



Ground Official Job Description

Introduction

Ground Officials work on the front line at sporting events dealing with crowd control and conflict situations to ensure the inappropriate actions of a few don't ruin the overall sporting experience for everyone. Just like administrators and officials and coaches, they are an essential part of making sport run smoothly and without incident. But well before they don the shirt for their turn at 'ground marshal' they need to know what they are doing and how to do it...

What does a ground official do?

- You are responsible for managing sideline (off field) behaviour
- You support and uphold the principles of fair play
- You wear a vest and represent your club
- You are a complaints receiver, a listener and an enforcer
- You issue warnings the first time a person breaches a code of conduct on the sideline
- You report off-field inappropriate behaviour that contravenes the codes of conduct using formal incident recording and reporting processes
- Facilitate the removal of people where appropriate
- With the assistance of committee members/referees you involve the Police if the situation escalates beyond your control.

What do I need to know?

You need to thoroughly understand:

- Your club/association codes of conduct/behaviour for parents, players, coaches and officials
- The degree to which ground officials can enforce club/assoc rules on non-members
- Your club/association processes for reporting incidents

Dealing with an incident?

Coaches, officials and ground officials want to put a stop to bad behaviour at sporting events, but are often unsure of what they can do to intervene and who is responsible for what. Here are some steps that can be taken depending on the seriousness of the incident:

- **Reporting inappropriate behaviour** - *Responsibility of everyone*

Behaviour that contravenes the codes of conduct should be reported to the ground marshal. Any person who is unsure who the ground marshal is should report the incident to a club committee member.

- **Approaching the offender** - *Responsibility of the ground official*

Only the ground official should approach the offender - this prevents the situation escalating.

- **Issuing warnings** - *Responsibility of the ground official*

The first time a person breaches a code of conduct, they might be issued with a warning. The person might not be aware that their behaviour is unacceptable and should be notified of the club's rules regarding behaviour.

- **Taking disciplinary action** - *Responsibility of the club committee/ or competition administrator*

If the conduct is repeated or of a serious nature the club committee/judiciary should consider taking disciplinary action in accordance with its rules. This might result in counselling, suspension or expulsion. The issue may be escalated to the CA, Zone or FQ

- **Removing people from the field of play or venue** - *Responsibility of the ground official*

The referee should communicate directly and immediately with the ground official to remove a person from the ground. If the club is in a position to control ground entry, it will be able to evict persons from the ground. Where attendance is not controlled, clubs can request offenders leave the ground, or otherwise can discipline the person for breach of the code.

- **Suspending play** - *Responsibility of the referee*

The referee may suspend play and refuse to restart until appropriate action has been taken. They may request that a person is removed from the sideline and, in serious cases, abandon the game altogether.

- **Involving the police** - *Responsibility of the ground official*

If a person feels the behaviour of another constitutes a criminal act the police should be notified immediately by the ground official.