

Heene-Woodside Short Mat Bowls Club

Risk Assessment October 2025

This risk assessment aims to identify and mitigate potential hazards associated with short-mat indoor bowls activities. The assessment considers various risks related to player safety, equipment handling, including adherence to national public health guidelines.

In line with industry best practices, this document outlines the current control measures in place as well as recommendations for additional actions to enhance safety. The assessment evaluates risks such as slips, trips, falls, surface maintenance, manual handling, and general good hygiene practices, ensuring that all bowlers and spectators are protected.

The goal of this risk assessment is to foster a safe and enjoyable environment for all participants, whether experienced bowlers or newcomers, while adhering to the highest standards of health and safety.

Hazard: Slips, Trips & Falls

Who Might be Harmed:

- Bowlers
- Spectators
- General members of the public

Current Controls:

- Observe the Generic INDOOR risk assessment.
- Care should be taken when stepping on and off the mat.
- Woods out of play should be placed carefully at the edge of the mat, near the fender.
- Avoid leaving bowls gear in walkways. Stow bags under spectator chairs.
- Care should be taken not to inadvertently step on or kick woods.

Likelihood: Likely

Consequence: Moderate

Risk Score: 12 (High)

Additional Control Measures Required:

- Maintain a **clear and observable walk path** on each side of the mat.
- Move equipment not required for the game well to the side.
- Ensure the **mat edge** is kept in good condition—report any rucks or tears immediately.
- Only woods required for play should be on the mat; out-of-play woods should be stowed on the collection tray.
- **Fender** position to be checked and replaced before each end.
- Ensure **spectators** are informed about safe walking paths and advised to stay clear of the playing area.

Residual Risk Score:

Likelihood: Unlikely

Consequence: Minor

Risk Score: 4 (Low)

Hazard: Playing Surface Maintenance & Safety

Who Might be Harmed:

- All users

Current Controls:

- Use a foot/delivery mat at all times.
- The playing surface should be kept clean and dust-free.
- The mat should be rolled and stowed correctly to prevent curling.
- Woods should be delivered as close to the ground as possible.
- No food or drinks on the playing surface.
- Spray chalk used to mark “touchers” without damaging the surface.

Likelihood: Likely

Consequence: Moderate

Risk Score: 12 (High)

Additional Control Measures Required:

- Ensure the **playing surface** is vacuumed regularly to remove dust and debris.
- **Good delivery actions** should be coached and reinforced to reduce the risk of strain or injury.
- **Bowling mats** should be stored where they cannot be ‘sat upon’ or accidentally damaged by other hall users
- **Spectators** should use foot mats to cross the playing surface.

Residual Risk Score:

Likelihood: Unlikely

Consequence: Minor

Risk Score: 4 (Low)

Hazard: Cuts & Grazes

Who Might be Harmed?

- No identifiable risks found.

Hazard: Lifting & Manual Handling

Who Might be Harmed:

- Bowlers

Current Controls:

- Observe **generic manual handling guidance**—bend your knees, not your back.
- Typical weight of a wood is 1.4 kg (similar to a large bag of flour).
- The bowls mat should be considered a **two-person lift** when rolled.
- **Fender length** should be considered when lifting.

Likelihood: Possible

Consequence: Moderate

Risk Score: 9 (Medium)

Additional Control Measures Required:

- Only pick up **one wood at a time** from the floor.
- Consider using a **bowls lifter** for easier lifting.
- **Two or more woods** should be carried using a bowls carrier.
- When lifting the mat, use a **scaffold pole** for added support.
- Ensure **two-person lifting** is employed for the mat and fender.

Residual Risk Score:

Likelihood: Unlikely

Consequence: Minor

Risk Score: 4 (Low)

Hazard: Strains & Sprains

Who Might be Harmed:

- Bowlers

Current Controls:

- Use a bowling aid if required.
- Care should be taken when kneeling to measure or mark woods.
- Disabled bowlers must be allowed to adopt a **comfortable stance** when delivering.

Likelihood: Likely

Consequence: Moderate

Risk Score: 12 (High)

Additional Control Measures Required:

- Reinforce **good delivery actions** during coaching sessions.
- Encourage a **warm-up/down routine** before and after games to reduce strain.
- Allow flexibility in **bowling stance** for bowlers with disabilities.

Residual Risk Score:

Likelihood: Unlikely

Consequence: Minor

Risk Score: 4 (Low)

Hazard: Bruising or Breaks (from Heavy Shots)

Who Might be Harmed:

- Bowlers
- Spectators

Current Controls:

- Bowlers should be cautious when playing a heavy-weight shot intended to move one or more woods or the jack.
- Avoid **kicking the woods** hard when clearing the end.
- **Warn players** at the head end and on adjacent mats of any heavy shots being played.

Likelihood: Possible

Consequence: High

Risk Score: 8 (Medium)

Additional Control Measures Required:

- **Warn bowlers** of the risks of heavy shots and encourage safe play.
- **Keep woods in stow areas** near the fender to avoid stray shots.
- Ensure **clear communication** before delivering a heavy shot to avoid accidents.

Residual Risk Score:

Likelihood: Unlikely

Consequence: Minor

Risk Score: 3 (Low)

Other General Measures:

- **Training & Awareness:** Ensure all members are aware of the risk assessment and control measures in place. Provide **regular training** to bowlers and club staff.
- **Emergency Protocols:** Implement and clearly communicate emergency procedures for injury, illness, or fire.
 - Ensure **first aid kits** are readily available and easily accessible.
 - Ensure **fire exits** and evacuation routes are clearly marked and regularly tested.
- **Accessibility:** Consider adjustments for bowlers with disabilities, such as accessible entry points and seating areas.
- **Psychological Safety & Well-being:** Foster an inclusive environment where members feel comfortable reporting hazards and requesting support.