Photographic Alliance of Great Britain

Advice for Clubs, Federations and the PAGB on Health & Safety at Club Meetings and Events

This document is an advisory document only and does not set out a policy for anyone to follow. It is intended only as guidelines for Clubs to construct their own policy. Whilst the document has been fully researched and we believe it to be accurate, the PAGB can accept no responsibility for any errors or incorrect statements and cannot be held liable for any consequent actions which may arise.

Camera Clubs do not come under the scope of Health and Safety legislation and so there is no legal requirement to have a policy and procedures in place. However, clubs generally hold their meetings in premises where the owners or administrators of the premises require that clubs meeting on their premises have a health and safety policy in place. Additionally, the policy must be brought to the attention of members and available for scrutiny and consideration by members. Even if your camera club is not required to have such a policy it is good practice to have a policy in place to highlight and minimise any risks that may be identified.

The policy for each club will be unique and based on the specific requirements of the club and the arrangement of the premises where they meet. The following points should be covered as required:

- At the beginning of each meeting, those in attendance should be made aware of the location of emergency exits and whether or not any fire alarm tests are scheduled to be carried out during the progress of the meeting. Members should also be made aware of the location of the assembly point should evacuation of the building be required. A club may also think it necessary to have members sign in as they arrive at the meeting, or have an official note down the names of all present, so that a roll call can be carried out at the designated assembly point.

- Club officials should be aware of the location of fire fighting equipment such as fire extinguishers. In the event of a fire, anyone

who decides to use the installed fire fighting equipment should be fully conversant with the operation and use of such equipment.

- Club officials must be aware of the location of any first aid equipment available within the building. These officials must also be aware of how to contact emergency services and be aware of the complete address and postcode of the premises in case emergency services are required.

- It is also advisable that anyone possessing up-to-date first aid skills is identified.

- Members should be made aware of any specific restrictions or requirements placed on the club and club members by the operators of the building where the club meets.

- With regard to electrical equipment, there is absolutely no legal requirement that club's electrical equipment must be subject to Portable Appliance Testing (PAT). However, the building's administration may insist on this. If so, it will only be required to test earthed electrical equipment. Non-earthed electrical equipment is double insulated and it is not possible to carry out a meaningful test on such equipment. Details concerning PAT can be found on the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website at:

  http://www.hse.gov.uk/electricity/faq-portable-appliance-testing.htm

  This web page completely exposes the myths surrounding PAT and states that in 2011 the HSE reviewed their own regime of testing and decided that further routine testing of their equipment was unnecessary and that equipment will only be subject to user checks and visual inspections.

- PAT requirements raises the problem of visiting speakers using their own equipment when speaking at clubs. The easy way around this is to seek agreement from the building's administrators that they allow the equipment utilised by visiting speakers to be used providing it is supplied via a Residual Current Device (RCD). Details of these devices can be found at:

  http://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/guides-and-advice/electrical-items/rcds-explained

  It should be noted that doing the same for the club's own equipment could also negates the need for PAT. The RCD should be tested at the commencement of each meeting by pressing the test button, which simulates a fault on the circuit. It is also recommended that the

integrity of equipment, provided by the club or utilised by a visiting speaker, is visually checked at the commencement of each meeting.

- All trailing electrical cables, and any other tripping hazards, should be taped to the floor before the meeting room is populated. Besides ensuring the elimination of tripping hazards, this will also protect club equipment from being dragged from tables and damaged.

All clubs are strongly advised that they are covered for Public Liability Insurance. When seeking Public Liability cover, clubs should not rely on the property owner's cover, which will likely only cover them in the event that someone is injured or their property damaged by the building (e.g. a roof tile falls off, hitting a passer by or damaging a car).
Should the property owner state that their policy would cover the club, we strongly recommend that written confirmation be sought from the insurer/broker that arranges the cover. This will give the club peace of mind, and some protection in the event that a claim occurs and it is found that the cover does not extend to them.
Cover available under the PAGB Scheme is very competitive, and the large number of clubs involved helps to keep premiums to a minimum level. If a club arranges their cover away from the PAGB Scheme, a claim could seriously impact their renewal premium. With the large number of clubs involved on the PAGB Scheme, a claim is far less likely to have an impact.

Each building is unique and some may require specific health and safety considerations not covered here. It is therefore advised that club officials review arrangements at their meeting place and put in place any procedures or safety measures specific to their environment. A simple stroll around the premises looking for obvious hazards should highlight any requirements that may need to be added to the Health and Safety policy. An example of this may be the production and handling of boiling water should the club provide tea and coffee for members during the course of the evening.

Other matters, not directly related to Health and Safety, may also be considered. As a common courtesy it is advisable to have in place a procedure for aiding wheelchair users, and other disabled, in attending meetings and making full use of the facilities available. Please note that some clubs have actually installed induction loops for the hard of hearing and ask visiting judges and speakers to wear a lapel microphone to facilitate use of the induction loop.

Should you have any specific questions or require any further clarification and advice please contact the Secretary of the PAGB. Contact details can be found in the PAGB Handbook and on the PAGB Website at www.thepagb.org.uk.