

## GUIDANCE NOTES ON WHITE LINE MARKING OF FOOTBALL PITCHES

Various practices have been used in the past for the application of white lines to football pitches. The objectives of such practices has been to both reduce labour and materials costs whilst endeavouring to keep the lines visible for a greater length of time. Some of these practices have lead to injury and subsequent court action being taken against managers and clubs. You are therefore advised to study the following notes carefully.

### A. LEGISLATION

The main governing factors for marking out white lines are the same as that for other routine tasks in the workplace.

#### 1. Duty of Care

Under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 every employer has a duty of care to ensure the workplace is safe for their employees, contractors, visitors, players, and spectators.

#### 2. The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1994 (COSHH)

Regulations to prevent ill health from exposure to any hazardous substances present in the workplace.

#### 3. Risk Assessment

You are required to carry out assessments on all tasks carried out in the workplace in relation to the nature of hazard, worst outcome, person(s) at risk, current precautions, estimated risk and further precautions.

If all three of the above are addressed satisfactorily this will automatically govern what to use for white line marking, ensure best practice and, above all, safety.

It is the duty of all Managers to ensure that all the regulations are adhered to as they are ultimately responsible in the eyes of the law. If line marking is carried out by contractors then a specification should be drawn up to include all the safeguards outlined in these guidance notes. This could also extend to include specifying a particular product.

### B. SUITABLE LINE MARKING COMPOUNDS

#### 1. Permanent paints

Based on pigmented viscous liquid. These "paints" can be applied either in a diluted form or neat.

#### 2. Powders

There are various non-toxic whiting powders available which are based on ground natural calcium carbonate and can be used wet or dry. They are safe to use provided COSHH principles are applied. Under COSHH the user would be required to wear gloves and eye protection and to wash off any contact with the skin as a precautionary measure. Most powders are supplied in a fine form.

**Hydrated Lime (Calcium hydroxide) should never be used for line marking. It is toxic and can give rise to chemical skin burns and irritations. It can cause serious damage to the eyes and skin on contact in both its dry or wet form. Its use is not recommended under any circumstances.**

### C. USE OF HERBICIDES TO REINFORCE LINE MARKINGS

Until **The Food and Environment Protection Act, 1985 (FEPA)** was introduced many groundsmen and club members used various herbicides mixed in with whitening compounds to keep the lines in longer and more visible during the winter playing season.

It is, however, only permissible to use a herbicide which is approved for use on sports turf, and this is likely to be a total herbicide. COSHH and Risk Assessment must be carried out prior to any application. A further governing factor is that the user must have obtained his/her Certificate of Competence in Use of Pesticides (PAI, PA2A or PA6A).

Any herbicide product for line marking must be used within the conditions of approval granted under The Control of Pesticide Regulations, 1986 (COPR), and as outlined on the product label. There should be no risk to players by contact or transfer of the active herbicide to any part of the body.

The addition of herbicides to whitening materials is not a recommended practice unless carried out by a competent, certificated person.

Creosote is another compound used in the past to mark and reinforce line markings but it is not approved for use on sports turf under COPR. Its use is therefore not recommended under any circumstances.

The use of Hydrated Lime, herbicide additives and creosote can result in serious injury to players, which can ultimately lead to actions against both clubs or individuals. Play safe – use only safe and approved compounds that are currently available on the market. Do not use old compounds.

**D. MACHINES AVAILABLE TO MARK WHITE LINES**

Marking machines fall into the following categories.

**1. Dry Line Markers**

As the name implies, these are for applying dry powder compounds.

**2. Pressure Pump Markers**

A wheel driven pump forces marking fluid through a jet or spout directly onto the turf surface.

**3. Electric Pump Markers**

These are battery driven to constantly maintain the required pressure and direct the liquid onto the turf surface.

**4. Belt Feed Markers**

These have a moving belt system which conveys a continual supply of liquid onto the turf surface by contact

**5. Wheel Transfer Markers**

These convey the liquid via rotating wheel onto a tray and then via a sponge wheel directly onto the turf surface.

All of the above markers are obtainable from most sports ground suppliers. Before purchasing any marker have a demonstration first, and ensure you get the right marker for your requirements.

**E. USEFUL CONTACTS**

Institute of Groundsmanship (Training Courses) Tel: 01908 312511  
[www.iog.org](http://www.iog.org)

British Agrochemical Association (Code of Practice) Tel: 01733 349225

Health & Safety Executive. Tel: Info line 0541 545500

HSE Books Tel: 01787 881165

Sports Council (Health & Safety Guidance Notes) Tel: 020 7388 1277

Suppliers of products [www.turfpages.co.uk](http://www.turfpages.co.uk)

**F. IMPORTANT NOTE**

These notes are, intended solely to provide helpful guidance for club managers and groundsmen.

The information may vary or change from time to time, as a result of directives issued by governing bodies or government departments.

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, the Institute of Groundsmanship cannot at any time or under any circumstances be held liable in respect of any damage or costs of any nature arising directly or indirectly from information contained herein.

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