

Throws Training Guidance for Coaches

This guidance has been developed to raise awareness and help identify the potential hazards a training session presents and examples of how to mitigate the risks of accidents and injuries occurring. 'It is the responsibility of all coaches and athletes to ensure that all training sessions are conducted in a safe manner' (UKA Code of Practice, 2022).

What are the Hazards and who might be harmed?

'A hazard is something with potential to cause harm to an individual. This can be an object, an activity, a medical condition (diagnosed or unknown), environmental conditions and even substance abuse' (UKA Code of Practice, 2022).

The throwing events present several potential hazards such as throwing implements (all throwing equipment), the surface type (runway/circle) and landing areas. Common injuries and accidents occur from slips, trips and falls, equipment failure and the environment (facility/weather) among others.

A training session is a dynamic environment where many things are constantly changing. Coaches will need to familiarise themselves with all aspects of the throwing environment and the facility as a wider training venue, especially if throwing takes place on the infield of an athletics track. Regular assessments are required throughout a session to monitor the dynamic nature of the training environment.

What is a Risk Assessment?

A risk assessment is an inspection which is carried out to identify any hazards which may occur during an activity. The purpose is to identify, assess and determine the level of risk or likelihood that the hazard could cause accidents and injuries from slips, trips, and falls, collisions with others, equipment, and environment.

It is best practice to conduct a risk assessment as part of club activity, both generally to cover all areas of the clubs training and competition activities at all venues, as well as a specific event by event risk assessment. Once in place the risk assessment can act as a reminder and check list when conducting all aspects of training.

Some of the common Hazards include

- Slips, trips, and falls
- Collisions with others
- Equipment
- Environment.

Pre-session Preparation

Prior to a training session, it is important coaches* are aware of any issues which may affect an athlete's health or well-being, suitably understanding their readiness to participate and having knowledge of any pre-existing medical conditions, existing injuries, impairments or illness. Similarly, this information would be useful for clubs to know about all coaches and volunteers. It

would be best practice to have access to essential emergency first aid equipment and appropriately trained personnel available at the venue during training sessions.

[*Data Protection Act 2018](#)

To conduct training sessions all coaches must possess a valid UKA licence to coach throws and be operating within the code of conduct of the coaching licence scheme. In addition, to help with both the quality of coaching provision and to ensure the safety and welfare of participants, the athlete to coach ratio should always be manageable and within the recommended guidance.

The pre session briefing is a great time to make sure all athletes and support coaches are clear regarding the session content, their individual roles and responsibilities and that safety is always adhered to by everyone.

Equipment and Facility

The location of a throw's session will have a direct bearing on the safety considerations, potential hazards and risks associated with the activity. Throwing on the infield of a track and throwing within a designated throws area outside of the athletics track or arena will present varying circumstances. For this guidance information, throwing from the infield of a track will be the focus.

Risk assess the area and remove any potential hazards. If hazards cannot be removed entirely reduce their risk to all users. Visually check the landing area before throwing. Fill any potholes to ground level and remove any debris.

Check all equipment being used thoroughly and put to one side equipment that may be deemed not fit for purpose and report to the facility/club.

Competition based equipment

- Hammer - Visually inspect equipment for jagged/rough edges, cracks, or damage. Check the spindle is tight, the grip is in one piece, and wire ends are taped
- Javelin - Visually inspect equipment for damage on javelin point, shaft, grip, and tail
- Discus – Visually inspect equipment for jagged/rough edges, cracks, or damage. Tighten the centre weight
- Shot and Club - Visually inspect equipment for jagged/rough edges, cracks, or damage.

When using non-competition equipment like medicine balls, soft hammers, quots, and turbo javelins it is important to check all equipment is in proper working order.

When using any throwing equipment or personal belongings (apparel, bags etc) which pose a trip hazard to other users ensure they are stowed in a suitable place away from activity areas. Remove objects immediately when no longer in use and store in a designated safe space or return to storage.

Surface preparation - If using an all-weather runway, ensure the area is swept free of debris such as grit, mud, standing water and vegetation. If left untreated, surfaces can become very slippery especially in inclement weather.

As with the all-weather runway, when throwing from a circle, ensure the surface is swept free of debris. If a stop board is to be used, ensure the stop board is dry and fixed securely to the floor. Always instruct observers to stand behind the circle to avoid tangential release of an implement.

Ensure appropriate footwear is being worn for the style of delivery being used and that all those in the area not throwing are to observe the thrower.

When coaching athletes using a throwing frame, follow manufacturers guidance, ensure fixings are secured into the ground and report any loose fittings to the facility provider. Do not use until fixings are secure. Using faulty or insecure frames could result in the athlete falling from the chair. If using tiedowns, ratchet straps help to secure the frame; however, they also present a trip hazard. After securing the throwing frame with ratchet straps, furl any excess strap placing within the confines of frame.

Several pre session checks and equipment set up (frames, cages) require manual handling. To minimise the risk of injury (back, hands, fingers). Where possible use two or more people for safe lifting, winching, and securing of equipment. Checks of the integrity of the netting and correct positioning of the gates for rotational throws activities using throwing cages must be carried out by competent personnel only and the activity stopped if either is compromised or poses a risk. Refer to UKA Throwing Cage Safety Guidance for more information.

Weather

Sufficient light must be present to see the implement landing. If this is not possible at the start of the session, then the session should be cancelled. If visibility changes during a session (dynamic risk assessment) and becomes compromised the session must stop.

When training from a cage during high winds, ensure the nets are weighed down to prevent them from billowing inwards. This will reduce the risk of implements snagging in the cage. Implements caught in the netting above head height can pose a risk from falling, safe removal may require assistance from facility staff.

- Slips, trips, and falls
- Collision with others
- Pre-existing medical conditions
- Athlete overload.

During activity

Regularly check the surface is in good condition for throwing. Especially during inclement weather. Check the tie downs do not come loose if working with athletes using a throwing frame. Check for faulty equipment and put to one side any defective equipment.

Throughout the session a dynamic risk assessment is required. Continually assess the well-being and safety of the athletes and that the activity is suitable relative to their age and stage of development. This will help to minimise the risk of athlete overload and safeguard against any welfare issues. Monitor the training space and immediate surrounding areas for other users, assess the weather conditions and adapt the session as necessary.

Stray implements – ensure other users are keeping their distance and abiding the boundaries of designated areas (throwing area, landing area and safety area). The landing area (sector) should be based on the ability level of the athlete + 50%, do not throw if any person is likely to get hit in or near the landing sector. Ensure non-throwers are observing from behind the circle.

When retrieving implements from the landing area (sector), all throwing equipment, whether competition spec implements or non-competition training aids, should only be collected on command by the coach. To mitigate the risk of tripping and falling, warn everyone about uneven ground and potholes made by implements in the landing area and to walk when retrieving equipment. All holes should be filled to ground level i.e., press turf back with feet.

Ensure the safe transit of equipment when carrying implements back to the throwing area e.g., carry javelins vertically point facing towards the ground. Always walk with equipment when retrieving never, run with implements or throw equipment back towards to the throwing area.

Notable risks

- Slips, trips, and falls
- Equipment failure
- Collision with others
- Pre-existing medical conditions
- Athlete overload
- Safeguarding
- Manual handling.

Post Session

When the session has concluded, all equipment should be checked for damage and cleaned before being returned to storage. The throwing area and landing area should be clear of all throwing equipment and athlete apparel. The landing areas used should be repaired as appropriate and in line with facility guidance (potholes, divots etc) ready for the next session.

Check all athletes are healthy and report any accidents or injuries to the club or facility operator as appropriate. For safeguarding and welfare reasons, ensure all young athletes have been collected before departing the venue yourself or make sure a club representative or welfare officer is present until all club training has concluded, and everyone has departed from the facility.

Other

- Ensure training is supervised by a qualified professional (qualified and licensed coach)
- Training prescription should be age-related and not age- determined. Prescription should be based according to biological status, training age, motor skill competency, technical proficiency, existing strength levels, and psychosocial maturity
- Regardless of training mode, training volume and intensity shall not be increased at the expense of technical competency
- Remind athletes to ensure they are hydrated before the session starts and have access to a drink and refuelling either before, during or post session
- Anticipate potential risks of injury, taking measures to eliminate or reduce them, and alert participants to these risks, including recommended coach : athlete ratios

- Ensure athlete can hear instructions (use of headphones whilst training)
- Coaches shall achieve and maintain professional certification(s) with continuing education requirements and a code of conduct
- Coaches must operate within their scope of practice; responsibilities and knowledge and understanding of throws training
- Athletes must be made aware of gym discipline and etiquette when using the facilities
- Ensure equipment is wiped clean after use
- Athletes and coaches should always be informed of the correct mode of dress required for coaching sessions.
- Clothing should not be so loose that it obstructs movement, nor should it be so tight that it restricts movement
- Clothing should insulate / aerate the athlete comfortably
- All jewellery and watches should be removed prior to the session commencing
- In the event that an athlete wishes to wear different clothing in accordance with their religion or cultural traditions, this should be discussed and a suitable outcome agreed on, resulting in maintaining respect for the individual's beliefs at the same time as enabling safe participation
- Glasses should be with plastic or unbreakable lenses
- Coaches should ensure that athletes wear appropriate footwear
- Footwear should provide good traction
- Footwear should provide good support and appropriate cushioning for the activity being carried out
- Laces should be well tied and there should be no obstruction such as loose tongues of shoes.