

FA guidelines for Assistant Referees – fouls in and around the penalty area

Some assistant referees use a flag across the chest to signal a penalty kick (see below). This signal is not in the Laws of the Game and is not approved by FIFA, UEFA and is used by very few (if any) other FAs. Use of the signal draws unnecessary attention to the assistant referee which can create dissent and management problems. It also potentially creates conflict if used at the same time as the referee is indicating/deciding not to award a penalty kick.



The FA Referees' Committee (in consultation with PGMOL) has thus decided that **this signal should no longer be used** and the following procedure should be adopted.

Penalty Kick

When a foul is committed by a defending player near to or inside the penalty area, the assistant referee should first make eye contact with the referee to establish their position and actions. In situations where:

- ***it is clear that the referee has not seen the foul, and***
- ***the assistant referee is better placed to make the judgement, and***
- ***a flag signal is necessary to indicate publicly that a foul has taken place,***

the actions of the assistant referee should be as follows:

If the foul is INSIDE the penalty area:

- *the assistant referee should raise the flag in the same hand that will be used for the remainder of the signal and agitate/wave the flag to indicate a foul has been committed*
- **the flag should NOT be placed across the chest.**
- *where available it is recommended that the electronic beep is used and/or the 'communication system' is used to advise "penalty, penalty, penalty"*
- *following the signal for the foul the assistant referee should make a ***clear physical movement*** along the touchline towards the corner flag post keeping alert in case the referee does not see or over-rules the flag signal*
- *If the referee awards the penalty the assistant referee should stand just in front of the corner flag post until the situation is calm and only then move to the standard position.*

If the foul is OUTSIDE the penalty area:

- *the assistant referee should raise the flag in the same hand that will also be used for the remainder of the signal and agitate/wave the flag to indicate a foul has been committed*
- *where available it is recommended that the electronic beep is used and/or the 'communication system' is used to advise "attacking free kick, outside, outside, outside"*
- *following the signal for the foul the assistant referee should make a ***clear physical movement*** along the touchline towards the halfway line to a position ***level with the front edge of the penalty area*** and stand still*

IN or OUT??

*Where a referee penalises a defender near the boundary of the penalty area and seeks guidance from an assistant referee concerning the exact location of the offence, if in a credible position to assist, the assistant referee's action should be as outlined above **without the flag being raised**.*

SUMMARY

*There is no 'special' assistant referee flag signal for a penalty kick. When the foul is clearly inside the penalty area, if needed, the 'normal' indication for a foul should be followed by a ***clear physical movement to the goal line – the flag should not be placed across the chest.*** When the foul is outside the penalty area, if needed, the assistant referee should make a ***clear physical movement to a position level with the front edge of the penalty area.****