

Managing occupants in the Technical Area

The Laws of the Game 2018 states that the technical area is defined as **designated** seating for team officials and substitutes. While the size and position of technical areas may differ between clubs, the following notes are issued for general guidance:

⚽ **The technical area should only extend 1m (1yd) on either side of the designated seated area and up to a distance of 1m (1 yd) from the touchline**
Make sure when you do your pitch inspection that the Technical Area has enough seats to accommodate the number of persons permitted to sit in the Technical Area "9".

⚽ **Markings should be used to define the area**
It is preferable that solid Lines are used to clearly define this zone; however, where no line marking equipment is available consider the use of cones to define this area.

- *If no technical area is provided then an incident report is required.*

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- *Each year the FFV will issue Rules of Competition for the number of occupants permitted in the technical area*

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- *Break the ice by introducing yourself to the coaches prior to the game. Carrying out the equipment check in a suitable location will give you a clear idea of who may be in the Technical Area. State your expectations and hold the coach or other occupants responsible.*
- *The number of substitutes is stipulated by the rules of competition. Remember substitutes may leave the technical area to warm up. They must, however, warm up behind Assistant Referee 1.*

The occupants of the technical area:

⚽ **Are identified before the start of the match in accordance with the competition rules**

- *Each year the FFV will issue Rules of Competition for the number of occupants permitted in the technical area. Familiarise yourself with who can sit in the technical area. Make sure you remove all others. It is the others' who will give you a hard time.*

⚽ **Must remain within its confines except in special circumstances, e.g. a physiotherapist/doctor entering the field of play, with the referee's permission, to assess an injured player**

⚽ **Only one person at a time is authorised to convey tactical instructions from the technical area. We allow this person to stand and in general terms, it will be the coach.**

- *On-going coaching is NOT permitted, that is when an occupant in the Technical area provides continuous commentary of what he / she wants from their players. Tactical instructions are those that provide the team with clear instructions and purpose for game play. A coach's role on game day is to observe and analyse the game and make adjustments or improvements to the quality of football of his or her side. To this end, a coach may offer advice to his/her players to either exploit a weakness in the opposition or to enhance a strength of his/her team.*
- *Once this person delivers his/her instructions they may stand anywhere within the technical zone including on the line itself. Other members must not stand with the person delivering the instructions. All other occupants such as club officials and substitutes must be seated. Refer to picture above for an illustration of this directive.*

⚽ **The coach and other occupants of the technical area must behave in a responsible manner. Here we use the 'Ask'- 'Tell'- 'Remove' strategy.**

Only 1 person is able to stand in the Technical Area. All the other occupants must be seating.



Number of occupants depends on the FFV Rules of Competition. Always check!!

The 'Ask'-'Tell'-'Remove' strategy

Always leave an impression when you have spoken to occupants of the technical area that if you come over again that there is going to be serious consequences.

Regardless if you are the referee, assistant referee or the fourth official from time to time you are required to speak to the people that are located in the technical area.

Three main points when dealing with people in the technical area is that:

1. You as the fourth official must be FIRM, SERIOUS and POLITE.
2. The best way to do this is to use the Ask-Tell-Remove policy. See below.
3. Also when dealing with people in the technical area, when speaking to people in a firm, serious and polite manner you want to leave an impression in their minds that this person is serious and if they come over again that there is going to be serious consequences.

Process to use the Ask-Tell-Remove strategy

Step	Action
1. Pre-Tell	The fourth official (or the referee) is able to use their presence and use non-verbal action such as positive body language - for example the use of hands, eyes (stare), moving forward (presence).
2. Ask	The fourth official (or the referee) uses the terminology of "ASK". The fourth official (or the referee) moves into the technical area and 'Ask' the perpetrator (coach or otherwise) to behave.
3. Tell	The referee should be the person who delivers the 'tell'. The fourth official or AR1 calls the referee over for this.
4. Remove	Referee is informed by the fourth official or AR1 to remove the perpetrator (coach or otherwise). At this point the referee SHOULD remove the occupant and should not shirk their responsibility. This is about supporting the fourth official or AR1.

Ask-Tell-Remove strategy is only applied to typical technical area behaviour. The Ask-Tell-remove policy is similar to the 'steps theory' of player management whereby it is not a three-strikes policy just because it is the technical area.

A fourth official should try and avoid continually going over to each team's technical area when there is something minor going on. Your actual physical presence standing near the technical area on a rotation basis should be adequate enough to diffuse any minor situation.

If the fourth official continually goes over to the technical area for every minor incident and enters into a debate, argument, discussion over every minor incident then the fourth official loses their authority status. If occupants of the technical area see the fourth official come over again and again the technical area just think that they are solely going to tell them off and not do anything about it at all and that they are just being a pain and walking over here and telling them to settle down and remain quiet.

Remember, too many 'Asks' are ineffective!

As a fourth official when you approach the technical area in a firm, serious and polite manner, you want to deliver your simple message quickly. Do not loiter or enter into a debate, argument or discussion.

When you walk away from the technical area you want to leave an impression in their minds that this person is serious and that he is not afraid to follow through with his comments and that you want the technical area thinking in their minds that if the fourth official comes over here again at any stage during the rest of the game that there is going to be serious consequences.

The following case studies should give clear guidelines as to what constitutes an 'Ask', 'Tell' or 'Remove'.

Scenario	Ask	Tell	Remove
1. The coach yells out "Come on ref there are two teams out there. You are not giving us anything."	1 st offence	2 nd offence	3 rd offence
2. A coach or assistant coach consistently leaves the technical area and does not get back when asked.	1 st offence	2 nd offence	3 rd offence
3. The assistant coach yells out "Come on ref that's a free kick. You are not giving us anything." Dissent only!		1 st offence	2 nd offence
4. The coach yells out "That's not a free kick. You're a joke referee."		1 st offence	2 nd offence
5. The assistant coach visibly shows dissent at the referee's decision and yells out "Come on give us a go".		1 st offence	2 nd offence
6. While the ball is in play the coach uses 'gestures' or 'negative body language' to demonstrate defiance or dissent at your decision - e.g. aggressively throwing down water bottles		1 st offence	2 nd offence
7. Other occupants such as the training, goalkeeper coach, or physio visibly show dissent at the referee's decision and yells out "Come on, give us a go."		1 st offence	2 nd offence
8. The coach yells out "Fucking hell ref" Moves out of technical area and waves arms			1 st offence
9. The coach yells out "You're a fucking idiot ref."			1 st offence
10. While the ball is in play, an assistant coach throws an object (e.g. footwear, drink bottle, etc.) at an opposing player			1 st offence