

Events Health and Safety / Risk Assessments

What is your duty of care?

Where members of the public are invited to participate in a staged or planned event, the responsibility, or duty of care, for public safety rests with the organiser and/or the owner of the property or land where such events are staged.

A duty of care is a legal obligation requiring you to adhere to a reasonable standard of care while performing any acts that could foreseeably harm others. As an event organiser, you will always have a duty of care to people working at or visiting your event, and safety must always be the paramount consideration before, during and after your event, whatever the size. Health and Safety legislation applies to all events.

It is your responsibility to ensure that health and safety legislation is adhered at all levels of management, from your senior event team through to event staff, contractors and sub-contractors.

The implications can be very serious, from major fines to imprisonment.

We expect organisers to have a competent, named person who is responsible for safety at every event - for larger events there may be a need for a dedicated safety officer.

You will need to ensure that you have developed processes for managing health and safety, and that all documentation is available to the Events Safety Advisory Group on submission of your Events Application Form.

Health and safety documentation will include the following:

Risk assessments

A risk assessment is a careful examination of what is likely to cause harm, followed by an explanation of the control measures in place to reduce or eliminate such risks. In other words, it is the natural process of weighing up the benefits of taking a particular action against the risks and possible consequences.

Under the 'Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974', and the 'Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999' employers and the self-employed have a legal responsibility to carry out a risk assessment. As an event organiser, removing or minimising risk to participants and the public should be your number one priority.

You will need to identify a competent person to carry out a risk assessment for your event to ensure that all hazards are adequately assessed and all precautions correctly identified and implemented.

When do I need to complete a risk assessment?

You should conduct a risk assessment for all activities or tasks involved in organising the event. This includes activities during setting up and breaking down the event, as well as activities that take place during the event.

A standard risk assessment form can be downloaded from the Health and Safety Executive website, or use the form enclosed in the Events Application.

Help with your risk assessment

What is the task/activity you are assessing?

In order to start your risk assessment, you need to identify the task you are assessing and consider the event as a whole. This should include the following considerations:

Event specifics:

Location

- Where will your event be held?
- Is the site being considered suitable for the event?
- What are the particular hazards of this location? e.g. proximity to water / major roads.
- Have all the entrances and exits on the site been located?
- Are the entrances and exits controlled, stewarded, suitable for prams, pushchairs and wheelchairs, and appropriately signed?

Event activities

- What activities will take place before, during and after your event? e.g. erecting a stage, managing crowds, holding a fireworks display, separating spectators and vehicles, dismantling a stage.
- Do any of these activities present particular hazards? e.g. Moving parts of machinery at a funfair, noise/sound levels at a music festival both for your employees and audience, cash handling if the event has an admission charge, manual handling during the event build or break, rubbish/litter.

Audience demographic

- Who is likely to attend your event, and what hazards might they present, or what particular risks might they be vulnerable to? e.g. young children, families, the elderly, large crowds.
- Are the needs of disabled people working at or visiting your event being met?
- Are any special arrangements required and in place? ie for lost children, lost property, drinking water, toilets, noise control or parking?

Duration of event

- How long will your event last?
- Does this increase or present any particular risks?
- For example, fatigue for participants or spectators, lighting if the event will take place in low light / hours of darkness.

Weather

- What time of year is your event?
- Is there a likelihood of inclement weather or extreme weather conditions? For example, heat, cold, rain.
- Is the event location vulnerable or exposed in the event of extreme weather?

General Health and Safety considerations:

Major incident

- What will happen in the event of a major incident?
- Is there a reliable system of communication between key people in place?
- Is there a reliable system of communication with the audience/crowd in place?
- How will emergency service gain access to the incident, are Blue Route identified, what are the controls measures to ensure they are kept clear, and how will they be opened up and marshalled in an incident?
- Has a control point been identified, call signs determined and announcements prepared?

Overcrowding

- How many people are expected to attend your event and how many can the site safely hold?
- How will you control how many people attend your event?
- Are crowd control barriers necessary?
- Do you have enough stewards / marshals for the size and type of your event? Steward should be issued with Hi Visibility outer clothing?

Working at height

- Will any of the activities or elements of your event necessitate working at height? e.g suspending banners from temporary structures or stages, any activities requiring ladders.

Moving vehicles

- Will your event pose a risk of moving vehicles? E.g. forklift trucks, mix of vehicles and pedestrians, for example with a public car park.

Food safety

- Will you providing / serving food or alcohol on site?
- Will Liquid Petroleum Gas or any other fuel be used as a heat source?
- All caterers at an event must complete a **Food Safety Assessment Form** available in the **Appendix**. This applies to pre-packaged food or food prepared on site.

Structural safety

- Will you have any temporary structures at your event? Eg Marquees, stages, lighting columns.
- Are they capable of withstanding wind forces and bad weather conditions?
- Have they been erected by competent persons?
- Have your subcontractors supplied certificates of compliance? Temporary structures must adhere to the 'National Outdoor Events Association Code of Practice for Outdoor Events' and the Institution of Structural Engineers guidance 'Temporary demountable structures'.

Electrical safety

- Will power be required at your event?
- What risks might this present? E.g. use of generators, earthing, temporary overhead or underground cables.

Fire Procedures

- Are there effective fire control measures in place?
- Who will manage this and how will staff be briefed?
- Events with significant infrastructure or increased risk of fire will require a dedicated Fire Risk Assessment, e.g. larger events, Bonfire nights or Firework displays.

Emergency Procedures

- Are adequate first aid facilities in place?
- Is an emergency plan in place?
- Can emergency vehicles get on and off the site easily? Has advice been sought from the emergency services about the emergency routes?
- Who will make the decisions during an emergency and how will they do this?
- How will an event be stopped in case of an emergency?
- Is there a reporting procedure in place for the reporting of injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences? (visit www.riddor.gov.uk for more information)

Security

- Is their special security measures required for attending VIP's Police can advise you on this issue.
- Does the event attract any concerns regarding political disruption,? You should check the National Counter Terrorism Security Office (www.nacto.gov.uk) to find out whether you need to put in place any additional security measures.

Road Closures

- Closing a public highway can be a complex legal matter. If your event requires part or all of a public highway to be closed, you will need to make an application in writing to the (LCC) Lancashire County Council Highway Department
- Only closures of roads or streets will generally be considered and there may be a cost where a road closure order is granted.

Events on the Highway

- Plan your route carefully whenever possible your event should be held in a park, sports ground or country footpaths away from the road. Do not use roads where there are roadwork's as these can be dangerous.
- Signpost your routes but ensure you must discuss this with the Highway departments to ensure they comply with regulations.
- On the day try to start and finish your event off the road. Mass starts are dangerous. Never allow cars to follow closely behind groups of participants support vehicle should be at a safe distance and not obstruction or inconveniencing other traffic. Make proper arrangements to look after people who drop out. Children tire easily and may become a danger to themselves and others. If you take animals keep them under control.

How do I complete a Risk Assessment?

Once you have considered your event and the tasks you need to assess, you will need to work through the following **five steps** in order to complete your risk assessment.

1 – Identify the hazards

2 – Decide who might be harmed and how

3 – Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions

4 – Implement your findings

5 – Review your risk assessment and update if necessary

The guidance below is based upon advice from the HSE publication *‘Five Steps to Risk Assessment’*, which can be found on the HSE’s web site.

Step 1 – Identify the hazards

Look for hazards that you could reasonably expect to result in significant harm under the conditions at your event. In addition to the examples already provided, this could include:

- Slipping/tripping hazards (e.g. trailing cables)
- Emergencies (e.g. power failure, disorder, access/egress)
- Hazardous substances (e.g. petrol, needles, fireworks)

Step 2 – Decide who might be harmed and how

List the groups of people who may be affected by the hazard. For example:

- Contractors
- Employees
- Members of the public
- Spectators

Step 3 – Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions

Having spotted the hazards, you then have to decide what to do about them. The law requires you to do everything **‘reasonably practicable’** to protect people from harm. Ask yourself:

- Can you get rid of the hazard altogether?
- If not, how can you control the risks so that harm is unlikely?

First, consider what precautions, or existing controls, are already in place to either eliminate or reduce the risk of an accident happening, and what you are already doing. This could include use of existing street lighting, CCTV, implementing ticketing systems to control numbers, making use of venue facilities (indoor or outdoor) for welfare etc.

For the hazards listed, do the precautions already taken:

- Meet the standards set by a legal requirement?
- Comply with a recognised industry standard?
- Represent good practice?
- Reduce risk as far as **reasonably practicable**?
- You need to be sure that what you propose to do will work in practice and won’t introduce and new hazards. An essential part of this is to involve your staff, who will be critical to putting your plans into practice during your event. For your employees, you need to ensure that you have provided:

- Adequate information, instruction or training.
- Adequate systems or procedures to enable staff to implement your plans.

What additional precautions do you need to either eliminate the risks or reduce the risk?

Where the risk is not adequately controlled, you need to indicate what more you will do to **reduce** the risk. This is in effect an ‘action’ list of extra measures you need to put in place.

This could include:

- Arranging your site layout to reduce exposure to the hazard, such as putting barriers between pedestrians and traffic.
- Issuing personal protective equipment such as clothing, footwear, goggles.
- Ensuring stewards are clearly identifiable.

Step 4 – Implement your findings

A risk assessment is only a useful document if you put it into practice. It should not be a form that sits in a folder, unread. It is an evolving working process that should inform all the activities that take place at your event, and should be continually monitored throughout.

Throughout your event, including build and break, you should ask yourself:

- Have all your plans and procedures been put into place?

The nature of a live event can mean that not all your ideas go exactly to plan. There may be unexpected changes or last minute adjustments that require you to amend your risk assessment. This means that you need to stay flexible and adaptable and ensure you are monitoring your procedures as you go. This is called ‘**dynamic**’ risk assessing. It is not a substitute for pre-planning, but an important addition to your management processes, for all events.

You should record any changes to your risk assessment and make sure that all involved in delivering the controls or procedures to reduce or eliminate the risks are kept informed.

Step 5 - Review your risk assessment and update if necessary

After your event, you should review the assessment and all amendments to learn improvements for future events.

Ask yourself:

- Has anything changed to introduce new hazards?
- Have your staff spotted a problem that you didn’t anticipate?
- Are there any improvements you still need to make?
- Have you learnt anything from accidents or near misses?

Reviewing your risk assessment will be an important part of your event debrief procedure.

Further advice and a standard risk assessment form can be downloaded from

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/index.htm>

When things go wrong

Remember - as the organiser of the event, you are responsible for the safety of everyone who is involved. If anyone is hurt or injured because of your negligence you may have to account for your actions in a court of law.

If an incident does occur at any event in the Borough, the Authorities will ask:

- Were adequate plans in place to manage a major incident?
- Were the emergency plans communicated and explained?
- Were there enough emergency service resources on site?
- Was there a detailed casualty treatment, management and evacuation plan?
- Was there a clear chain of command and control?
- Were communications between key personnel and the crowd adequate?

And Finally

This guide is intended to help you fulfil your responsibilities as an event organiser. However, you should augment the information provided by other reading including the Events Safety Guidance on the Events Web page.

The Events Safety Group will not be held responsible for any deaths, loss or damage to property arising as a consequence of your event. It is your responsibility to ensure that you take the necessary steps to protect yourself from liability.

We hope you find this guide to be a useful tool, and wish you a successful event.

