

De-escalation

Awareness of your Environment

An effective approach to safeguarding players, officials, and administrators during a netball activity is to thoroughly understand your surroundings and implement safety measures proactively to address potential risks.

The following content aims to provide information to assist you to identify and assess the environment at your Association (during games, training or otherwise) and at venues the Association may take players to minimize the risk of potential violence to players, officials and/or administrators.

1. Is your environment set up to safely deal with difficult or heightened people?

- a. Ensure everyone knows how the courts, buildings and rooms within buildings are orientated. (when away from home courts include team tents in this consideration).
- b. Are the courts clearly marked and maps of the courts available in central positions (when away from home courts know what teams are playing where).
- c. Know the exits from buildings and from the venue.
- d. Is there a dedicated safe spot for people to go to?
- e. Know where the first aid kit is and make sure it is always accessible (i.e. training).
- f. Know who the first aid officer is.
- g. Is there always sufficient lighting?
- h. Can the premises be controlled so that you are aware who is entering or exiting?

2. Duress System

- a. How do people call for help? Emergency technology can be a mobile phone, walkie talkie, duress app on phones.
- b. Make sure your emergency technology is always charged.
- c. If you use an app, make sure it is regularly drilled with volunteers and tested.
- d. What do people say when asking for assistance? Do you need to use a code word when calling for help... *"Hi I'm with Mr Smith on Court 7, can you check if my RED FOLDER is on my desk? Oh, that's right it's in my car."* This gives someone your location, knowledge of who you are with, if "RED FOLDER" is your code word for help, you have asked for help without the aggressor knowing and it gives you an exit strategy.
- e. Who do people call for help (Internal Emergency Response)? Clear instructions that are well communicated.
- f. Who administers assistance? Is it one person or more than one person?
- g. When do you call the police (External emergency response)?

3. Identification of people in power

- a. Make sure all administrators are known to each other and quickly visible (specific colored shirt).
- b. Ensure this identifiable clothing is not worn away from the courts.
- c. Name tags (if used) should not have your full name listed.

4. Safety in numbers

- a. Consider whether individuals are safe to move around the environment on their own.
- b. Consider how the end of the day looks. Ensure that volunteers are not left on their own at the courts (especially at night).
- c. Ensure volunteers know that they are all there to support each other.

5. Environment awareness strategy

- a. Create an environment awareness strategy and review at least on an annual basis.
- b. Communicate the strategy to those volunteers with roles to play in it. Ensure education on the strategy is regular and ongoing.
- c. Ensure volunteers know how to report incidents and have a safe and secure place to store those reports. Ensure the reports are investigated swiftly.

At the time of an incident, you should:

- use calm verbal and non-verbal communication
- use verbal de-escalation and distraction techniques
- seek support from other staff
- ask the aggressor to leave the premises
- set off the duress alarm
- retreat to a safe location
- implement the internal emergency response
- implement the external emergency response (if necessary).

Immediately after an incident, you should:

- ensure that everyone is safe
- provide first aid or urgent medical attention where necessary
- provide individual support where required, including practical, emotional and social support
- report what happened (Association, NNSW and/or NA), who was affected, and who was involved.