

# The Management of Persistent Standing

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All photographs taken by Steve Frosdick

# Overview

The problems for stadium managers

The legalities of standing

Why do fans stand in seated areas?

What are the safety risks?

What are the security risks?

What are the service risks?

Managing the risks

A radical solution?





**Week after week, stadium managers across Europe face problems from large groups of fans who persistently stand in seated areas**



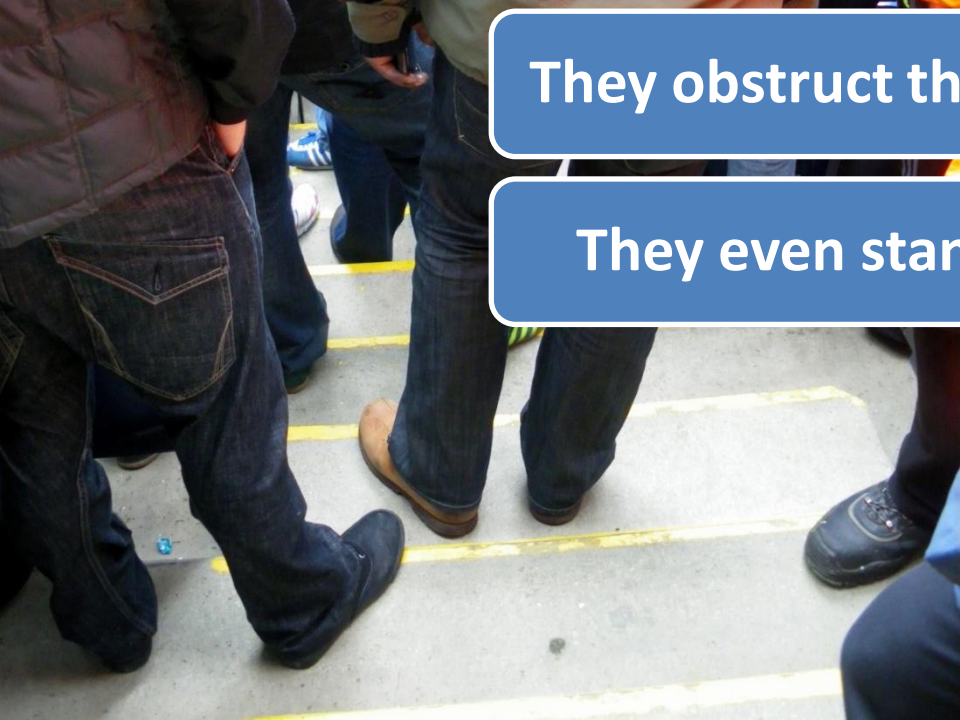


**They block the gangways**

**They are difficult to steward**

**They obstruct the view of others**

**They even stand on the seats**





# This brings pressure from the authorities

Perceived risks

Seat backs too low to restrain falls?

Progressive crowd collapse?

Gangways obstructed?

Falling off seats?

Pressure to 'Do something about it!'

Pressure to 'Make them sit down!'

# Why do fans want to stand in seated areas?

Tradition and culture

The person in front is standing

To get a better view

The game is big and exciting

It improves the atmosphere

It's raining and the seats are wet

To protest against the regulations

They simply prefer it



# The legalities of standing

Various countries have made a law that stadia must provide all-seated stands

Various governing bodies also require all-seating for their matches

There is an expectation that fans will sit down, but no law that they must do so

Standing up is however often forbidden by the ground regulations

Standing up is thus a breach of contract, but it is **NOT A CRIME**

It follows that the police have no role in asking fans to sit down – this is the job of the stewards



# The inherent safety risk

Is persistent standing inherently unsafe?

How real is the risk of a crowd collapse?

Well ... it depends on when it takes place

It also depends on the angle of rake





# The inherent safety risk

**WS Atkins report on Old Trafford in 2002**

**Most dangerous at moments of excitement**

**Next most dangerous when leaving the stadium**

**LEAST DANGEROUS DURING NORMAL PLAY**



# The inherent safety risk



**Green Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds 2008**

**Maximum 25° rake for standing terraces**

**Maximum 34° rake for seated stands**

**So over 34°, standing must be inherently unsafe**

**And at 26° to 34°, standing could be unsafe**



# Two safety policy propositions...

Persistent standing in stands with angles of rake above 34° must be inherently unsafe. Spectator groups who risk assessment suggests are likely to persistently stand must not be accommodated in such areas.

Persistent standing in stands with angles of rake between 26° and 34° may be inherently unsafe. Spectator groups who risk assessment suggests are likely to persistently stand should only be accommodated in such areas on a balance of risks basis, for example when it is essential to use an upper tier to keep high risk fan groups segregated from one another.



# Interim conclusions

Persistent standing in stands with angles of rake below  $26^{\circ}$  is NOT inherently unsafe; such persistent standing is less dangerous than standing at times of high excitement and standing during egress

Requiring people to sit down at all times spoils their enjoyment and causes unnecessary conflict between fans and stewards

Persistent standing can bring other safety, security and service risks, but these risks can be managed





# The main safety risk

A person standing up takes up more room (550 mm) than someone who is sitting down (460 mm)

Persistent standing can thus make the crowd overflow into the gangways

This obstructs emergency access for the stewards, medical services and the authorities

So they could be unable to reach a casualty or respond to other safety incidents

# The main security risk

“While there is no automatic correlation between standing in seated areas and misbehaviour, there is evidence that some groups of standing spectators regularly adopt a **hostile attitude to stewards and to the authorities generally**. This can make it harder to tackle offensive conduct such as racist chanting or obscene language. Even where this does not lead to misbehaviour, standing spectators may not be in the mood to comply with reasonable requests (in particular to keep the gangways and exits clear) that may be for their own safety.”

(Football Licensing Authority 2002)



# The main security risk

Left unmanaged, this hostile attitude can and does lead to anarchy in the stands







# The main service risks

Obstructed access to concourse facilities

Children and others who find it difficult are forced to stand to see

People who prefer to sit lose the choice to do so

Disabled patrons may have their view obstructed



A photograph of a stadium gangway. In the center, a man in a high-visibility orange safety jacket with reflective stripes stands near a metal railing. He is looking towards the right. The background shows a green football pitch and a crowd of people. The foreground is filled with the backs of several people's heads and shoulders, suggesting a busy, crowded area. The overall scene is brightly lit, likely during the day.

# Managing the safety risks

**There is an absolute safety requirement to keep the gangways clear at all times**

**Reactive measure: active stewarding can persuade standing fans to overlap and remain in the seating area**

**Preventive measure: reducing the capacity to 24 tickets sold per 28 seats so as to allow for lateral migration**



# Managing the security risks

Strong access controls can ensure fans occupy their allocated block, row and seat and so be identifiable from the ticket sales database



Active stewarding is needed in the vomitories and gangways to check tickets, act as ushers and to prevent lateral migration between blocks





# Managing the service risks



Hold back tickets to provide relocation seating for those who want or need to sit down

Ensure disabled platforms are located high enough to be unaffected by standing fans

Otherwise use netting to remove seats where standing will obstruct disabled patrons



# The radical option – consider ‘rail seating’

Used in Germany and Austria

Very popular with some fan groups

Complies with all-seating regulations

Fans want clubs to have the choice

But the business case is weak ...

The authorities are opposed ...

And safety officers don't think rail seats would stop persistent standing anyway

