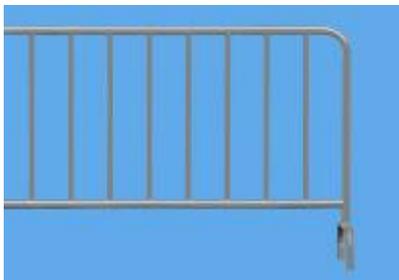


# Risk Management for Public Events



## Introduction

Holding a public event brings immeasurable benefits to a community including a boost to the local economy, increased tourism, community spirit, and promoting an area as a good place to live and work.

Whilst the vast majority of events are completed without any significant problems, occasionally they do happen. In April 2014, there were chaotic scenes in Sheffield when the organisers of the half marathon decided to cancel the event after the race had started. This was due to a shortage of drinking water for the runners and led to negative publicity both locally and nationally. The shortage of supplies should have been identified during the planning stage of the event. It could be said that larger events are better planned and prepared for and therefore less likely to have incidents, however, the size of event may have no bearing on the potential risk impact.

Although adverse incidents during events are rare, there needs to be proper planning in place to deal with any foreseeable incident, major or minor, to ensure employee and public safety.

Almost all public sector organisations will have their own methodology and guidance for planning and managing events. The HSE's The Event Safety Guide, commonly known as the Purple Guide has been withdrawn and superseded by the new revised Purple Guide<sup>1</sup> issued by the Events Industry Forum. Access to this guide requires an annual subscription of £25<sup>2</sup>.

Depending on what type of event you are holding, you may need to reference some of the available documents which are listed in the Reference Section of this guide.

<sup>1</sup> [www.thepurpleguide.co.uk/](http://www.thepurpleguide.co.uk/)

<sup>2</sup> Correct at April 2016

## Legal

There are a number of circumstances in which an organiser might be held legally liable for any injury or property damage suffered by a participant or a member of the public. These include:

- Negligence;
- Under the Occupier's Liability Act 1957<sup>3</sup> (if the organiser is the occupier of premises where the event is taking part); and
- In nuisance (if the organiser interferes with another's use or enjoyment of land or some right in relation to land).

The main law governing health and safety at work in the UK is the **Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974** (HSWA). This places general duties on employers, the self-employed and people in control of premises to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of their employees and anyone else that may be harmed by work activities or the workplace, e.g. the audience.

**The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999** complement and expand on the general HSWA duties mentioned above, requiring employers and the self-employed, among other things, to carry out risk assessments and have effective arrangements in place for managing health and safety and emergency arrangements.

**The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015** will apply to your event if any construction projects are necessary as part of the event design and development. The Health and Safety Executive began enforcing the CDM regulations within the events industry from April 2015. Whatever type of construction work is required, including the erection and dismantling of temporary structures for the film, theatre and events industry, wherever it is carried out, will come under these regulations.

## The Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007

now makes it possible for a corporation to be found guilty of manslaughter and homicide without the need to identify an individual within the organisation to prosecute. The offence of corporate homicide or manslaughter is related to the way in which senior managers organise the activities of the organisation. The Act refers to senior management as the people who:

- Make decisions about how activities are to be managed or organised, and
- Manage or organise the whole or a substantial part of those activities.

Whilst prosecutors will need to establish that the criteria for a gross breach of duty of care has taken place, clearly there is scope for any organisation holding an event to be subject to the Act.

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<sup>3</sup> In Scotland - Occupiers' Liability (Scotland) Act 1960

## Risk Management and Events

Assessing the risk from an event should take place as early as possible, at the stage of concept, and should form part of the initial submission for approval.

Admittedly, not all risks may be apparent at this stage, however, as the project matures, risks will emerge and can be added to your risk register. Continuous risk management analysis should be conducted throughout the Planning, Build-up, During the Event, and Build-down phases.

All local authorities should now have risk management systems implemented and this should be used as the methodology for assessing the risks associated with the event's objectives. This is best done by facilitated risk workshops with the key personnel involved in the event systematically going through what your event objectives are, identifying potential adverse incidents, what may cause them, and what the impacts may be. Then identifying control measures to prevent the incident occurring and mitigating actions to reduce the effect of the incident should it occur.

There are two distinct areas of risk which need to be understood from an organisation's perspective.

Firstly, what incidents and occurrences will affect the success of the event? In other words, what will stop the event going ahead or significantly delay or disrupt it? Issues you may need to consider include failure of the artist or performer to arrive, lack of finance, lack of organisational commitment, severe weather etc. By identifying these you can then develop contingencies and reduce the impact upon you, third parties such as contractors and the attendees.

ISO 31000 'Risk management principles and guidelines' provides a risk management process which may be useful for your workshops. Risk is defined within the ISO as 'the effect of uncertainty on objectives'. Therefore be clear about your objectives, make them SMART, and identify potential adverse incidents which may occur, what may cause these to occur and what the ultimate outcomes may be.

Secondly, you need to identify the health, safety, security, and welfare aspects of the event. Not just during the event but also the build-up and after the event.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires employers to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the health and safety risks. The HSE's guide 'Risk Assessment, A Brief Guide to Controlling the Risks at Work (INDG163)' is one methodology, however, regardless of what format your risk assessment takes or how you do it, it must be suitable and sufficient.

## Employee and Volunteer Safety

You need to ensure risk assessments are completed to protect staff and volunteers before, during, and after the event. But that's just the start. Once they are completed, the significant findings need to be communicated to all those who may be affected; the control measures implemented and maintained (providing supervision to ensure this is done) and the risk assessment needs to be continually reviewed to ensure it remains current. If a significant adverse event occurs, the suitability and sufficiency of the risk assessment may well come under scrutiny.

## Contractors

Robust procedures for appointing contractors are critical. Your organisation should have a contractor procurement process in place and this should be used. Remember, you may have a duty towards contractors who you have appointed and are on your land. Check currency of memberships of approved bodies, licences, insurance arrangements, and references from previous events where they have provided similar services as well as risk assessments and method statements, ensuring these are adhered to throughout their service. This means periodically checking that controls indicated in their risk assessment are implemented and they are working within the scope of the method statement. Contractors in this sense could also include those providing catering services.

## Crowd Safety and Welfare

As the event organiser, or if the event is taking place on your land and you've given permission for it, you will owe a duty of care, even to those who are not in your employment. Dynamics will also include the number attending as well as the profile, children, teenagers, families etc. You may have some control over the behaviour of attendees but in general, they will be behaving differently from the way you would expect of an employee. Remember, they may be under the influence of drink or drugs, in an unfamiliar situation, trying new activities, or not focussed on safety. Their behaviour may also be influenced by the profile of the performer or the activities on offer.

You will need to ensure you have adequate numbers of stewards in place to ensure control of the crowd in normal and emergency situations.

## Structural Safety

Only use approved structures. Where there is 'construction work' the CDM regulations will apply and any contractor procured to erect structures including seating and marquees etc. will need to comply. There is guidance available on the minimum distances between marquees etc. Inspect structures after erection, immediately before the event, and during the event to ensure they are secure and stable.

## First Aid, Contingencies, and Emergencies

**First aid:** as part of your safety arrangements, you must have appropriate response procedures in place should someone be injured during the event, so think about how many first aiders you will require. Consider this as part of your risk assessment and consult the First Aid at Work Regulations 1981 to see if you are subject to any statutory obligations.

**Contingencies:** above all else, the safety of people in the event environment is of paramount importance. You need to have contingency plans in place, including potentially cancelling prior to the start, or stopping the event early due to various factors including severe weather.

**Emergencies:** arrangements appropriate to the size of the event will need to detail what actions will be taken in the event of an emergency. The risk assessment process should identify all foreseeable incidents which may lead to this. Consider how the evacuation alarm will be raised and communicated throughout, evacuation routes widths, location, ground conditions etc.), assembly areas large enough for the evacuated people, access and egress for emergency vehicles (taking care that the risk of conflict with evacuating attendees is reduced to a minimum) Consult the emergency services to ensure their needs are met.

## Insurance Arrangements

The Public Liability cover provided by RMP is a blanket cover catering for the 'usual activities' of the authority. Special events such as bonfire and firework displays are considered as one-off events of which RMP should be notified in advance. It is imperative that if you are planning an event, you must contact your own insurance officer during the planning stage, with the proposed details in order that dialogue can be opened with you RMP Account Director. Failure to do so may result in no insurance cover being provided for the event.

Documentation with regard to planning for the event, including detailed risk assessments will be required. Do not assume that your organisation's Public Liability cover will provide cover for other groups such as a display operator or company contracted to run an event. All but very minor groups and private individuals should have their own Public Liability cover. The adequacy of contractor's insurance cover for both Employers Liability and Public Liability should be checked prior to the event. A minimum of £5m public liability cover would be expected and copies of current insurance certificates obtained. More detailed guidance on risk management of contractors and checking contractor's insurance cover is available on the RMP website.

## Other Key Points

**If in Doubt:** Seek expert advice and consult the appropriate guidance. Some of the guidance is listed in the next section.

**Planning:** Plan well ahead, and prepare and rehearse for safety and welfare as early as possible.

**Risk Management:** Consider the threats to your event and hazards to attendees, employees etc., document them, communicate, implement, supervise, and review throughout the event. Risk assessments must also include the assessment of the risk of fire.

**Safety Management:** Choose a competent person to take charge of safety. Ensure the person chosen has seniority and enough standing to make things happen and make safety their only job.

**Consult with Agencies:** Where appropriate, contact and consult with the Fire, Police and Ambulance Services, and Licensing and Environmental Health Departments etc.

**Traffic Management:** Consider traffic movement before, during, and after the event. Take advice from the Police and Highways Agencies about traffic into and through the site, temporary road closures and parking orders. Have professional parking control. Consider other events on the same day and nearby road works.

**Emergency Management:** Consider all foreseeable incidents from bomb threats, fire, flood, severe weather etc. Draw up emergency plans, including for emergency evacuation, for each type of incident and ensure the procedures are understood clearly by all concerned. Make sure the emergency services can access and navigate around the site.

**Stewarding:** Where appropriate, get advice on the number of stewards needed. Make sure they are well trained, easily identifiable, have good communications available, and are not distracted with other tasks.

## Guidance

- The Event Industry Forum. *The Purple Guide to Health, Safety and Welfare at Music and Other Events*.
- The Department of Culture, Media, and Sport. *Guide to safety at Sports Grounds (The Green Guide)*.
- HM Government. *Fire Safety Risk Assessment; Open Air Events and Venues (England and Wales)*.
- HM Government. *Fire Safety Risk Assessment; Large Places of Assembly (England and Wales)*.
- HM Government. *Fire Safety Risk Assessment; Small and Medium Places of Assembly (England and Wales)*.
- Scottish Government. *Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Places of Entertainment and Assembly (Scotland)*.
- British Standards Institution. *PAS 51:2004 Guide to industry best practice for organizing outdoor events*.
- Health and Safety Executive. *HSG175 Fairgrounds and Amusements Parks; Guidance on Safe Practice*.
- Health and Safety Executive. *HSG 154 Managing Crowd Safety. A guide for organisers at events and venue*.
- Health and Safety Executive. *HSG124 Giving your own fireworks display. How to run and fire it safely*.
- Ministry of Defence. *Leaflet 9. Fire Safety for Marquees, Tents, and Similar Structures in Support of Social/ Public Events*.
- Made up Textiles Association. *MUTA Best Practice Guide. Safe use and Operation of Temporary Demountable Fabric Structures*

## Industry Bodies

The following is a list of some of the industry groups where advice may be sought. It is not exhaustive and organisers should ensure they seek appropriate advice.

- The Event Industry Forum.  
[www.eventsindustryforum.co.uk](http://www.eventsindustryforum.co.uk)
- The Events Services Association  
[www.tesa.org.uk/](http://www.tesa.org.uk/)
- The National Outdoor Events Association  
[www.noea.org.uk/](http://www.noea.org.uk/)
- The Local Authorities Event Organisers Group  
[www.laeog.org/](http://www.laeog.org/)
- The Health and Safety Executive  
[www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)
- Made up Textiles Association  
[www.muta.org.uk/](http://www.muta.org.uk/)

## Get in touch

For more information, please contact your Broker or RMP account director.

Risk Management Partners  
[contact@rmpartners.co.uk](mailto:contact@rmpartners.co.uk)

The Walbrook Building  
25 Walbrook  
London EC4N 8AW

020 7204 1800  
[www.rmpartners.co.uk](http://www.rmpartners.co.uk)

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RM-PE-01-17