



THREE STRIKE POLICY

V1.0 JANUARY 2026

BACKGROUND

Football Victoria (FV) is the governing body for football (soccer) in Victoria with a clear purpose to inspire and enable Victorians from all walks of life to live and love football, for life.

As part of this commitment, FV is motivated to eradicate poor behaviour both on and off the field, regardless of who this behaviour may be directed towards.

Under Football Victoria's Grievance & Discipline Regulations, "All Clubs are responsible and liable for the conduct of their Club Associate(s) at or in the vicinity of any Match."

Football Victoria Spectator Code of Behaviour is implemented and enforced in relation to all attendees. Individuals clearly identifiable as 'Away' team Club Associates are the responsibility of the 'Away' Club.

FV's hardworking Match Officials play a vital role in ensuring Matches take place in an enjoyable, safe and fair manner. They enhance the Matchday experience for all participants. Unfortunately, FV is seeing increasing levels of egregious and disheartening incidents.

Our Match Official workforce is growing, steadily, thanks in no small part to the hard work of our Referee Department and their teams of Coaches, Mentors and Welfare Officers. To ensure that the qualified Match Officials we have continue to grow, develop and improve their skills – we need to ensure they stay in the game.

Each year many choose not to continue because of abuse and in 2022, more than 50% of first-year referees did not return to the game.

To combat this trend of Match Officials walking away from the beautiful game and to further boost recent record participation figures, FV is introducing a Three Strike Policy.

The primary purpose of this policy is to reduce the levels of negative behaviour demonstrated towards Match Officials and build a culture of accountability within Clubs for the behaviour of their Associates. In doing so, it is hoped that the footballing environment across all participant groups, competitions and regions will improve.

2025 STATISTICS

Based on figures from the 2025 season, the following offences were committed across each of the sanctions which would attract a strike under this policy:

OFFENCE	RED CARD	MISCONDUCT PENALTY	TOTAL
R8_4/MP7D - (Inappropriate physical contact)	5	4	9
R8_5/MP7E - (Threatening or intimidating language and/or the threat of physical violence)	2	8	10
R8_6/MP7F - (Spitting at or on a Match Official)	0	2	2
R8_7/MP7G - (Violence towards a Match Official and/or their family or property)	0	2	2
R8_8 MP7H - (Violence towards a Match Official wearing a Green Arm Band or a Junior Match Official and/or their family or property)	0	0	0

Through introducing this policy, FV is providing a clear and robust framework to deal with the unwelcome behaviour observed at a small minority of our Clubs.

The Three Strike Policy outlines strong measures, deployed to ensure that there is no ambiguity around the consequences for bad behaviours and that such behaviour will be dealt with accordingly. Such measures will be issued in addition to a sanction to an individual(s) identified as being responsible for the behaviour.

PROCESS

The Three Strike Policy applies to Clubs for Offences, particularly where instances of abuse or misbehaviour have been directed at Match Officials by their spectators, Club officials, Team officials, Players and parents.

Strikes do not replace sanctions or penalties that may be issued to individuals or Clubs due to breaches of the FV Grievance & Disciplinary Regulations, or any other conduct that may have occurred in circumstances associated with the determination of a strike. The enforcement outcome of a strike will always be 'in addition to' any individual or Club based disciplinary determination.

All strikes will be issued, implemented and enforced by Football Victoria's CEO or FV Designate as defined and as detailed in the 2026 FV Grievance & Discipline Regulations.

The specific offences which will trigger an automatic Strike 1 are Red Card Offences R8_4 through to R8_8 (and equivalent Misconduct Offences, MP7D to MP7H)

CODE	OFFENCE	GRADING GUIDELINES
R8 (B)	Offences against Match Officials	4. Inappropriate contact with and/or conduct, or use of offensive language as described in R6_5
		5. Threatening or intimidating language and/or conduct towards a Match Official or conduct reasonably perceived as a threat of physical violence towards a Match Official or their family or property
		6. Spitting at or on a Match Official
		7. Violence towards a Match Official and/or their family or property
		8. Violence towards a Referee wearing a Green Arm Band or Junior Match Official and/or their family or property

The application of a strike for other Offences or breaches of the Laws will be assessed on a case by case basis.

A strike will remain active on the Club's record for 12 months from the date of notice and will be published on FV's website.

Strikes are cumulative within a 12-month period; for example, if an additional strike is issued before an earlier strike has expired within the 12-month period, the Club will be on their second strike until their first strike expires. As an example, if a Club receives a first strike on 20 January 2025 and receives a second strike on 7 September 2025, the club will be on two strikes until 20 January 2026, when their first strike will expire and they will revert back to one strike.

Upon issuing of an Offence or a breach of the Laws, FV's Disciplinary department will:

Strike 1

- Issue a strike notice to the Club citing details of the Offence.
- All Club Teams will be issued a suspended 3-point deduction.

Strike 2

- Issue a second strike notice to the Club citing details of the Offence or behaviour, if within 12 months of the date of a first strike notice.
- The relevant Team will have their 3-point deduction triggered with immediate effect.
- The Club will be issued with a request for response which must be received within 10 days and which must demonstrate measures, to FV's satisfaction, that the Club will implement to address the Offence/behaviour including future mitigation.
- Upon receipt, FV will determine which, if any, other Teams will have their 3-point deduction triggered.
- Additional requirements may be imposed by FV in conjunction with the Football Operations Department, such as the playing of fixtures with no spectators, movement of Kick-Off times of Home Matches, reversal of fixtures to the opposition team venue or matches to be played at neutral venues.
- The Club will receive a mandatory \$2,000 fine for any second strike.

Strike 3

- Issue a third strike notice to the Club citing details of the Offence or behaviour, if, within 12 months of the date of a second strike notice.
- The relevant Team will have their 3-point deduction triggered with immediate effect (regardless of whether they were issued a deduction of points in the Second Strike in which case a further 3 points shall be deducted from that Team).
- All Teams not yet deducted 3-point deductions under the First and/or Second Strikes will have these penalties enacted.
- A request for response will be issued to the Club which will provide a summary of the incidents across all three strikes.
- Club Executive Committee members must attend a meeting with FV's Executive to discuss the issues and pattern of behaviour at the Club.
- FV will make a determination regarding sanctions.
- In circumstances where affiliation is not revoked under a third strike, one or more Teams involved in the offending conduct, across any number of competitions the Club may be involved in, could be removed from those competitions for the remainder of the Season or be mandated to participate without the possibility of earning points.
- The Club will receive a mandatory \$5,000 fine.

Notes

If a Club then accumulates a further strike within 12 months:

- A request for response will be issued to the Club which will provide a summary of the incidents across all strikes.
- Club Executive Committee Members must attend a meeting with FV's Executive to discuss the issues at hand and the pattern of behaviour at the Club
- FV will make a determination regarding sanctions.
- A mandatory \$10,000 fine will be levied in addition to any other sanctions.

Implementation

No right of appeal exists against a strike.

In the event that a Tribunal later determines that the Offence is either proven as a different Offence or not proven, then FV's CEO or the FV Designate may, in their absolute discretion, rescind a strike.