
POLICY - GOALPOST SAFETY

1. Introduction

Australia as a nation loves all sports - both in a participatory and spectator capacity. Football's popularity at grassroots level is unrivalled, and unique, in its attraction to all ages. As such, both players and spectators have every right to expect that the equipment used in the game is of an appropriate standard of safety and suitability.

However, in recent times there have been injuries and fatalities, which have occurred as a result of unsafe or incorrect use of fixed and portable goalposts. In order to ensure that the game remains enjoyable for all, the FFNT would like to draw your attention to the following guidelines for the safe use of both fixed and portable goalposts. These guidelines are in association with, and further to, the FIFA regulations as covered by Law 1 advised in FIFA circular number 593 on 10 July 1996. Law 1 States that:

“For safety reasons, goals (including those which are portable and not installed permanently at a playing pitch or practice field) must always be anchored securely to the ground. Portable goalposts must be made of lightweight material. Particular attention is drawn to the fact that if not properly constructed, portable goalposts may tip over and cause injury or even death. Portable goals should not be left in place after use, but should be dismantled, removed, tied together face-to-face or secured to a permanent structure such as a fence.”

Safety is always of paramount importance and everyone involved in football must play their part and ensure that the following guidelines are adhered to, in order to prevent similar incidents occurring in the future. The FFNT is committed to making safety a top priority in the game at all levels.

These guidelines are designed to attract as much attention as possible at local levels, to the potential dangers of using goalposts if the necessary checks and precautions are not made and taken.

Whether played at school, in a park or for a club, football should be fun, enjoyable and most importantly, safe! By raising this awareness, the FFNT aims to create a safer environment for all.

In this regard, please complete the confirmation attached to the back of the guideline, which will be utilised by the FFNT to maintain records of goalpost standards and monitor safety issues. Please ensure that the confirmation is witnessed by a member of the club, or by a skilled professional (e.g. accountant, doctor or lawyer).

Fixed and Portable Goalpost Safety

1. Definitions

- (a) A portable goalpost can be defined as any freestanding football goal, designed to be moved - at any point in time, both on and off a field. These goals can be either full size, used outdoors for adult football games and training, or smaller goals used outside for junior games and training. The smaller goals are also used for the purposes of indoor football games. A fixed goalpost can be defined as a permanent fixture that remains in one position.

2. Components and Design and Construction

- (a) Goalposts should be constructed of aluminium, steel tubing, a combination of both materials, or of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) plastic tubing. Timber frames are not recommended, as they tend to be less durable. Goalposts which are 'home-made' or which have been altered from their original size or construction should never be used. They do not have the built-in safety features and may be particularly hazardous for younger players.
- (b) All portable goalposts should be in good condition and properly constructed according to good engineering practice.
- (c) A rear ground bar that connects the two side supports should form part of the portable goal at all times. This will ensure that weight is added to the rear of the structure, increasing its stability and reducing the risk of the goal overbalancing. Particular attention is drawn to the fact that if not properly assembled and secured, portable goalposts may topple over. The rear ground bar is an effective anchor on which to secure the goalpost.
- (d) As defined by Standards Australia - with the exception of netting, the materials used in the construction of portable goalposts "should be designed to maintain their structural integrity for outdoor use for at least a period of five years, but preferably longer, depending on whether the goal is stored indoors or outdoors.
- (e) Any materials used in the construction of the portable goalposts should be protected against corrosion.

3. Stability, Support and Fixture

- a) For safety reasons, goalposts of any size must always be anchored securely to the ground.
- b) Portable goalposts must be pinned or weighted down by the use of chain anchors or appropriate anchor weights to prevent them from overbalancing. If possible, this equipment should be permanently and securely attached to the goal frame and can be in any of the formats as identified below:

Outdoor Goalposts

- i) Steel pegs – Stake or ‘J’ Hook style. Varying in lengths and diameters of 250mm (10 inch) to 600mm (24 inch) for the stake style and ensuring that a ‘J’ hook has a curved top which is designed to fit over the side or rear ground bar. Sufficient stakes are required to support each goal, taking the size of that goal into consideration. The ‘J’ hook should be angled toward the front of the goal, driven fully into the ground, but clearly visible to prevent anybody potentially tripping.
- ii) Anchors can fit over a ground bar with staking holes for steel pegs or spiral styled screws, which secure fully into the ground.
- iii) A semi-permanent anchor requires that the main support is a permanently secured base that is buried underground. A semi-permanent anchor connects the underground base to the goals by means of two tethers, or utilises a buried anchor tube with a threaded opening at ground level. The goal is positioned over the buried tube and the bolt is passed through the goal ground shoes and rear ground shoe and screwed into the threaded hole of the buried tube.

Indoor and Outdoor Goalposts

For both indoor goals and those located outside where the ground surface cannot be penetrated, sandbags or counterweights may be utilised. The number of bags that are required to support the structure should be adequate - and relative, to the size of the goal. Indoor goals can also be secured by bolting the frame to the playing surface and/or to the rear wall of the venue.

- (a) Ground conditions can affect the stability of goals and it is therefore important to take into consideration weather patterns and the geography of the land.
- (b) Ideally, portable goalposts should not be left in place after use – they should be dismantled and removed to a place of secure storage.
- (c) It is strongly recommended that nets should only be secured by plastic hooks and tape, and not by metal hooks. Any metal hooks should be removed and replaced. Net pegs should not be used to anchor the goal structure.

4. Testing

- (a) Before use, organisers should test the structures to ensure that they are stable by exerting a downward pressure on the crossbar, and backward and forward force on both upright posts. It is essential that the structure's security is established prior to commencing usage.
- (b) Goalposts should be of correct dimension, with imperative stability and crossbar strength requirements. Condition of the goalposts together with the adequate fixture of netting, is paramount to general safety. Should any components of the goal be damaged or missing, replacements should be sought immediately to provide optimum protection to all.

5. Safety

Under no circumstances should children or adults (includes players, officials or spectators) use the goalposts and/or the goal netting as gymnastics equipment. Climbing, swinging or playing on, or around the structure and/or any of its supports is not endorsed and should not be permitted at any time as it may cause severe bodily harm, permanent injury or even death.

6. Insurance

Safety and the successful implementation of these guidelines has an effect upon both personal accident and public liability insurance provided by the FFNT. Any potential reduction of premiums that may result from the continual implementation of these guidelines will improve the safety standards of the code, and in turn will clearly be beneficial to all parties concerned.

7. Conclusion and Implementations

- (a) Both indoor and outdoor goalposts are to be inspected once every six (6) months in conjunction with the issue of these guidelines. Steel components showing signs of rusting or warping should be replaced, as should any other component, which needs repair or replacement. Should goalposts be owned, and therefore maintained by the local Council, please ensure that they are informed in writing of the repairs required. In the meantime, the goalpost should be removed and stored in a secure area.
- (b) All portable goalposts are to be securely anchored to the ground at all times during usage. If the goal post can be disassembled and stored, it should be stored in a place where children cannot gain access. Goalposts that are not secured are not to be used.

- (c) Always ensure that adequate personnel are available to move a portable goalpost taking into consideration the weight and assuring that the correct lifting technique is utilised at all times. This also applies to the hanging of goal nets – under no circumstances should any person attempt to jump up in order to secure the netting. A stepladder or other stable object should be provided to elevate a person to the correct height whereby goal nets can be hung and removed from the goalposts safely. An acceptable alternative is the use of a specially constructed extendable pole to avoid overreaching from the ground level.
- (d) All portable goalposts should be fixed securely to the ground to prevent any overbalancing.
- (e) Goalposts are to be used for their intended purpose. It is essential that steps be taken to ensure that both children and adults do not climb, swing on, or play with the netting and structures of the goalposts.
- (f) Ownership of the goalposts should be clearly determined and defined and placed in writing. The club must retain this formal record at all times. If the equipment is hired, or leased, record of ownership should also be kept in writing.
- (g) Records need to be maintained, clearly identifying all user groups of the goalposts.

As referred to in the Introduction, please complete the attached confirmation and return it to at **FFNT Inc, GPO Box 3105, Darwin, NT 0801** no later than **one (1) month** after the date of postage. Your urgent attention is appreciated. Receipt of this information will assist with regards to reassessment of future insurance policies, which reflect on your budget and payments.

GOALPOST SAFETY CONFIRMATION

1. My club/association confirms that both the fixed and portable goalposts used by our club/association will be inspected on a six (6) monthly basis to ensure that they comply with the safety guidelines as outlined in policy document 01/04.
2. My club/association confirms that the goalposts used by our club/association are:
owned by us - owned by the; local Council - leased - hired.
(please circle correct ownership).

If the goalposts are leased or hired, the name of the company with which we have an agreement is,

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3. Should the goalposts be owned, leased or hired by a third party, my club/association confirms that it will provide notification in writing to the relevant organisation/party of the necessary repairs required. We also confirm that whilst these repairs are being sought, we will not use the goalposts and they will, where possible, be moved and stored in a secure location, or safely secured at their existing location if they are permanent fixtures.
 4. My club/association confirms that if possible, portable goalposts will be securely stored when not in use.
 5. My club/association confirms that all portable goalposts are anchored securely as stipulated in the guidelines contained in policy document 01/04.
 6. My club/association confirms that suitable personnel are used to move the goalposts and that an object to safely hang goal nets is provided, whether a stepladder, other stable object or extendable pole.
 7. My club/association confirms that, where possible, monitoring is provided at all times to ensure that the goalposts and nets are not used to climb up or swing on, and that testing of the structure to establish the stability is performed prior to usage.
 8. My club/association confirms that it will maintain a written record of all users of the goalposts who are associated with the club/association.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(please print name and position at club)

Witness: _____ Date: _____

(please print name and position at club or professional occupation)

Note:

A copy of the relevant minute that identifies the meeting date, business item and resolution of the club/council to accept and implement these guidelines must accompany this signed confirmation.