

Event Planning Guidance



Introduction

This guidance has been designed to provide information to organisations wishing to arrange an event at a Council owned venue. It can be used for all events regardless of size, however some parts may not be relevant for smaller events. The guide gives general advice that should be used when arranging any type of event. However, it must be remembered that events can be extremely diverse, ranging from a small community fete to a large outdoor carnival and therefore this guidance cannot be considered exhaustive. It is likely that additional guidance will be required for specialist events and larger scale activities.

Should you consider that more information is required there are many national associations and organisations who may be able to offer advice on specific types of event. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has also published further guidance on its website: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/event-safety/index.htm> and the Purple Guide is also a very useful resource for planning and running events.

Pre-planning

Detailed planning is essential to ensure the event is successful, so you should set out a timescale giving yourself as much time as possible to organise. Depending on the size of the event, this may need to begin up to a year or more in advance. To begin with the following need to be considered:

- **Establishing a committee.** One person should be identified as the overall event manager with responsibility for overseeing all aspects of the event's delivery. In addition it may be necessary to identify specific roles required to deliver the event and assign responsibility for each to other members of an organising committee. For example, one person with suitable experience, might be given overall responsibility for health and safety, whilst another co-ordination and supervision of stewards/volunteers.
- **What.** Decide on the type of activities to be held. Will there be any specific hazards such as fireworks or animals. If possible also try to establish the size of the proposed event and whether or not an entrance fee will be charged.
- **Who.** Identify the aims of the event. Are particular groups or types of people to be targeted, such as young children, teenagers, the elderly or disabled? If so, specific facilities may be required to accommodate them or additional stewards to ensure adequate safety standards are maintained.
- **Where.** Make sure the venue you have chosen is suitable for the proposed event and activities. The size of the venue, existing hazards and ease of access are examples of initial factors to consider. It may be a good idea to arrange a site visit to assess these.
- **When.** Consider the time of year, day of the week and time that the event will take place. The availability of the venue will need to be checked with the Council and extra provisions may need to be put in place as a result e.g. you will probably need to arrange lighting for an evening event. Check that the event will not clash with any other major events taking place in the area.

Risk assessment

You will need to establish all the potential hazards and evaluate the risks associated with the event, and take appropriate remedial action to reduce these to an acceptable level. This information should be formally recorded and reviewed as part of a written risk assessment. Appendix 1 offers additional guidance for carrying out a risk assessment for an outdoor event.

Where the event consists of more than one attraction e.g. a summer fete, a risk assessment may be required for each activity. Any contractors, businesses, charities, exhibitors, caterers or other organisations involved in the event should also carry out their own risk assessments, which you should obtain copies of. Bear in mind, that some smaller organisations, particularly those employing less than 5 people may not have a written risk assessment as this is not required by law, however, you should still ask them for a written risk assessment to cover their activities.

- **Event safety plan.** For smaller events a robust risk assessment will be adequate for informing all the health and safety aspects of the event. However larger events will also require an event safety plan, to record and collaborate these arrangements in more detail. An event safety plan may be updated multiple times in the build up to the event, as arrangements are finalised. However a final version should be agreed and circulated to all those involved in organising the event before arriving on site. Appendix 2 provides a basic event safety plan template.
- **Safety Advisory Groups (SAGs)** exist to promote and improve safety at public events. They are often chaired by the local authority and bring together event organisers, emergency services and other parties involved in events. Prior to larger events the Council may hold a SAG meeting to review the event plan and discuss specific health and safety arrangements. A draft copy of the event plan must be submitted to the group prior to the meeting for members to review and sign off. The event organiser and/or representatives from the organising committee should attend in person if possible.

Health and Safety

Event organisers have a legal responsibility, under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees, volunteers or contractors involved in arranging the event and the public and participants attending. You must take all reasonable precautions to ensure the event takes place safely and in compliance with the relevant safety standards. The following aspects of health and safety legislation may need to be considered, however additional legislation may also require attention, depending on the nature of the event. All details should be recorded in risk assessments and/or the event safety plan.

- **Working at height.** Where possible work at height should be avoided, however if not then the Work at Height Regulations (2005) will apply. Any person working at height should be trained in how to do so safely and be issued with appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) e.g. protective headwear. Other equipment such as scaffolding, mobile elevated work platforms (MEWPs), ladders, ropes and harnesses should also be considered to allow safer working. All equipment should be safety compliant and operated by a trained person.
- **Construction Design Management (CDM).** The Construction (Design and Management) regulations 2015 apply to events that involve any element of construction and temporary structures e.g. staging, marquees, exhibition stands, AV or PA sound systems, so check the regulations to understand whether they apply to your event. It is important to note that the regulations only apply to the set-up and de-rig phases of an event and that structures will require inspection and sign-off before the event goes 'live'. The regulations define different roles in event delivery, so you should check your own responsibilities as the event organiser and ensure others are aware of theirs. Useful guidance from the HSE is available at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/cdm-2015/>

- **Electrical Safety.** All portable electrical appliances should be PAT tested and a record kept, whilst hired equipment should come with a certificate of electrical safety. Generators may be required, but should be distanced from public areas and be suitably fenced off to prevent public access. Cabling should be safely channelled to eliminate electrical and tripping hazards. BS 7909 provides best practice for temporary electrical installations. Emergency power requirements should also be considered as detailed by best practice in BS 5266-1.
- **Hazardous substances** may be required for the event, though consider whether they are absolutely necessary and whether a safer alternative could be used. If they are required, the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 will apply and you should consider ways to limit a person's exposure e.g. by issuing appropriate PPE.
- **Fire safety.** Any event is likely to carry some element of fire risk, however minor. You will need to establish what these are and assign appropriate prevention and control measures, as well as evacuation routes and procedures should a fire break out. The Government published guide *Fire safety risk assessment: Open air events and venues* provides advice on fire safety at outdoor events. This is available free of charge from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-risk-assessment-open-air-events-and-venues>. Appendix 3 includes a step-by-step guide to producing a fire risk assessment, whilst additional guidance, including example templates is available at <https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/Event-safety>.

For events with more complex health and safety issues, such as the above, it may be useful to hire an independent inspector, to oversee this aspect of the event. They should be qualified in health and safety practices, so check they have the appropriate level of training. Numerous courses and qualifications are available, both, from the National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH) and other organisations e.g. the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH).

First Aid

You will need to ensure adequate first aid cover is arranged for the duration of the event, including set-up and de-rig. Various levels of qualification are available, therefore the size of the event, nature of the workforce and potential risks are all factors to consider. At smaller events designated first aiders or appointed persons will be sufficient, whereas larger events may require specialist cover from organisations such as the Red Cross or St John Ambulance. You should not rely on the local NHS ambulance provider being able to attend when planning first aid provision, likewise with the police and fire services.

Emergencies

Local police, fire brigade and ambulance providers may formally advise on the event through a SAG meeting. Even if this is not the case, it is still important to notify the appropriate emergency services of the event, in case they need to attend an emergency. A formal plan should be established to deal with emergency situations. The complexity of this will depend upon the size and nature of the event itself. Things to consider include evacuation of the venue, liaison with emergency services and access routes for emergency vehicles.

Contingency/Curtailment

In certain circumstances it may be necessary to cancel all or part of the event. Consider what these might be e.g. extreme weather, heightened terror threat or contractors dropping out and the implications. In some scenarios **contingency planning** will make it easier to put in place alternative arrangements at short notice. A **curtailment plan** will also help to set-out the decision making process and actions to be taken in the event that cancellation is necessary. Some of the key things to consider in such circumstances are who makes the decision, when is it made and how are the public attending the event informed of this.

Insurance

The Council requires all event organisers, contractors, performers, exhibitors, caterers and any other organisation operating in some capacity as part of the event, to hold **public liability insurance** with a **minimum £5 million limit of indemnity**. You will need to submit evidence of this to the Council in advance of the event. You should check policies to ensure planned activities are covered. For example, use of inflatables (e.g. bouncy castles) is often not included in standard policies. You should inform insurance companies that the event is taking place. Depending upon the nature of your organisation and the proposed event, other insurances may also be required.

With certain exceptions, any business or charity with employees is required by law to have **employer's liability insurance**. As an event organiser it is recommended that you check that contractors, stallholders etc. have this in place. It is also good practice to obtain details of **motor insurance** for all vehicles entering the event site.

Contractors

Contractors may include caterers, staging/lighting companies, fencing providers or fairground operators. All contractors should be vetted to ensure they are competent to undertake the tasks required of them and wherever possible personal references obtained. It may be necessary to draw up and ask them to sign a contract for the services they will be providing you. Ask for copies of safety policies, method statements and risk assessments, and satisfy yourself that they will perform their tasks safely. Provide contractors with a copy of the event plan if necessary and maintain regular communication with them prior to the event, to ensure they will work within your specified parameters. They will also need to be given a full safety induction when arriving on site.

It is best practice to keep an up-to-date list of contractors and other organisations attending the event and use it to record when all their paperwork is received. See Appendix 6 for an example template.

Safeguarding

Consider what safeguarding issues may arise at the event e.g. will children or other vulnerable groups be involved, and put in place appropriate measures to mitigate these. Your organisation may already have safeguarding policies and procedures in place, however these may need adapting for the event and details included in the risk assessment/event safety plan. For larger events, or those with more complex safeguarding issues, someone on the organising team could be designated to take responsibility for overseeing this aspect of the event planning.

Think about if certain activities might require parent/guardian consent for children to take part, and how this will be obtained if so. Public visitors may also need informing if photography/filming (e.g. for promotional purposes) is planned to take place during the event. Those working directly with children should have the appropriate **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks** carried out. Depending on roles and responsibilities it may be appropriate for other members of event staff and contractors to also have a DBS check.

A formal process for dealing with **lost children** should be established and communicated to stewards and event staff. It is good practice to set-up a 'lost child point' for coordinating this and to provide an area where children can be safely looked after until they are re-united with their parent/guardian. A procedure should also be in place for contacting the police if a child or parent/guardian is still missing at the end of the event. Full details of any incidents should be recorded using a 'lost children form' and copies kept in case any further investigation is necessary. A simple example is available in Appendix 5.

Licensing

The nature of the event will determine if any licences are needed, so check if any of the activities you have planned are requiring of these. For example, events of up to 500 people involving certain

licensable activities e.g. sale of alcohol or forms of regulated entertainment, require a **temporary events notice (TEN)**. Meanwhile, where raffle tickets are being sold in advance, a **lotteries licence** may be required, however if tickets are just being sold on the day this is not usually necessary.

Please visit <https://www.woking.gov.uk/licensing-and-permits> for more information, including a full list of licensable activities and details of how to apply for a licence. Alternatively the Council's licensing team can be contacted at licensing@woking.gov.uk for advice on more specific requirements. A fee may be charged for a licence and you will need to apply well in advance of the event.

Permission from the Council is also required for charitable collections to take place and a **street collection permit** will be issued for this. Please visit <https://www.woking.gov.uk/licensing-and-permits/charity-collection-permits> for more information on the regulations and to apply for a permit or alternatively contact streetcollections@woking.gov.uk.

Litter

Arrangements will need to be made for waste disposal and rubbish clearance both during and after the event. Additional bins may need to be provided and individuals designated specific responsibilities for emptying rubbish bins and litter picking. Depending on the amount of waste generated, a specialist contractor may need to be hired to remove it from site at the end of the event.

Toilets

The nature of the event will dictate the extent of toilet facilities required. Some venues may have public toilets available for use, however you should check the opening hours and whether they fulfil your requirements based on the number of visitors expected. For larger events hire of additional facilities will likely be required. Remember that toilet facilities must be available for event staff and contractors to use during set-up and de-rig and will need regular checking and cleaning. Also remember to include provision for disabled users when planning this aspect of the event.

Noise

Some events will generate increased noise levels from PA systems, music etc. which will need managing appropriately to minimise disruption. Sound levels should be tested before and at regular intervals throughout the event to ensure they do not become excessive. You will need to consider when the event is scheduled to finish, especially if it extends later into the evening, and agree a finish time with the Council. It is also a good idea to inform local residents of the event beforehand if there will be loud noise, and particularly if it will cause disruption over several days.

Catering

Ensure any caterers have been registered by their local authority's Environmental Health department. It may also be useful to check food hygiene certification and food hygiene rating issued by the Food Standards Agency.

Catering stalls should be sensibly positioned away from activity areas, near to water supplies and with adequate space left between stalls to reduce the risk of fire spread. Portable gas supplies for cooking should be kept to a minimum in designated areas away from the general public. Caterers using equipment to provide hot food should have a fire blanket or the appropriate fire extinguisher on their stall.

Stewarding and Security

Stewards should be fully briefed on all aspects of the event and given appropriate training and written instructions for the job required of them. This should include briefing on the government's

'Run, Hide, Tell' protocol to follow in the event of a terror attack. It is important that stewards can effectively communicate with each other and event control, mobile phones and/or radios are best for this. Stewards may require PPE such as hats, boots or high visibility clothing, whilst for evening events, they may need to be issued with torches. At all day events or events lasting several days, a staffing rota will be required to ensure appropriate rest breaks are taken. Consider allocating an area separated from the public for this.

Depending upon the nature of the event, additional security arrangements may be necessary, including arrangements for securing property overnight. You should consider hiring a suitable contractor to do this. Check that hired security is licensed by the Security Industry Authority (SIA).

It is important to be aware of the difference between paid staff and volunteers and the different levels of expectation placed upon each. Make this distinction clear and ensure both parties are aware of their roles and responsibilities. Both stewards and security staff should be easily identifiable to the public attending.

For security purposes, any cash collection should be planned to ensure it is kept to a minimum and regular deposits made to a secure area.

Crowd Management

The type of event and the numbers attending will determine the crowd control measures needed. For outdoor events a measure of 0.5 people per square metre of available space can be used to calculate the capacity of the venue. The numbers of people entering and exiting the event will need to be monitored to prevent overcrowding. Consideration should be given to the stewarding arrangements, the positioning of barriers and provision of a public address system. *Managing Crowds Safely: A guide for organisers at events and venues (HSG 154)* has been published by the HSE and contains useful advice on this. It is available at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg154.htm>

Traffic/Transport Management

- **On-site traffic.** Vehicles and other traffic will need to be carefully managed to ensure segregation from pedestrians. It may be necessary to only permit vehicular access at specific times and not during the event itself. Separate entrances should be provided for vehicles and pedestrians with specific arrangements for emergency vehicle access. Car parking facilities will be required at most events, so consider to what extent such facilities are required, where they will be situated and how they will be managed. Some venues will have existing car park provision, however additional areas may need to be provided to avoid visitors having to park in nearby streets or residential areas and causing further disruption.
- **Off-site traffic.** Larger events in particular may generate additional traffic in roads surrounding the venue. To minimise disruption, traffic control should be discussed with the police and adequate signage provided to direct people to the appropriate entrances. If road closures, signs on the highway, traffic diversions and/or the placement of cones are required then an application must be made for a traffic regulation order and/or approval from the highway authority, Surrey County Council. If the event is likely to generate lots of vehicle traffic, consider liaising with local public transport providers to see if they can provide additional services for visitors to the event, to reduce this.

Fairgrounds

The Council will need to be notified at least 3 months in advance if funfair rides are proposed as part of the event. As a minimum you will need to obtain copies of the following documentation from the operator and provide them to the Council:

- Public liability insurance **with a minimum £10 million worth of indemnity** for each ride stall and device.
- Risk assessments for each ride, stall and device.
- **Amusement Devices Inspection Procedures Scheme (ADIPS)** or other relevant safety certification where necessary for all rides, stalls and devices.
- Inspection logbook for all rides, stalls and devices. It is also advisable to check the HSE website for any prohibition/improvement notices served against specific rides or operators or alternatively request a copy of their accident record.

You may also consider collecting further information from funfair operators, for example weights and dimensions, the number of people allowed on a ride and details of the vehicles being brought on site. Appendix 8 includes other information to think about and can be used to record and keep track of these for each ride, stall or device.

Access to the venue for large vehicles will need considering, as will the siting of individual attractions to ensure they are a safe distance apart. Attractions should be inspected before opening and then daily if the event lasts more than one day. Ride operators/attendants will need to be suitably trained and you should request to see evidence of this.

Best practice on fairground operation is detailed in *Fairgrounds and amusement parks: Guidance on safe practice*, published free of charge on the HSE website <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg175.pdf>.

Other activities

Some activities will require specialist consideration and permission to be granted, examples are given below. It is advisable to seek guidance from the Council if you are unsure whether a particular activity is permitted. Remember to record details of these in the risk assessment and/or event safety plan.

- **Inflatables.** Ensure that all inflatable equipment has **Pertexa Inflatable Play Accreditation (PIPA)** or other relevant safety certification in place and conforms to BS EN 14960. You will be required to supply copies of these along with insurance and risk assessments for the devices to the Council. The equipment should be inspected for safety before use and where possible supervised by a qualified person. Failing this, operating instructions obtained from the supplier and followed by a suitably responsible person is adequate. Remember that weather conditions, in particular high winds may make it unsafe to use inflatables so this should be monitored using appropriate equipment at all times. The HSE has published guidance for operating inflatable devices on its website <http://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/fairgrounds/inflatables.htm>
- **Fireworks.** Fall out zones and spectator viewing areas should be defined, taking into account the nature of the venue and surrounding area. Specialist contractors should be hired to perform displays and consideration given to curtailment of a display in the event of extreme weather. The HSE publication *HSG 123: Working Together on Fireworks Displays* is a useful reference guide.
- **Performers.** All performers should have their own insurances and risk assessments. Where amateur performers are being used, discuss your detailed requirements with them and ensure they will comply with your event plan. Consider whether staging and/or seating areas are required for performances and the health and safety implications of this.

Site layout

Draw out a site plan identifying the position of all the intended attractions, facilities and temporary structures. Liaise with the Council when planning the layout of the event to establish if there are any areas that need to be kept clear for a particular reason. You may also find it useful to visit the venue yourself to take measurements and get an understanding of other restraints or hazards.

Plan out and designate the entrance and exit points, circulation routes, vehicle access and emergency evacuation paths. Consider whether barriers and or fencing will be required to protect the public against specific hazards. Obtain accurate measurements of all structures and activities, to understand the extent of the area needed, remembering to include any safety zones required for certain activities e.g. inflatables or fairground rides. Consider also, where visitors will queue if an attraction is particularly popular.

When planning site layout it is important to include an **event control**, as a central point to coordinate all administration and communication as the event progresses. For a smaller event this may simply be a gazebo with a table, whereas larger events may require a more complex set-up.

Final preparations

Immediately prior to the event going “live” a detailed safety inspection will need to be carried out. A walk through of the site should be carried out to identify any potential hazards and to check out communications are working. Depending on the length of the event you may want to carry out further inspections during the event. All defects should be noted and remedial action taken. These checklists should be retained for future reference. The following should be checked:

- **Routes.** Ensure clear access and exit routes and adequate circulation within the site. Pay particular attention to emergency routes.
- **Siting.** Make sure that all facilities, attractions and stalls are correctly sited as per your site plan. Be certain that the first aid facilities, fire extinguishers and any cash collection boxes are in place. Check waste bins are in their correct locations.
- **Signage.** Ensure adequate signage is displayed where necessary. This should include emergency exits, first aid points, information, lost children/vulnerable person points and other welfare facilities such as toilets and drinking water.
- **Vehicles.** Check that all contractors, performers and exhibitors vehicles have been removed from the site or parked in the designated area before the public are permitted to enter.
- **Structures.** Ensure all staging, seating, marquees and lighting structures have been erected safely and that certification has been obtained from the relevant contractors as a record of this.
- **Barriers.** Check that all barriers and other protection against hazards are securely in place and there is no risk of falling from staging or other facilities.
- **Stewards.** Make sure that all staff have arrived, been briefed and are in their correct location. Ensure all stewards are wearing the correct clothing for easy identification and have been issued with the appropriate communications device.
- **Lighting.** Check all lighting is working, including any emergency lighting.
- **Public information.** Make sure the public address system is working and can be heard in all areas.

After the event

- **De-rigging.** Arrangements for de-rigging the event should be detailed in the event safety plan. De-rigging should not begin until after the scheduled end time, unless it is advertised that the event will finish early. As with set-up, vehicle and pedestrian movement on-site will need to be

carefully managed to ensure safety is maintained. Remember to take into account that people may be tired after a long day working at the event.

- **Site condition.** After the event, another inspection should be carried out to make sure nothing has been left on the site which could be hazardous to future users. This inspection should also identify any damage which may have been caused during the event. If any structures are left overnight, it must be ensured they are left in a safe condition and are safe from vandalism etc.
- **Accidents.** Under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013, it is required by law that records are kept of incidents or occurrences causing death or serious injury. It is the duty of the event organiser to do this. It is good practice to make a note of all incidents and near misses, however minor, so they can be considered as part of future risk assessments. If an accident occurs, evidence should be gathered as soon as possible. This may include the details of witnesses and/or photographs. An accident form, such as the one in Appendix 4, should be completed and you will also need to advise your own insurance company. Action must be taken to prevent any further incidents taking place in future.
- **De-brief.** It is useful for the organising team to have a full de-briefing meeting to review how the event went in the days/weeks afterwards. If the event is to run again in future, this is also an opportunity to discuss improvements that could be made. A de-brief SAG meeting may also take place to review how the event ran from a safety point of view.