

Research into the health & safety implications of using of rubber crumb infill in 3rd Generation sports surfaces (Issued February 2016)

To Whom It May Concern

3rd generation artificial turf is recognised as a durable, safe, year-round playing surface, able to withstand regular use and all kinds of weather. It enables significant increases in sports participation, ensuring far more individuals and communities benefit from all the associated social and health benefits of physical activity.

From time to time concerns are raised in the media as to the safety or environmental risks associated with these pitches and their constituent parts, commonly SBR crumb rubber. Extensive research by the leading National Governing Bodies of English Sport (NGB`s) suggests that these claims have no foundation in fact and lack any scientific evidence to substantiate them.

The NGB`s believe that reliable scientific data should be the basis of any discussion regarding the safety of 3G pitches and the crumb rubber infill. The numerous scientific studies conducted by government agencies around the world, and undertaken by independent experts have all validated the human health and environmental safety of 3G pitches and crumb rubber. The NGB`s hold a bibliography of this research with in-depth findings and data which can be provided on request.

Additionally, over the past 12 months Labosport – an independent laboratory that specialises in the testing of sports surfaces – has assessed crumb rubber in the UK, EU and USA to the same test method that is required for the testing of children`s toys (EN 71-3 – Safety of toys Part 3: Migration of certain elements (Material of Category III)). It has not once found any toxicology issues doing these tests.

The NGB`s take the health, safety, and welfare of 3G pitch users very seriously and maintain a register of approved pitches. To ensure all reasonable actions are taken to validate the safety of their users, and suitability of the facilities that they fund, the authorities monitor scientific data on a regular basis. Should any new credible scientific data be identified in the future the NGB`s will review their guidance at such time. Equally, if an independent agency or testing organisation decides to conduct new objective and science-based research on the safety of 3G pitches and crumb rubber, the NGB`s will assist in any way they can. In addition, Sport England has also expressed its confidence in the NGB`s and the measures that they have taken to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of users of artificial turf pitches.

At present the preponderance of evidence very clearly shows no negative health effects associated with crumb rubber infill used in synthetic turf and the NGB`s believe that they have taken all reasonable measures to ensure that the pitches they use and fund in England are safe and present no known hazard to health.

This research data has been adopted as current best advice by:-

The Football Association
The Football Foundation
Rugby Football Union
England Hockey