



Department of Employment
 Caxton House Tothill Street London SW1H 9NF
 Telephone Direct Line 01-213 5949
 Switchboard 01-213 3000

Rt Hon Douglas Hurd MP
 Home Secretary
 50 Queen Anne's Gate
 LONDON
 SW1H 9AT

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De D.

FILE WITH MEA

You wrote on 19 December about the handling of the Popplewell Inquiry report on safety and control at sports grounds. I am in agreement with the broad approach proposed.

The main interest of this department is in the role of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 in relation to sports grounds and other premises covered by the Inquiry. As both the Interim and Final Reports recognise, the overlapping interests concerned are complex and I fully agree that we should aim to achieve as much clarification as we can in considering how to amend the legislation concerned.

The Health and Safety Executive are already discussing the general area of fire safety with your department, as recommended in the Interim Report. Because of the coverage of the 1974 Act HSE will clearly need to be closely involved with any proposals to amend the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 to cover indoor sporting venues. The wide scope of this Act already overlaps with powers and duties contained in a number of other Acts and further extension will need to be carefully considered to ensure a decrease rather than an increase in complexity. Modification and clarification of the Safety of Sports Ground Act 1975 should help resolve areas of uncertainty between that Act and the 1974 Act.

HSE will also have an interest in other aspects, including revision of the Green Guide and work on model Safety Certificates. The Health and Safety Commission is already proposing to allocate enforcement of the 1974 Act at sports grounds to Local Authorities.

On a separate point, I welcome your proposal to amend the recent legislation to permit the sale and possession of alcohol in executive boxes at football matches. This will end an obvious absurdity which damages respect for our 1985 Act.

I am copying this letter to recipients of yours.

J. Clarke

KENNETH CLARKE

HOME AFFAIRS

FOOTBALL

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PTS

