



FEBRUARY 2020 UPDATE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is TrackMark?

- TrackMark is UK Athletics' quality assurance scheme for outdoor Track & Field Athletics facilities. TrackMark was developed in consultation with track operators, track and field athletics clubs and National Sports Councils and is an accreditation process that utilises a simple web-based portal.
- TrackMark accreditation is broken down into six units and is open to any outdoor athletics facility that has track and/or field facilities.
 - TrackMark Unit 1 - Track
 - TrackMark Unit 2 – Field
 - TrackMark Unit 3 - Ancillary
 - TrackMark Unit 4 - Operations
 - TrackMark Unit 5 - Floodlighting
 - TrackMark Unit 6 - Competition
- TrackMark uses recognised published minimum standards as a basis for assessing compliance and provides venue operators with a list of approved consultants able to conduct inspections that assess compliance with these standards.
- A venue that achieves TrackMark will be recognised by UKA as having well managed, well maintained facilities that are accessible to participants of all abilities.

How long does accreditation last?

- TrackMark is broken down into six units and unit accreditation lasts for a period of three years after which time the venue is required to reaccredit.

How much does accreditation cost?

- The cost of accreditation & reaccreditation is £75 per unit (payable on submission). The unit costs contribute to the administration of the TrackMark scheme and the development and maintenance of a new UK online track directory that will be launched in 2020.

Have all venue operators been informed about TrackMark?

- All UK venue operators of athletics facilities that regularly host competition have now been sent details of the TrackMark and guidance on how to start the accreditation process

Why do we have facility and equipment standards?

- Standards ensure a level playing field when people are competing, but also help to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all those who participate in track and field athletics.
- The purpose of a standard is to provide a reliable basis for people to share the same expectations about a product or service – in this case athletics facilities and equipment. It provides reassurance to both users and operators that facilities and equipment meet minimum standards ... and, if they don't, it provides the necessary actions required to bring them back up to standard.

How are facility minimum standards defined?

- Athletics facility and equipment standards are defined through the World Athletics/UKA rulebook, the World Athletics Track & Field Facilities manual (2008) and published British and European Standards. To illustrate; synthetic track surfaces, throws cage netting and high jump and pole vault landing beds all have published minimum safety standards. Under the TrackMark scheme, technical and safety critical elements of provision are checked for compliance by approved members of the Sport & Play Construction Association's ([SAPCA](#)) Track & Field division.
- **What was wrong with the previous scheme of facility inspections/certification? Why the sudden need to check compliance with standards?**

The past 20 years has seen a rise in personal injury claims that has extended into the sports arena and legal experts are increasing questioning whether facilities achieved minimum standards to establish potential negligence claims.

Safety in Sport Guidance for UK National Governing Bodies UK Sport (Dr C W Fuller) states that National Governing Bodies of sport should ensure that:

- **Facilities:** Procedures should be available for inspecting and maintaining facilities to an **acceptable standard**.
- **Equipment:** The suitability of equipment supplied for the use of participants should be assessed to determine whether it operates according to the manufacturer specification and that it **complies with the standards and/or laws/rules of the sport**.

Health & Safety legislation

- 90% of Athletics venue operators are employers and therefore have a legal obligation to health & safety under the Health & Safety at Work Act (1974). This act requires them to do what is reasonably practicable to ensure health and safety of not only employees but also to protect all users of the facility (e.g. volunteer staff like coaches, club members, visiting teams and spectators) from risks to their health and safety arising out of, or in connection with, their activities.
- The demonstrable achievement of standards is critical when things go wrong. For example, if a Pole Vaulter sustained a critical or fatal injury when falling onto a landing bed the venue would likely be asked to provide evidence that the landing bed met the published standard at the time of the incident.

Why do venue operators now need to pay consultants to carry out facility and equipment checks? These used to be carried out by volunteer facility assessors.

- Many published track and field standards (particularly those relating to safety), are highly technical and require expertly trained personnel and equipment. For example, Pole Vault and High Jump landing beds are governed by the British Standard EN 12503 (2) and its associated testing protocols, and these require robust laboratory tests as opposed to the purely visual inspections that were carried out under the previous scheme of certification.
- Using an approved member of SAPCAs Track and Field division provides venue operators with the reassurance that (at the time of testing), facilities and equipment met the minimum required standard.

How will TrackMark help clubs?

- The UK's stock of athletics facilities is ageing rapidly, with many track & field venues approaching their 30th anniversary. A lack of replacement/refurbishment provision, poor maintenance regimes and budget cuts during this period mean that many venues face the risk of becoming unsafe/unusable within the next 10-15 years.
- A key function of Unit 1 (Track) and Unit 2 (Field) inspections is to provide venue operators with an "early warning system" that will encourage short, medium and long term investment to ensure that track and field facilities will not decline to a point of no return over the coming years.

What if a venue fails part of a TrackMark facility/equipment inspection test?

- Facility and equipment inspections utilise a Green, Amber and Red rating system and, in most cases, we would expect venues to fall within the green and amber rating scale

which is acceptable for TrackMark accreditation purposes. (Note: Any amber rated areas will need to be addressed prior to re-accreditation).

- Red rated areas indicate areas of significant failure which will require immediate attention either for safety reasons or because they have the potential to significantly affect that long-term viability of the venue (e.g. a dangerous throws cage or a track surface that is in such poor repair that the sub base is exposed and is starting to become damaged).

Does a venue need TrackMark if it is a training venue only (i.e. does not host any licensed competitions)?

- Whilst the achievement of TrackMark status is not mandatory for track and field training UKA recommends that all venues seek accreditation to demonstrate to all users that the facility and its equipment have achieved the minimum standards required by the governing body.
- In addition, in the event of a serious accident/incident the achievement of TrackMark status makes it much easier for an operator to demonstrate that minimum safety standards have been met and therefore improve their ability to defend any litigation claims.

Venues that do not host competitions at any level (i.e. training venues) – should seek to modify their throws cage to meet the new UKA specification by no later than April 2022.

For further information please contact your Home Country Athletics Federation or UK Athletics:

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