

# Playing of volleyball on fire stations

---

---

New policy number: **311**  
Old instruction number: **AD/17**  
Issue date: **15 August 2000**  
Reviewed as current: **9 January 2024**  
Owner: **Assistant Commissioner, Fire Stations**  
Responsible work team: **Central Operations**

---

## Contents

1 Introduction ..... 2  
2 Guidelines..... 2  
Appendix 1 - Abridged guide to the rules of volleyball ..... 4  
Document history..... 10

# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy should be considered part of the general guidelines of playing volleyball at stations. It also includes a summary table identifying the hazards that currently exist (see Appendix 1).
- 1.2 In the event of changes at a station which may impinge on the playing of volleyball, the station commander/borough commander should seek guidance from a health and safety advisor, Health and Safety Services and Technical and Commercial Services as to whether a re-survey of the playing area is required.
- 1.3 Watch officers are to ensure the following guidance and rules of the game are complied with whenever volleyball is played.

# 2 Guidelines

- 2.1 Volleyball can only be played on a station whose yard, or a section of that yard, has been surveyed, approved and marked out as fit for the playing of volleyball.
- 2.2 Station commanders and borough commanders are to ensure that the premises they are responsible for has passed an assessment from Technical and Commercial Services and a site survey has been carried out by a health and safety advisor prior to allowing the playing of volleyball.
- 2.3 On each and every occasion, that volleyball is to be played, prior to commencement, the court, is to be inspected by the watch officers to ensure that it is safe and free from risk both to the players and other persons, i.e. that it is free from trip or slip hazards, not being affected by weather, obstructions or other conditions or issues that could cause injury.
- 2.4 A risk assessment must be carried out for the playing of volleyball. This should include a list of hazards likely to be encountered at fire stations and suggestions as to how risks relating to specific hazards may be reduced. The risk assessment - activity form template can be accessed via: File | Brigade Wide Share | Templates | forms (departments) | health & safety | RA Activity Risk Assessment form.
- 2.5 All poles nets, balls and other equipment are to be examined to ensure that they are appropriate, secure, and in a safe and proper condition, (see paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4). Only equipment provided by the London Fire Brigade Welfare Fund is approved for the playing of volleyball on fire stations.
- 2.6 The playing of volleyball is on an entirely voluntary basis, no member of staff can be ordered or instructed to play, and it is undertaken at the players' own risk. Any injuries sustained whilst playing volleyball will not be recorded as "due to service" and will not be regarded as a qualifying injury for the purposes of the Firefighters Pension Scheme, although they should be entered in the accident book.
- 2.7 Clothing and footwear must be appropriate for fitness training and must be in a good state of repair.
- 2.8 The playing of volleyball must not interfere with the normal working or training routines of the station. Permission to play can only be granted by the officer in charge.
- 2.9 Volleyball is not a substitute for, nor does it form any part of the Brigade's approved fitness training programme.
- 2.10 Play must only take place at times which will not cause any disturbance or inconvenience to people living or working near the fire station.

- 2.11 All players must be familiar with the abridged rules as provided by the Brigade, and that a non playing umpire must be selected.
- 2.12 Station commanders/watch officers are not to permit volleyball to take place unless they are fully satisfied that the above conditions have been met. And, that prior to the commencement of play an entry to that effect is made in the station logbook.
- 2.13 There is to be no inter-station movement of appliances or personnel in order for volleyball to be played.

## Appendix 1 - Abridged guide to the rules of volleyball

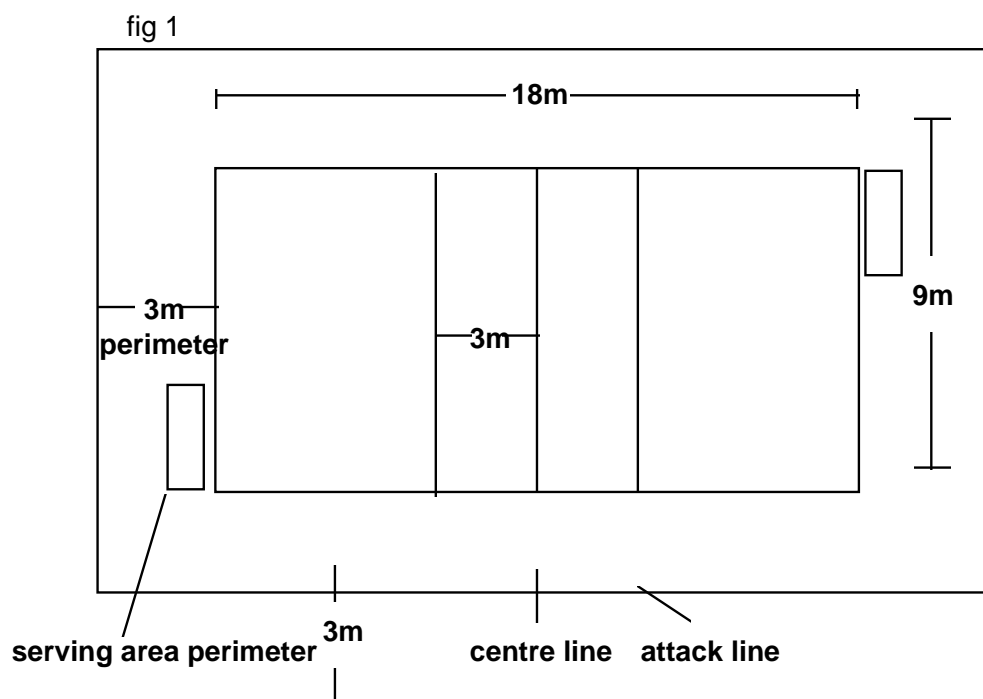
1 The following rules are based on information provided by the English Volleyball Association.

### 2 The net and court

The standard volleyball net is 1m deep and 9.5m long. It is constructed from 10cm square black mesh, and a double thickness of white canvas or linen is stitched across the top. A flexible cable passes inside the band of canvas, and stretches the upper edge of the net: it is essential that the net is taut, so that the ball will remain playable if it rebounds from the net.

Two tapes made of white material 1m long and 5cm wide are fastened near each side of the net, perpendicular to the sidelines and the centre line.

The court shall be a maximum size of 9 x 18m; however, a court of smaller dimensions is permissible so long as the width is half the length. There should be a clear 3m perimeter surrounding the court. See fig 1.



### 3 Posts

The net is supported at each end by a post. The net must be the same height from the ground at each end, and not more than 2cm above regulation height. The regulation height of the net at the centre is 2.43m.

For safety reasons only freestanding posts/nets should be used. The posts should be rounded and smooth, and the side of the post nearest the court should be free from any protrusions.

### 4 The ball

A standard volleyball is spherical, with a circumference of 65-67cm and weighs 260-280g.

Footballs, basketballs, moulded plastic or anything other than an approved volleyball can cause injury and should **not** be used.

### 5 Start of play

In competition volleyball there are six players.

**Choice of court**

The two captains toss a coin to decide which team will serve first; the winner chooses either the right to serve first or the court in which their team wishes to start the match.

After each set, the teams change courts and the team which received service, serves first in the following set.

In the final set, when one team has a total of eight points, the teams change courts automatically; however, the team serving at the time of the change continues to serve.

**Position of players prior to start of play**

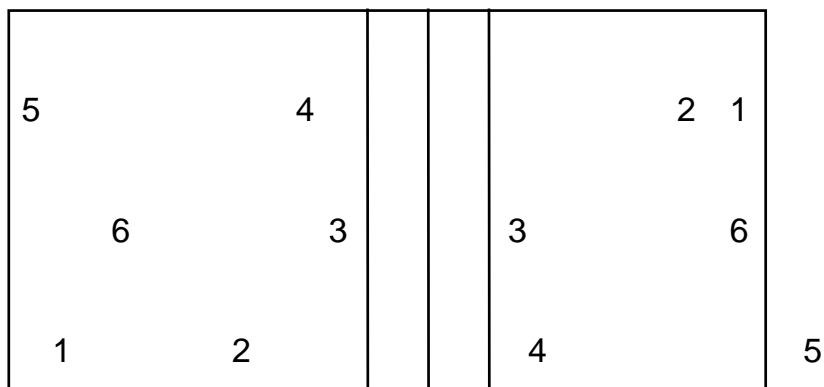
At the time the ball is served, the players of each team should be placed in their own court in two lines of three: these lines may be broken ones.

The players nearest the net (numbers 2, 3, and 4) are the front line players, the other three (numbers 1, 6, and 5) form the back line. The numbers refer to the court positions and not to the players numbers (see fig 1).

As soon as the ball is served, each player may cover any section of their own court, but the back court players must not smash or block at the net. The same player serves until their team loses a point. When the serve passes to the other team, the serving team rotates clockwise by one position before serving.

The rotation order must be observed until the end of the set. Before the beginning of each set, this rotation order may be changed. In competition volleyball, the change should be noted on the score sheet.

fig 2

**Back court players**

Back court players may not play the ball directly from within the attack area into the opponents court unless the ball is below the height of the net.

They may not block.

From their own area, back court players can return the ball by any means permitted. A back court player smashing from their own area may land on or beyond the attack line (the spiking line), providing their take-off for the smash is clearly behind the attack line.

If a back court player is outside the court but in the extension of the attack area, they are considered to be in this area.

## 6 The game

Play is started with a service by the player in position number 1. The team receiving the service attempts to return the ball to the serving team's side of the net, using a maximum of three hits or less. No more than three hits can be allowed (with the exception of contact made when blocking), nor may any player hit the ball twice in succession (except if one of the contacts is a block).

The receiving team directs the first pass or service reception towards the net. The second play is a "volley" - when one of the receiving team volleys the ball into the air ready for the third play, the smash. The player of the team which smashes the ball attempts to ground the ball in the opponents court, or to cause the serving team to misplay the ball. If this can be achieved, then the receiving team wins the right to serve and so the chance to score points. Except in the deciding set, only the serving team can score points.

## 7 Handling the ball

The ball may be played with any part of the body above and including the knee. A player who touches the ball or is touched by it when the ball is in play, is considered to have touched the ball.

The ball can touch any number of the parts of the body down to and including the knee, on condition that the contact is simultaneous, that the ball is not held but hit, and that it rebounds vigorously. If a player touches the ball more than once with any part of the body, before any other player touches it in the meantime, they have committed a foul (a double hit). The best way of playing the ball accurately is with a volley pass. The ball must be cleanly contacted; if it comes to rest momentarily on the hands or on the arms of the player, this is considered to be catching or holding. Scooping or lifting the ball are also considered to be holding.

## 8 Simultaneous contact

If two opponents simultaneously hit the ball from above the net, the player from the team on whose side the ball does not fall is deemed to have hit it last. The other team then has three touches of the ball.

If, after the simultaneous touch, the ball falls on the ground inside the limits of the court, the team on whose side the ball falls is at fault. If the ball falls outside the court, the other team loses the point or service.

If two players of the same team play the ball and touch it together, this is considered as two touches (except in the case of a block). If only one player contacts the ball, it is considered to be one touch.

If two opponents make a personal foul simultaneously (a double foul) the point is replayed.

## 9 The service

The service is the means of putting the ball into play. The player in position 1 stands in the service area; tosses the ball into the air and strikes it with one hand (open or closed) or any part of the arm. The server is not allowed to strike a ball resting on the other hand.

The server must stand behind the end line and between the lines limiting the service area. Having served, they may enter the field of play.

If the ball falls to the ground without being touched by the server, the service is retaken, but the game must not be deliberately delayed in this fashion.

The service is considered correct if the ball passes:

- Over the net, without touching it, into the opponents court, and:

- Between the two vertical tapes on the net marking the width of the court.

The service is a foul if the ball:

- Touches the net.
- Passes over or outside the vertical tapes marking the width of the court.
- Touches a player or object before going into the opponents court.
- Goes under the net.
- Falls outside the limits of the court.

If the service is faulty, the opponents gain service.

## 10 Net play

If the ball touches the net during play (other than the service) and passes into the opponent's court, it is not a fault. Even if the ball goes into the net, it can then still be played by any player other than the last one to touch it, providing that the maximum of three touches is not exceeded. If the force of the ball hitting the net causes the net to come into contact with an opposing player, this does not constitute a fault on the part of the latter. If any player deliberately touches the net, they commit a fault. If two players from opposing teams simultaneously touch the net, this is known as a double fault and the point is replayed.

## 11 The vertical plane of the net

It is a fault to hit the ball from within the playing space of the opposing team, or to cross the vertical plane of the net with any part of the body with the purpose of interfering with or distracting an opponent while the ball is in play.

It is not a fault for a player to touch the opponent's court with his foot or feet, provided that some part of the foot or feet remains in contact with the centre line; nor is it a fault to enter the opponent's court after play has stopped.

## 12 Scoring

The serving team scores a point when:

- The ball touches the ground inside the opponent's court.
- The opponents have played the ball more than three times consecutively.
- An opponent holds or pushes the ball.
- An opponent touches the ball two consecutive times.
- An opponent touches the net.
- An opponent reaches under the net and touches the ball or any opposing player when the ball is in play on that side of the net.
- An opponent completely crosses the centre line.
- At the moment of service, the opposing team commits a fault of position, e.g. after winning service has not rotated position clockwise.
- A returned ball crosses or touches the net outside the tapes marking the width of the court.
- A returned ball goes out of court, passes under the net, touches an object outside the court, or is returned by a player aiding themselves with any object as support.
- An opposing back court player in the attack area incorrectly returns the ball.
- The opponents prolong the interruption of the game for more than 30 seconds.

In every set except the deciding one, only the serving team can score points. If the non-serving team wins a rally, it gains the right to serve and scores a point.

### 13 The set

A set is won by the team that first scores 15 points, with a minimum lead of two points. If the score reaches 14-14, play is continued until a clear two point lead is reached, e.g. 14-16 or 17-15. However, a point limit is reached at 17, i.e. if the score is 16-16 the team scoring the next point wins the set with only a one point lead.

In the deciding set, should the score be a 14-14 tie, play continues until a two point lead is gained by one team.

A match is won by the team that gains three sets, i.e. each match is the best of five sets.

### 14 Modified games

As outlined in 3.5 above, there are six players in a competition volleyball team.

However, the English Volleyball Association also recognises certain modifications of the game of volleyball including:

#### Bounce ball

Number of players 1 v 1 or 2 v 2

Each player volleys the ball over the net. The opposition must let the ball bounce before volleying it back.

#### Mini volleyball

Number of players 3 v 3

A player must pass to all three players in their side.

Two of the three are net players; the third is the main defence/reception player.

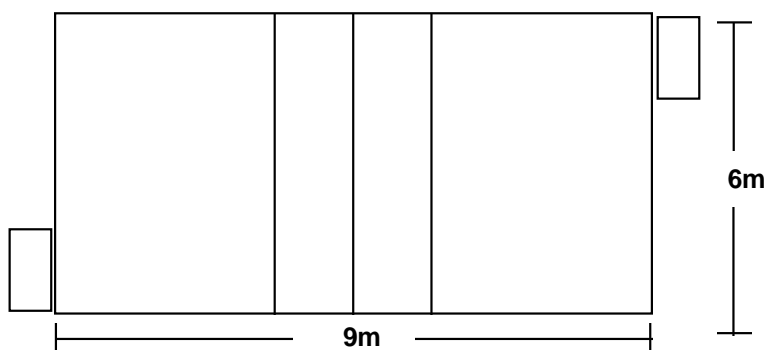
#### Midi volleyball

Midi volleyball is normally played on a smaller court (see fig 3), however, it can be played on a normal size court.

Three of the four players play as attackers, the server is normally the only back court player.

For each of the above variations, the standard rules of volleyball and scoring will apply.

fig 3



### 15 Game management

To ensure the rules of volleyball are correctly interpreted, and the game played in a safe and responsible manner, a referee should be appointed before any play begins.

All of the referee's decisions are final, and they will have absolute authority over the game.



Volleyball is not a contact sport and the referee must ensure that any player committing a foul in this manner is warned.

# Document history

## Assessments

An equality, sustainability or health, safety and welfare impact assessment and/or a risk assessment was last completed on:

EIA	08/01/24	SDIA	L - 23/10/23	HSWIA	16/10/23	RA	
-----	----------	------	--------------	-------	----------	----	--

## Audit trail

Listed below is a brief audit trail, detailing amendments made to this policy/procedure.

Page/para nos.	Brief description of change	Date
Throughout	General terminology changes made throughout the policy.	14/12/2009
Page 2, para 2.2	New paragraph added.	14/12/2009
Page 4	A guide to the rules of volleyball made into an appendix.	04/01/2010
Throughout	Department names updated in line with the Top Management Review.	24/10/2011
Page 1	Updated the owner from Head of Operations and Mobilising to Head of Mobilising.	09/07/2012
Throughout	This policy has been reviewed as current no amendments required. SIA and EIA date added.	13/08/2013
Page 15	Subject list and FOIA exemptions tables updated.	09/12/2014
Page 1	Amendments made to PN Owner and Responsible work team due to TMR	09/10/2015
Page 2 (2.2) Page 2 (2.4) Page 2 (2.7) Appendix 2	Health & Safety Advisor inserted for GM. Changes to wording and link to current RA inserted. Reference to Brigade supplied clothing removed. Appendix 2 removed and replaced with link to current RA form.	07/02/2017
Page 1	Owner title/Department name changed in line with the introduction of the London Fire Commissioner which now replaces the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority.	15/10/2018
Throughout	Last amended date added to confirm amendments made to reflect change in organisational structure.	03/12/2018
Throughout	Changes made to reflect the change in organisational terminology for role to rank.	15/10/2019
Throughout	Reviewed as current with the following minor amendments made.	25/06/2020
Throughout	'Technical and Service Support' changed to 'Technical and Commercial Services' due to departmental name change.	
Page 2, para 2.4	New path added for the risk assessment - activity form.	
Throughout	Reviewed as current, new path added for risk assessment form.	09/01/2024

## Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

Brigade premises	Health and safety at work

## Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

Considered by: (responsible work team)	FOIA exemption	Security marking classification