

Health and Safety

Legislation in England is largely designed to cover Health and Safety in the workplace. In addition there are regulations covering hazardous sports and activities for children. In the main, these do not apply to most bridge clubs.

Regulation of private clubs, sports, art and leisure activities generally rests with Local Authorities who are advised that “The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HSWA) should not be used to cut across the freedom of individuals voluntarily to take risks outside their working environment. Where there is no employment, there should be no intervention by an enforcing authority in the sporting or other activities of private clubs [...] except in reaction to serious incidents or follow-up of complaints.” Source: Health and Safety Executive OC331/3.

The EBU is not able to provide legal guidance in this respect but it would seem prudent for clubs to follow good common sense rules in respect of Health and Safety and Fire precautions at the club. These might include:

- Making sure that fire exits are kept clear at all times.
- Making sure that members are aware of fire exits.
- Making sure that members are aware of any particular hazards at the venue, e.g. minding awkward steps (which should be clearly marked), taking care if more than one person is using an unusually narrow kitchen, etc.
- Prompt reporting for rectification of any obvious hazards to the owners of the premises, e.g. loose wiring, insufficient lighting, etc.
- Following normal hygiene precautions, as you would in your own home, if any food is provided.
- Following any government guidelines on gatherings in public places in times of official epidemics.

In addition, for clubs which own their premises, it would be sensible to carry out a risk assessment annually and after major rebuilding or alterations.

Guidelines and forms for such assessments can be found on the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website at www.hse.gov.uk/contact/faqs/riskassess.htm

Clubs which employ staff definitely need to follow HSE regulations: see www.hse.gov.uk

It is generally advisable for clubs to have [Public Liability Insurance](#). Your insurer may be able to advise on any matters of particular concern.

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