed view of match (NB When constructing new boxes they must be on each side of the half way line, equidistant from it and a minimum of 3 metres apart, and at Category D be able to accommodate 11 persons)		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Fixed Seats or Benches to accommodate 8 people (bench seating to be a minimum of 4 metres in length)		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Technical Area Marked		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
1.11	Safe Walkway						
	Safe unimpeded passage must be provided between dressing room and field of play with adequate stewarding. The use of retractable tunnels or permanent structures to separate spectators and players/officials is recommended at Category F and above		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
1.12	Floodlighting						
	Average Minimum Lux reading– no one reading to be less than one quarter of highest reading	New Installations	180	180	180	180	180
		Existing Installations	120	120	120	120	120
	Current Grid from approved contractor within the last 2 years		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
1.13	Public Address System						
	PA system to be provided (at Category G and H consideration to be given to how information can be conveyed in an emergency)		Yes	Yes	Yes	Not compulsory	Not compulsory

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1.14	Entrances - Access to the spectator viewing areas from the turnstile must be via a bound surface to a minimum width of 0.9 metre. Protection and security to the operator must be incorporated..					
	Turnstile or	3 (to meet segregation requirements)	2	1	1	1
	Pay box	No	No	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
1.15	Exits					
	Location of exits clearly signed, ideally with “running man” signs and free from obstructions. There must be access via a bound surface to all exits from the nearest spectator viewing areas.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
1.16	Lighting					
	Emergency Lighting system strongly recommended. Adequate artificial lighting to be provided for spectators entering / leaving ground in non daylight hours	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
1.17	Adjoining Pitches					
	Where deemed that they are likely to interfere with the playing of a match, there must be no ball games played on adjoining pitches whilst matches are in progress	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
1.18	Emergency Access					
	Emergency Access must be provided	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

		Category D	Category E	Category F	Category G	Category H
2.0	Spectator Facilities					
2.1	Spectator Accommodation					
	Covered Accommodation to be of sound construction of timber/ steel/brick/concrete - existing timber stands must pass fire assessment <u>conducted by a competent person</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Development on at least two sides of the ground	Yes	Preferable	Preferable	Preferable	No
	Minimum Covered spectator accommodation – standing accommodation must not restrict the view from seating areas	300 including Seating	250 including Seating	200 including Seating	100 including Seating	50
	Minimum Number of Seats - At Category D, E and F the seats may be in two stands with a minimum of 50 in one stand at Category D and E and 50 in each stand at Category F	150 including Directors/ Committee/ Press	150 including Directors/ Committee/ Press	100 including Directors/ Committee	50	None
	Minimum Number of Seats for Directors/Committee and Guests – to be clearly marked Home and Away. At Category D these must have a prime position in the stand	24 (of which at least 12 for visitors)	16 (of which at least 8 for visitors)	16	Not Compulsory	N/A
	Individual Seating	Preferred	Preferred	Preferred	Preferred	N/A
	Or Existing Bench Seating if clearly marked	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Yes if provided
	Hard Standing on all sides of ground accessible by Spectators with a minimum width of 0.9 metre. Existing Athletics Stadia may be exempt at Category F and below The surface must be of a bound material	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Areas where no spectators are permitted to stand must be clearly marked with yellow hatched markings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2.2	Press Seating					
	Dedicated Press Seating with lighting and writing facilities and clear view of the field of play	2	2	No	No	No

		Category D	Category E	Category F	Category G	Category H
2.5	Ground Refreshment Facilities					
2.51	Directors/Committee/Guests					
	A separate room to be provided at the ground, may be temporary or mobile facilities. May be a reserved area at Category F. At Category D and E there must be toilet facilities located nearby. At Category G and H refreshments must still be available	For a minimum of 24	For a minimum of 16	Yes	Not compulsory	Not compulsory
2.52	Ground Refreshment Facilities					
	Refreshment facilities to be provided at (Grade D and E - in each separate area of) the ground – may be temporary or mobile. At Category F, G and H these may be in an adjacent clubhouse	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2.6	Disabled Facilities					
	Full account taken of the needs of disabled spectators and recommended that access is provided to both a covered viewing area and toilet and refreshment facilities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2.7	Segregation					
	When segregation is in operation, there must be adequate toilet facilities and refreshment facilities in each segregated area in addition to the appropriate means of egress and exit	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

		Category D	Category E	Category F	Category G	Category H
3.0	Dressing Room Facilities					
3.1	Players					
	Dressing Rooms of permanent sound construction (excluding shower and toilet areas). Must be heated, well ventilated, free from damp, clean and secure on match days	New build	18 sq meters	18 sq meters	18 sq meters	18 sq meters
		Existing build	12 sq meters	12 sq meters	12 sq meters	12 sq meters
	Minimum Number of Shower Heads		4	4	4	4
	Minimum Number of WC's in a cubicle		1	1	1	1
	Minimum Number of Wash Hand Basins (must not be in shower area) with Hot/Cold running Water		1	1	1	1
	Clean Treatment Table in good condition		Yes	Yes	Yes if no separate Medical Room	Yes if no separate Medical Room
3.2	Match Officials					
	Dressing Rooms (excluding shower and toilet areas). Must be heated, well ventilated, free from damp, clean and secure on match days	New Facilities	6 sq metres	6 sq metres	6 sq metres	6 sq metres
		Existing Facilities	4 sq metres	4 sq metres	4 sq metres	4 sq metres
	Minimum Number of Shower Heads		1	1	1	1
	Minimum Number of WC's in a cubicle. At Category H this does not need to be in dressing room but must be exclusive		1	1	1	1
	Minimum Number of Wash Hand Basins with Hot/Cold running Water		1	1	1	1
	Separate Provision for Male/Female Officials must be made. Where new dressing rooms are being constructed or existing are being re-designed, separate purpose built facilities for male and female match officials must be provided		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Audible warning device linked to dressing rooms		Yes	Yes	Yes	No

		Category D	Category E	Category F	Category G	Category H
4.0	Medical					
	Separate dedicated Medical Room for the use of players and spectators – At Category D access must not be via either dressing room and the room must contain a bed and/or comfortable seating, with cold and, ideally, hot water, together with paper towels	Yes	Not compulsory	Not compulsory	Not compulsory	Not compulsory
	Suitably qualified Person in attendance on match days or other appropriate provision (One per 1000 spectators, minimum of two)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Stretcher available- location notices in both players and officials dressing rooms	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Suitable treatment room for spectators within the ground	Yes	Not compulsory	Not compulsory	Not compulsory	Not compulsory
	First aid equipment to be provided	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes
5.0	Other Requirements					
5.1	Telephone must be available at the ground			Yes	Yes	
5.2 (Rule 8.21)	Match Programme to be produced for all matches	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not compulsory	
	Team Sheet to be produced for all matches	No	No	No	Yes	
5.3 (Rule 41)	Sandwiches and tea/coffee, or other similar light refreshments, to be provided for visiting Club Officials at half time			Yes	Yes	
	Liquid refreshments at half time and full time in Dressing Rooms for Players (and prior to match if requested)			Yes	Yes	
	Sandwiches and tea/coffee, or other similar light refreshments, to be provided for players and match officials at the end of all matches.			Yes	Yes	