

Introduction to the Risk Assessment for England Shotokan Karate Union (ESKU)

1. Purpose and Scope

The primary purpose of this document is to outline the formal risk assessment conducted for the operations, training activities, and events managed by the **England Shotokan Karate Union (ESKU)**.

The scope of this assessment covers all environments where ESKU activities take place.

This includes:

- Regular training sessions at various hired or owned facilities (Dojos)
- Competitions, gradings, and seminars organized or attended by the Union
- Administrative operations related to governance and membership management

This assessment aims to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of all individuals involved in ESKU activities, including practitioners of all grades and ages, instructors, referees, officials, volunteers, and spectators.

2. Legal and Ethical Commitment

The ESKU is committed to complying with all relevant UK Health and Safety legislation, including the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

Ethically, the Union recognizes its duty of care to provide a safe environment that minimizes preventable harm, allowing members to train in the traditional art of Shotokan Karate with confidence.

3. Methodology

The risk assessment process has been carried out using the standard five-step methodology recommended by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE):

1. **Hazard Identification:** Identifying aspects of ESKU activities that could potentially cause harm (e.g., physical impact during kumite, slippery dojo floors, equipment failure, or safeguarding issues).
2. **Identifying Who Is at Risk:** Determining which individuals might be harmed and how (e.g., a beginner student vs. a senior instructor, or a child vs. an adult).
3. **Evaluating Risks and Existing Controls:** Assessing the likelihood and potential severity of identified risks, considering control measures already in place (e.g., qualified instructors, established rules of engagement, matted areas).
4. **Recording Significant Findings:** Documenting the significant risks and necessary actions where current controls are insufficient.
5. **Review and Revision:** Establishing a protocol for regular review (annually or when significant changes occur, such as a new venue or new training protocols).

4. Statement of Intent

By systematically identifying and managing these risks, the England Shotokan Karate Union endeavors to foster a culture of safety-consciousness without compromising the quality, intensity, or spirit of traditional martial arts training.

This document is due to be reviewed annually.

Date of last review: 15th February 2025

Date of next review: February 2026

Signature of reviewer: G.Bussey

Date: 15/02/2025

Activity Risks

Activity	Key Safety Risks	Mandatory Safety Rules	Preferred but Optional Protection
Normal class training, warm-ups, cool-downs etc.	<p>Pulled muscles</p> <p>Fainting</p> <p>Asthma</p> <p>Existing & Unknown medical conditions</p>	<p>Pre-membership health checks</p> <p>Instructor awareness of any existing medical conditions, symptoms and treatments</p> <p>Clear floor space</p> <p>Jewelry/piercings removed or taped.</p> <p>Trained first aider always present.</p> <p>First aid kit always on hand</p> <p>Instructor lesson plan and adequate class supervision</p>	Jigsaw mats
Sparring	<p>Knock down.</p> <p>Strong blow to head/body</p> <p>Unconsciousness</p> <p>Broken bone</p> <p>Bleeding</p> <p>Fall</p> <p>Injury</p> <p>Winded</p> <p>Clash of limbs</p>	<p>Full sparring</p> <p>PPE</p> <p>Clear floor space</p> <p>Trained first aider always present.</p> <p>First aid kit always on hand</p> <p>Instructor supervision</p>	<p>Jigsaw mats</p> <p>Participants grouped according to gender, size, and ability.</p> <p>Level based on competence of least able member</p>
Patterns, line work, technical training	<p>Collision</p> <p>Accidental contact</p> <p>Pulled muscle</p>	<p>Clear floor space</p> <p>Members well-spaced</p> <p>Trained first aider present</p> <p>First aid kit always on hand</p>	Jigsaw mats
Pad work, other partner drills.	<p>Collision</p> <p>Strong blow to head/body</p> <p>Accidental contact</p> <p>Pulled muscles.</p> <p>Over-exertion</p> <p>Fall injury</p>	<p>Clear floor space</p> <p>Trained first aider present</p> <p>First aid kit always on hand</p>	<p>Gloves' worn</p> <p>Participants grouped accordingly</p>

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Activity	Key Safety Risks	Mandatory Safety Rules	Preferred but Optional Protection
Colour belt gradings	All the above		
Black belt gradings	All the above		
Head injury	<p>Hit to head sufficient to stagger participant.</p> <p>Hit to head causing unconsciousness</p>	<p>Issue head injury warning notice.</p> <p>Strongly advised visit to A&E if participant loses consciousness (Adult non-visit at own discretion).</p> <p>No sparring for one week, or one month if loss of consciousness</p> <p>Check parents receive head injury warning notices for those under eighteen with strong advisory for A&E visit.</p>	
Pregnancy	<p>Risk to self</p> <p>Risk to unborn child</p>	<p>Participants who are pregnant cannot participate in sparring or breaking.</p> <p>Participating in warm-ups, line work, patterns etc. is encouraged for general health</p> <p>Participants should not work to exhaustion</p>	<p>Participation in pad work will depend on varied factors. Avoid holding kick shields or gloves over stomach area</p> <p>Lower kicks to reduce risk of falling.</p> <p>Work with partners who can control their technique</p>

Activity Specific: Normal Class Training

Risk	Mitigation and Control
Pulled muscles, strains, sprains	<p>Classes begin gently and progress in intensity</p> <p>Stretching within range of motion.</p> <p>Instructor aware of participants capabilities</p> <p>Lesson plans made in advance to include smooth coordinated approach</p>
Fainting	<p>Instructor to be observant.</p> <p>Participants reminded to rest if they feel dizzy.</p> <p>If fainting occurs, keep airways clear, issue head injury warning notice if required</p>
Over exertion	<p>Be aware of individual fitness levels.</p> <p>Participants to self-regulate and not push beyond their limits Remind participants to slow down if necessary</p>
Clothing/jewelry/piercings	<p>Remind students that jewelry should be removed</p> <p>Piercings/rings that cannot be removed should be taped over Participants should be barefoot.</p> <p>Where shoes are required (verruca etc.), participants may not be able to join in all activities - sparring etc.</p> <p>Trousers should not drag on the floor (risk of slipping)</p>
Dehydration	<p>Participants aware that they should bring water bottles Give adequate breaks</p>
Medical conditions/ fit to participate	<p>Enquire at start of class about injuries etc.</p> <p>Participants to declare medical conditions etc. upon joining Participants to bring inhalers, epi-pens etc. to class</p>
Impact injuries/collisions	<p>Avoid overcrowding.</p> <p>Participants remind of risk prior to exercises such as tag games</p>

Activity Specific: Sparring, sparring drills, kicking pads.

Sparring is a normal class activity but due to its nature can never be without risk. Participants should exercise control and instructors should, where possible, group participants according to gender, size, ability etc.

Risk	Mitigation and Control
Kick/punch to head	<p>Full sparring PPE to be worn during sparring, including head guard and gum shield Participants encouraged to hit forehead rather than face.</p> <p>Hits to back of the head are not allowed Participants expected to exercise control First aider and first aid kit required</p>
Knock out/loss of consciousness	<p>Full sparring PPE to be worn during sparring, including head guard and gum shield Participants encouraged to hit forehead rather than face.</p> <p>Hits to back of the head are not allowed Participants expected to exercise control First aider and first aid kit required</p>
Bleeding	First aider and first aid kit present
Kick/punch to body.	Participants expected to exercise control
Winded	First aider and first aid kit required
Broken bones/clash of limbs	<p>Full sparring PPE to be worn during sparring, including head guard and gum shield Participants expected to exercise control.</p> <p>First aider and first aid kit required</p>
Pulled muscles	Warm-up required before sparring
Fall/slip/twisted ankles	<p>Trousers not to drag on floor Use of jigsaw mats if available Clear floor space.</p> <p>Avoid over crowding</p>
Incorrect holding of kick pads	<p>Demonstration of correct holding technique.</p> <p>Participants grouped according to size.</p> <p>Participants to exercise control when working with a smaller partner</p>
Damage to hands/feet during pad work	<p>Demonstration of correct kicking / punching technique PPE, i.e., gloves / hand wraps / footpads is optional</p>

Venue: Indoor Training

Risk / Event	Control Measures
Injuries caused by wet, dirty, or dusty floor	<p>Visual inspection of floor before activity</p> <p>Activity should stop if floor becomes wet.</p> <p>Members asked to remove shoes when entering the sports hall on wet days No food or drink in the main training area.</p> <p>Drinks to be kept at the edge of the room Jigsaw mats used when possible</p>
Injuries caused by obstacles	<p>Shoes and kit bags to be kept at the edge of the room.</p> <p>Obstacles such as school benches should be moved to the edge of the room Obstacles should be pointed out to participants before and during class Obstacles coned off where necessary</p>
Lighting	<p>Lighting should be adequate for participants and instructors</p>
Fire	<p>Instructor to be aware of venue fire procedures Instructor aware of nearest fire extinguisher.</p> <p>Participants reminded periodically of fire escape plans and muster points Fire exits to remain clear</p>
Injuries caused by sports hall doors	<p>Doors wedged open if finger shields are not fitted</p>
Electric shock due to faulty electrical sockets, light switches, speakers etc.	<p>When spotted, report concerns to venue</p>
Injuries caused by falling objects, become trapped under objects etc., in storage cupboards/equipment rooms	<p>Children not to enter equipment rooms.</p> <p>Instructor to point out potential hazards to adults who help set out equipment.</p>
Reaching family after injury	<p>Instructor to carry mobile phone.</p> <p>Instructor to have records of participants' emergency contacts Accidents logged in club accident book.</p> <p>Children who have received minor first aid given an "I received first aid" sticker Emergency contacts informed in person or over phone in the event of more serious issues</p>

Venue: Outdoor Training

In the event of using public land, other concerns should be assessed, including but not limited to; emergency vehicle access, risk of colliding with members of the public and risks associated with dogs.

Risk / Event	Control Measures
Injuries caused by slips/trips	Visual inspection of field/yard/playing surface before activity. Obstacles pointed out before activity Activities involving changing direction at speed not to take place on muddy ground. Classes cancelled in the event of heavy rain.
Sun burn/sun sickness	Participants encouraged to apply sunscreen before class and to bring sunscreen with them. Instructor to carry sunscreen in the event participants forget. Participants encouraged to dress for the weather and bring caps to protect their eyes Participants encouraged to take on plenty of water and to rest or reduce the intensity of their exercise whenever needed
Hypothermia	Participants reminded to dress for the weather Class will not take place outdoors in the event of heavy rain or extreme cold