



United Kingdom Paintball Sports Federation

# Code of Practice For Paintball Site Operators

Revised Edition: 19 April 2016

## **This Code of Practice covers:**

- Site Suitability
- Sanitary and Hygiene Facilities
- Food Facilities
- Site Staff
- Site Administration
- Equipment
- Liquid Petroleum Gas
- Water and Electrical Supplies
- Legislative Requirements
- Health and Safety Information

### ***Message to the Site Operator***

It is important for you, your customers and for the sport of Paintball that this Code of Practice is adhered to, particularly in regards to customer and staff safety. Paintball has an extremely good safety record please do not put this at risk!

The Code of Practice supersedes all previous editions. Please read it carefully to ensure you are familiar with the latest guidance.

Council of the UK Paintball Sports Federation  
30 September 2014



## **Site Suitability**

1.1 The site must have no public footpath or rights of way running through the playing area.

1.2 It is advisable to check with your local authority if the woodland has been designated as an "Ancient Semi-Natural Wood" (ASNW) or a "Site of Special Scientific Interest" (SSSI) these areas of woodland have legislation covering their use and planning permission must always be obtained.

1.3 The outer perimeter of the site must be clearly defined and appropriate signs erected in the absence of natural boundaries. The use of signs may be limited to days on which the site is in use.

1.4 Paintballs must not be able to reach any public footpaths, highways or rights of way adjoining the playing areas of the site. Pellet proof netting is an acceptable means of achieving this, provided it is regularly inspected for damage and it is well maintained.

1.5 The site must have at least one clearly defined (and appropriately signed) non-playing area (safe zone) into which no paintball markers are permitted. However, if paintball markers are permitted into the safe zone (i.e. during a tournament and by "walk-on" players) then, as a minimum power sources must be disconnected and a secure brightly coloured barrel plug or barrel sock **MUST** be used and maintained at all times within the safe zone. It is acknowledged some sites/game organisers may adopt more stringent local rules in respect to marker safety in respect of players with their own equipment and players should be required to observe such local rules.

1.6 Safe zones are the only areas of the site where participants may be permitted to remove their eye and head protection, unless the site has specific approval from their insurers for procedures that allow goggle breaks in the playing areas. At entrances to the playing area or exits from the safe zone there must be a sign demanding that participants wear their protective equipment, specifically eye and ear protection. At the outset of play a member of staff must be stationed at this point to ensure that this is observed and check goggle straps are secure and tight. It is suggested that a member of staff checks that goggle straps are tight at regular intervals when the players leave the safe area.

1.7 Any practice firing range (or other paintball marker testing area) must be considered part of the playing area and be appropriately signed and supervised during its use.

1.8 The following facilities must be within the safe zone:

- 1.8.1 The central administration office
- 1.8.2 First aid equipment and eye wash
- 1.8.3 Adequate sanitary facilities
- 1.8.4 Adequate changing and washing facilities
- 1.8.5 Catering facilities, if provided
- 1.8.6 Mobile or landline telephone

1.9 As far as is reasonably practicable, the playing areas of the site must be free from potential hazards, e.g. unbridged rivers, unguarded drops, cliffs and the climbing of trees should be prohibited. All hazards must be clearly marked with boundary tape and brought to the attention of the players during the safety talk and prior to the start of a game if the hazard is in the playing area.

1.10 All structures and buildings included on site must be stable, there must be a safe means of access/egress, and any windows, balconies or staircases must be suitably guarded. There are maximum heights (legal requirements) and a need for barriers when constructing features that require access by ladders, elevated walk-ways or ramps. If you are unsure about any of your structures consult your local council "safety officer".

1.11 The sides of any trenches must be shored to prevent slide or collapse, and comply with HSE guidelines pertaining to excavation.

1.12 Any tunnels must be constructed with materials of adequate strength to prevent collapse and must conform to HSE guidelines.

1.13 Site access for emergency vehicles must be maintained at all times during game days.



1.14 Outdoor paintball sites must not operate in the hours of darkness without proper and appropriate artificial lighting to ensure the safety of customers and staff.

## **2. Sanitary Hygiene Facilities**

2.1 Ideally, separate flushing toilets for male and female players should be available. Since most paintball is played in woodland away from essential services, suitable provision must always be made by use of chemical toilets.

2.2 Fixed, PortaCabin, mobile or similar sanitary toilet facilities must be provided for both male and female participants where possible. Drainage for these units should either be directed to a septic tank on site or the waste materials disposed of off-site into the main drainage system. Open latrine urinals should not be provided without appropriate hygienic drainage. If using a septic tank facility you must contact your local planning authority. Commercial serviced mobile toilet facilities are ideal as some contain hand-washing facilities and are regularly serviced every one or two weeks.

2.3 Toilet facilities must be provided on a ratio of one unit to twenty-five (1:25) participants of each sex. A suitable sealed disposable sanitary unit must be made available for female use.

2.4 Hand washing facilities must be provided for use in connection with sanitary facilities at a ratio of one hand basin to one toilet unit. An adequate supply of warm water must be provided for hand washing, soap and towel provided at each basin.

2.5 Waste water from sink and hand basins should discharge to a proper drainage system if available.

2.6 Holding tanks may be used if drainage is not available. They should be adequate in capacity and suitable arrangements must be made for emptying. They must not be emptied directly onto the ground. Any holding tank must be clearly signed.

2.7 On some sites it may be appropriate to use sludge pit excavations lined with plastic sheeting (e.g. damp proof membrane). Contents can subsequently be removed by a gully emptier. Such pits must be properly covered and fenced and local council authority obtained.

2.8 Soak-aways may be used on some sites but must be properly constructed, prepared and guarded

2.9 Site operators are responsible in the first instance for the removal of refuse to a place designated by the local authority.

2.10 It is essential to ensure that there is an adequate supply of suitable refuse containers available. Refuse bins should have close fitting lids.

2.11 Where skips are used they should be covered to minimise dispersion of contents by wind or wildlife.

2.12 Where plastic sacks are used they must be tied securely and removed from the site as soon as is practically possible. They should be stored in a safe place to avoid interference by animals, etc.

2.13 The disposal of waste by burning is permitted as long as it is performed in an approved designated area. Please note some councils will not allow burning of rubbish on site.

2.14 Accumulation of refuse, both at an individual unit and across the site, is unacceptable.

### 3. Food Facilities

3.1 The preparation, storage and handling of foodstuffs, whether conducted on or off site, must comply with current Food Hygiene legislation. ***Details and advice should be sought from your local Environmental Health Department.***

The following guide applies to any event with mobile or outside catering:

3.2 Ensure that deliveries of food only take place after suitable storage facilities have been provided.

3.3 All food containers must be clean and capable of protecting food from risk of contamination. Cardboard and wooden boxes are not suitable containers for fresh food ready for consumption.

3.4 It is acknowledged that the main problem facing catering on site is the provision of storage facilities that adequately protects food and maintains safe temperatures. The following points should be considered:

3.4.1 Adequacy of storage and serving facilities

3.4.2 Separation of raw and cooked foods

3.4.3 Clean containers that are capable of being readily cleaned.

3.4.4 To minimise the risk of contamination storage of food 24" above the ground is a minimum requirement.

3.4.5 Wherever possible stainless steel work surfaces should be used which can be cleaned using a proprietary work surface cleaner.

3.5 At all times high risk products must be kept below 5°C or above 70°C.

3.6 Ideally food should be prepared just prior to serving rather than many hours in advance. When this is not possible the food should be prepared in small batches and kept at temperatures specified above.

3.7 Keep raw and cooked foods separate at all times by using different containers and ensure that they are covered. It is vital to exercise high standards of personal hygiene in order to prevent contamination of foodstuffs. Rules to follow are:-

3.7.1 Correct hand washing must be carried out prior to commencing any food handling duties

3.7.2 After handling any raw foods and prior to handling any other foods always wash your hands.

3.7.3 Hands must always be washed after using the toilet.

3.7.4 Food handlers must not handle food excessively and, wherever possible tongs/utensils and disposable latex type gloves should be used.

3.8 Smoking in an area where there is food and drink is handled is not permitted.

3.9 Clean protective clothing should be worn. This should be sufficient to cover external clothing.

## 4. Site Staff

4.1 A minimum of two site staff should be on site to supervise play on game days and a ratio of one member of staff to every fifteen participants (1:15) should be maintained other than in exceptional circumstances.

4.2 All site staff must be trained in the supervision of paintball games relevant to the area of responsibility and records kept of their experience and training. The minimum age for a marshal is 16 years old. (It is recommended that all marshals attend one of the UKPSF Marshal Training Courses.)

4.3 All staff must wear easily recognisable uniforms (e.g. fluorescent tabards or bright coloured marshalling shirts).

4.4 All site staff must be familiar with an emergency procedure in the event of player injury or similar occurrence.

4.5 An adequate system of communication must be maintained between staff on the playing field and the staff in the safe area. They must be able to call a stop to play in the event of an emergency. (Radio communication is recommended).

4.6 At least one member of staff on each game day must be qualified in first aid to a minimum Red Cross, St. Johns or St. Andrews Ambulance level (appointed persons) or attend the UKPSF first aid course or any other approved course in First Aid to the earlier standards or higher. First Aid certificates should be available on site.

4.7 Any injuries requiring treatment by a First Aid qualified member of staff should be recorded in an appropriate accident record book. Pre-printed books are available for this purpose to ensure all relevant details are appropriately recorded.

4.8 There should be a central administrative office that is clearly signed where participants can find a member of the site staff to deal with any queries.

4.9 The use of material enhancements to games such as smoke/fog generators and canisters must not be detrimental to the site or the neighbouring environment or the safety of participants and appropriately trained staff must properly supervise their use. (Please check if your insurance company allows the use of smoke or paint grenades and if they can be sold to customers).

4.10 Smoke and paint grenades or thunder-flashes sold on site should not be taken off-site by customers at the end of an event. Pyrotechnics cannot be sold to any person under the age of 18 years.

## 5. Site Administration

A comprehensive safety briefing must be given orally to all participants prior to the commencement of play, whether or not they have previous experience of paintball games. This briefing must include:

- a) The safe use of all equipment, in particular the correct use and wearing of masks, and the correct use of paintball markers.
- b) A clear description of the safe zone and playing areas.
- c) Attention drawn to any particular hazards on the site, such as natural obstacles or areas designated out of bounds for conservation or safety reasons.
- d) An introduction to the site staff.
- e) The rules of the games.
- f) No physical contact allowed between participants during games.
- g) Make customers aware that paintballs can cause a bruise and cut the skin if paintballs are fired at close range and specify any safe firing distances observed on site.
- h) Ask participants if they suffer from epilepsy, asthma or other medical conditions that might require medical attention during a paintball game.
- j) reporting any incidents involving injury as soon as possible to a member of staff.

5.2 Immediately outside the safe zone, an interim storage facility must be provided for participants to deposit their paintball markers before entering the safe zone (eg 'Marker Board', 'Gun Rack', 'Armoury' or similar). A member of staff must supervise the collection and issue of paintball markers at this point.

5.3 If privately-owned markers are permitted on site, they must be brought to the attention of the site operator and chronographed regularly during the day under supervision from trained staff.

5.4 If privately-owned paintball masks are used, they should be checked to ensure their integrity, be designed for paintball use and be CE marked.

5.5 A separate area for participants with privately owned markers ("walk-ons") to enable them to service their markers between games should be provided outside of the main safe zone, otherwise their markers should be racked with the site markers.

5.6 A record must be kept of the number of paintball markers handed out to participants and checked in at the end of play. Should a marker be misplaced or stolen the Police must be informed immediately.

5.7 Protective equipment must be worn by participants, site staff and spectators at all times whilst in the playing areas (ie anywhere on the site outside of the safe zone).

5.8 So long as players are wearing appropriate head protection as outlined elsewhere in this Code of Practice, and that the manufacturer's guidance on paintball use is followed, the practice of allowing headshots is at the discretion of individual sites.

5.9 A telephone must be provided on site for emergency use.

5.10 A telephone number and location of the nearest casualty unit must be visibly displayed in the safe zone together with map co-ordinates of the site to direct emergency services should the need arise.

5.11 No person between the ages of fourteen and sixteen years of age must be allowed to participate in paintball games without parental consent. Twelve to thirteen year olds may participate with parental supervision but as a site operator you MUST check with your insurance company with regards to age limits. (Some will now allow 11 year olds who are in Year 7 at senior school) It is suggested that the parent/ guardian countersigns the insurance waiver to confirm that the junior player has attended the safety briefing and that the parent/guardian has also attended the briefing and understands the risks involved in playing paintball. It is also suggested that a parent/guardian stays on the site during a paintball event in case of an emergency. (You are not a child minding service).

5.11 No person under sixteen years of age may be allowed to participate in paintball games without parental consent. As a site operator you **MUST** check with your insurance company with regards to age limits, and comply with any provision of your insurance in respect of players under the age of 16. A parent, guardian or other responsible adult **MUST** countersign the insurance waiver/registration form to confirm the presence of the junior player, to confirm the age of the junior player and that the junior player has attended the safety briefing and that the parent/guardian/responsible adult has also attended the briefing and understands the risks involved in playing paintball. It is also suggested that a parent/guardian either stays on the site during a paintball event in case of an emergency, or that they leave a contact telephone number on which they can be contacted in the event of an emergency.

5.10 A person who appears to be intoxicated, whether by alcohol or drugs, must not be allowed to participate in paintball games. Alcoholic beverages must not be sold on site without a license to sell alcohol and only sold when the purchaser's has finished play and removed all protective clothing or equipment.

5.11 Anything deemed by staff to be an offensive weapon must not be allowed in the playing area.

5.12 The site, specifically playing areas and structures must be inspected prior to the commencement of play for the safety of participants. Should any area or structure be considered unsafe, participants must not be permitted to use them until they are made safe.

5.13 Where practicable the site should be re-inspected following a day's play to ensure that it is left safe and free from refuse, drinks cans and any discarded paintball equipment.

5.14 A full first aid kit must be available at all times the size of the kit must be comparable to the number of customers on the site. The site must have an accident report book, which must be correctly filled in at the time of every incident that requires the use of first aid equipment, medical attention or if an ambulance/paramedic vehicle attends. All serious injuries must be reported to your insurance company and major injuries i.e. admissions to hospital, if known of, must be reported to the Health and Safety Executive by the quickest practicable means. Form F2508 must be completed and sent to the HSE within 10 days of an accident where the person injured is admitted to hospital. They will decide if further investigation is required. You must be aware of the RIDDOR regulations with regards to reporting of accidents and incidents.

**5.15 ALL paintball site operators must have public and employers liability insurance**

5.16 ALL paintball site operators must carry out a risk assessment in accordance with HSE requirements.

5.17 Sites are reminded that as part of the Duty of Care to staff, customers and others present on site, behaviours that put the safety of these people at risk is not to be tolerated. Should such behaviour – including but not limited to physical violence – occur, event organisers and site operators should note the details of any offenders and the circumstances and sent a report to the UKPSF. The UKPSF reserves the right to ban offenders for any period of time from attendance at UKPSF recognised sites and events. In such circumstances sites and event organisers will be notified and are expected to observe any ban that may be imposed.



## 6. Equipment

6.1 All paintball markers used and/or permitted on site must be designed only for the purpose of firing paint pellets (paintballs) manufactured for use in paintball markers. Markers should carry a CE approval mark.

6.2 Paintball markers must conform to Home Office guidance:

6.2.1 The maximum kinetic energy (measured as close as is practicable to the muzzle of the gun barrel) of a paint capsule which can be fed through and discharged via the normal operating mechanism of the gun shall not exceed 6 foot pounds in the case of a pistol or 12 foot pounds in the case of a weapon designed to be fired from the shoulder.

6.2.2 The contents of the capsules should be non-toxic and non-irritant, otherwise the weapons and the capsules might be regarded as prohibited weapons under the provisions of Section 5(1)(b) of the Firearms Act 1968.

6.2.3 Furthermore the paintball marker must not be designed to discharge two or more paintballs if the trigger is pulled once. (i.e. fully automatic).

6.3 Records relating to paintball markers must be kept by the site operator. These records must include regular details of muzzle velocities by chronographing and general maintenance of the equipment, specific to each marker.

6.4 The site operator must provide/ensure all participants and staff with/have safety equipment designed and manufactured for the protection of eyes and ears in paintball games (i.e. goggle systems and lenses). Such protection should carry a CE approval mark. All goggle systems must provide mouth, nose and ear protection. It is suggested that a Balaclava, snood or similar is supplied/worn to provide extra protection.

6.5 All masks systems must contain a faceplate and ear armour and should not be modified from the manufacturer's specification. All lenses must be cleaned and inspected after a game and inspected before being supplied to the customer. Any cracked or badly scratched lenses MUST be replaced.

6.6 Clean overalls or similar should be available for use by participants. If participants are wearing their own outer clothing, it should cover as much exposed skin as would a coverall.

6.7 All safety equipment, in particular goggles and lenses, must be regularly inspected for damage and maintained in good order by the site operator. Records must be kept to detail proper maintenance of safety equipment.

6.8 Compressed air and liquid CO<sub>2</sub> cylinders must be secured in two places and in an upright position. They must be stored in an area, which is set aside from participants. Trained staff must only undertake refilling of paintball markers/bottles from cylinders. No member of the public must be allowed to attempt this task. When filling bottles, masks and gloves must be worn.

6.9 Adequate fire-fighting appliances must be provided and maintained on site in readily accessible positions.

6.10 A chronograph for the testing of paintball marker velocities must be positioned by or near the range for the use of any player or member of staff if needed. A record of maintenance and battery changes should be kept. The chronograph should be checked in line with other chronographs at regular intervals to ensure accuracy.

6.11 All compressed air cylinders must conform to the relevant standards and any testing required carried out at regular intervals (See UKPSF Fact sheet 2)



## **7. Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG)**

7.1 These guidance notes have been condensed from the Health & Safety Executive publication CS4 "The Keeping Of LPG In Cylinders" to which you should refer if you use LPG.

7.2 All gas cylinders must be treated with caution whether they are full or empty.

7.3 Cylinders must be:-

- 7.3.1 Securely fixed to the structure with the valve uppermost.
- 7.3.2 In a well-ventilated position
- 7.3.3 Protected from tampering or accidental damage.
- 7.3.4 Away from and below any source of ignition.
- 7.3.5 Fitted with automatic cut-off valves.
- 7.3.6 Identified by a suitable sign "LPG Highly Inflammable".
- 7.3.7 Away from serving hatch.

7.4 Pipes and fittings

- 7.4.1 Must be as short as possible. If copper is used it must not be placed where the temperature can exceed 100°C.
- 7.4.2 Must be provided with appropriate compression or screw fitting. Slip-on rubber hosing without any means of securing is not acceptable.
- 7.4.3 Must be protected from abrasion or mechanical damage. Where there is such a risk armour plated or reinforced hosing should be used.
- 7.4.4 Flexible tubing must be as short as possible and should be provided with internal threaded ends or crimped to fix it to the appliance.

7.5 Appliances must be sited so that they do not create a fire hazard.

## **8. Water & Electrical Supplies**

### **WATER**

8.1 There must be an adequate supply of clean water on site.

8.2 Wherever practicable mains water should be provided.

8.3 At sites where no mains water is available consideration should be given to the type of water storage tanks or containers used (i.e. structure, condition and cleanliness must be satisfactory). They must be capable of proper disinfection.

8.4 The provision of water tankers or bowsers should be considered.

8.5 The methods for filling water tanks or containers must be carefully considered ensuring that contamination does not occur.

8.6 Where possible, water from a stored supply should be pumped or gravity fed to the point of use.

### **ELECTRICAL**

8.7 Where practicable permanent mains electricity should be provided for lighting and power.

8.8 Electrical appliances should be protected from the weather, physical damage and interference.

8.9 All appliances MUST be protected by residual current devices.

8.10 Cables and flexes should be fitted so as to avoid tripping hazards.

8.11 Where mains electricity is not available the use of generators is advised. Care should be taken with fuel stocks. In addition consideration should be given to the potential for noise nuisance. Suitable screening may be required.

8.12 Where generators are used sufficient 'back-up' facilities are necessary.

8.13 All electrical work must be carried out by a competent electrician (to LEE regulation standard

8.14 All electrical appliances used on a paintball site must be tested and a certificate issued by an electrician

## 9. Legislative Requirements

9.1 A full record must be kept by the site operator of any incidents involving participants, members of staff or spectators which results in the need for medical treatment. This record must include the date, time and circumstances of the incident/injury, name and address of person(s) involved, the action taken, and the name of staff on site at the time. Certain types of injury are statutorily reportable to the local authority under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences regulations 1985. A supply of form F2508 should be kept on site in the event of a reportable injury occurring. These can be obtained from your local HMSO bookshop.

9.2 As an employer or self-employed person there are duties placed upon the site operator by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. It is important that you are aware of these duties. The employer must produce where there is five or more employees a written safety policy and risk assessment statement. This is a legal requirement and one, which applies to all businesses.

9.3 The Health and Safety (Information for Employees) Regulations 1989 require employers to provide their staff with a poster entitled 'Health and Safety Law-What you should know' and which should be displayed in a prominent position at all times. Alternatively, provide each member of staff the corresponding leaflet to keep. This contains the same information as the poster. Both leaflets and the poster can be obtained from any HMSO Bookshop.

9.4 A copy of your Employers Liability Insurance Certificate should be on display at all times in a prominent position.

9.5 Your attention is drawn to the Violent Crime Reduction Act (VCRA) 2006 and the provisions therein, in particular to sections relevant to Realistic Imitation Firearms (RIFs). Paintball markers fall outside the provisions of the VCRA, other than when they are considered to be a RIF.

9.6 Your attention is drawn to the need to address Child Protection issues and the need to have a Child Protection Policy in place. In this regard the UKPSF recommends that

- players under the age of 18 are accompanied by two members of staff to ensure appropriate chaperoning;
- at least one of them has undergone a Criminal Records Bureau (DBS) check;
- staff have regard to the potential risk from members of the playing group, as well as from staff;
- staff recognise Child Protection extends beyond physical risks to include psychological risks, for example, bullying;
- staff have an absolute duty to report any issues of concern to their line manager who in turn should notify the appropriate authority, usually the police.

Where you are staging events for 'own gunners' your attention is drawn to the Player Code of Conduct and the expectation that participants in such events are reminded of the behaviours expected to comply with Child Protection, both physical and mental, including bullying.

9.7 Trade & Site operators are reminded of their duties under the Equality Act (201) as amended and the need to have in place an Equality and Diversity Policy for their enterprise.

9.8 Whilst this Code of Practice aims to be up-to-date and comprehensive (and is amended accordingly from time to time), it is the site owner/operator's absolute responsibility to be aware of any additional, amended or new legislation affecting their activities. Compliance with this Code of Conduct would not absolve site owner/operator's from responsibility under such legislation.

## **Health and Safety Information**

The above information is drawn from the Health and Safety Executive ([www.open.gov.uk/hse/hsehome.htm](http://www.open.gov.uk/hse/hsehome.htm)), the LPG Association and other documents, and aims to help you as a site owner/operator, organise a safe paintball site for your customers and employees.

The UKPSF would like to thank the Health and Safety Executive and the LPG association for allowing the documents to be reproduced.

This Code of Practice must not be copied without permission of the UKPSF.

Contact the UK Paintball Sports Federation at [www.ukpsf.com](http://www.ukpsf.com) or telephone 01706 345821

Copyright UKPSF October 2000, and as amended, through February 2005, March 2010 and June 2014 editions.

