

**FIFA<sup>®</sup>**

# FIFA QUALITY PROGRAMME FOR FOOTBALL GOALS

## Best Practice Guide

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# 1. Preamble

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# 1. Introduction

This document outlines consolidated recommendations and checks for any end user of football goals to ensure best possible use, durability and safety for all involved, at amateur or professional level.

The safety and quality of football goals used worldwide is a matter that FIFA has closely monitored over the recent past. Following close collaboration with stakeholders, including member associations and competition organisers, FIFA deems it essential to further contribute to the existing safety, installation and maintenance procedures involving goals.

The FIFA Quality Programme has launched a certification process for the testing of quality, consistency and safety requirements of football goals. However, it is also very important that the end users of football goals, including FIFA certified products, follow certain procedures throughout the entire life cycle of a goal, from installation through to replacement, for an optimal and safe usage of goals.

## 2. Safety guidelines

Regardless of the quality, certain procedures must be followed to ensure the safe and correct use of football goals. This document has been prepared with the help of some of FIFA's key stakeholders in order to promote the correct use of goals. This is not an exclusive list of recommendations but something that will be built on over time.

### 2.1. Goal owner protocol

It is important that goal owners follow the guidelines and instructions given by the goal manufacturer. This is valid for the installation, maintenance, storage and replacement of the purchased product. Moreover, instructed procedures for inspection should be followed and records of safety checks kept, enabling the correction of faults found during inspection. Product life and guarantee should be accounted for and instructions for replacement parts, such as the nets, followed. Goal owners must prevent that under any circumstance children or adults are permitted to climb, swing or play with the structure of the goal and prevent access to portable goals outside of game or training time

### 2.2. Inspections

There are three types of goal inspections that should be performed on a regular basis to safeguard its users.

#### 2.2.1. Inspection upon repositioning

Each time a goal is repositioned, inspection to the firmness of the reattachment of the goal and its anchors should be assessed. If counterweights are used, specific attention should be given to ensure that they are correctly positioned.

### 2.2.2. Weekly visual inspection

This inspection involves checking for damage or defects, such as loose or missing nuts or pins, broken net fixings or cords, or signs of movement in the sockets and should be performed before matches or training sessions.

### 2.2.3. Strength and stability check

Finally, a check for the strength and stability of the goal frame, in accordance with BS EN 748:2004 or BS 8462:2005 + A1:2012, should be performed on a yearly basis, preferably by a FIFA-accredited test institute, ideally at the start of every season. Strength or stability tests should never be done by someone hanging or swinging from the crossbar.

## 2.3. Goal structure

The structure of the goal is an essential part to its safety:

- It is strongly recommended not to use wooden goals due to the structural integrity of the goal being highly susceptible to environmental factors
- No amendments should be made to the existing structure of goals.
- Goals should not be attached to any nearby structures other than goal-specific stanchions.
- Goals should not be placed on multiple surfaces as this can decrease the stability of the goal and leave spaces for entrapment. The base frame of the goals must lie flat to the ground.

## 2.4. Moving goals

Whilst moving goals it is important to follow the below guidelines:

- Check that all joints are firm, there are no missing screws or bolts and that there are no cracks before moving them.
- For goals with counterweights, instructions on their moving and handling should be followed.
- Goals must be moved by a minimum of four people. Children should not move goals on their own, unless under adult supervision.

## 2.5. Storing goals

The correct storage of goals is another method for ensuring that goals are not misused.

- Goals should be securely stored when not in use.
- Access to stored goals should be restricted to authorized persons only unless under supervision.

- Socketed and free-standing goals that are stored against a wall or fence, should be locked securely. If this is not possible, they should be put lying flat on the ground so that they are less likely to fall over.
- Portable goals should be either dismantled and securely stored or placed together, preferably goal mouth to goal mouth or goal mouth to a solid structure, with suitable fixings applied. Goals should not be stored in a hanging position.

## 2.6. Goals with counterweights

- For goals that include a counterweight, fixed structures that are pre-filled or integrated into the base frame are preferred.
- For goals that do not have such structures, it is essential to follow the instructions of the manufacturer to ensure a suitable counterweight is used.
- Counterweights should lie flat on the ground at the back of the goal and have rounded profiles.
- They should not be placed in the area between the goal line and the net nor pose any additional risks, such as protruding screws or ends, or sharp edges.

## 2.7. Goal nets

- Goal nets can cause cuts or trap body parts if the mesh size becomes too large or the yarn too thin. In case of damage to the net, replacement instructions should be requested from the manufacturer.
- The use of metal hooks to attach nets should, under no circumstances be used, as they can be a hazard to safety.
- It is currently recommended that mesh size should be between 70mm and 150mm
- Yarn thickness should  $\geq 2.0\text{mm}$

## 2.8. Stanchions

- Stanchions should be at a 45 degrees angle from the rear of the net. Moreover, where possible they should be placed a distance of at least 2 meters from the back of the net, to permit for a 4-meter distance between the goal line and the stanchions.
- Stanchions should be padded with a material at least 4 centimetres thick, with a non-white uniform colour.

## 3. Match day installation checks

The correct installation of a football goal is an essential step to guarantee safety and quality. The installation of goals should follow the instructions given by the manufacturer. The below points should be paid close attention to.

### 3.1. Goal posts

Before installing goals, it should be ensured that the goals at both ends of the pitch are the same model. In some cases, this can be done through a visual inspection of the labelling. With regards to dimensions of the posts, the width and depth of each post must be  $\geq 100\text{mm}$  and  $\leq 120\text{mm}$ .

### 3.2. Post lean

For all matches post lean is an important factor that should be checked to ensure that the posts are positioned vertically and efforts made to minimise this.

This is particularly important with goals used in conjunction with goal-line technology where the post lean should be measured before each game and the post lean should be at a maximum of 15mm/m. To inspect this, the distance between the top of the post and the goal line should be measured using a digital spirit level.

### 3.3. Line markings

Line markings should be made using a line marking machine and observing that the lines are the same width as the posts. As it can be more practical to not have the goal in place when the lines are marked, the width of the posts should be measured in advance and indicated for the line markings. Note that in any case, but in particular, where goal-line technology is used, the back of the goal-line needs to be perfectly aligned with the back of the goal posts.

### 3.4. Goal size

Should a check on the size of the goal be necessary, the Laws of the Game state that the horizontal distance between the inside of the posts is 7.32 m (8 yds) and the vertical distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is 2.44 m (8 ft).

The FIFA Quality Programme recommends that if measuring this for natural turf the top of the soil should be used as the playing surface, for filled artificial grass the top of the infill should be used and for non-filled the top of the primary backing should be used for the 'ground'.