

Event Risk Assessments – Guidance Notes

As the organiser of an event you have legal responsibilities to ensure the health, safety and welfare of any employees, volunteers, and contractors involved in arranging the event; and of the public and participants attending. All events must comply with recognised safety standards and you must take all reasonable precautions to ensure the event takes place safely.

The event organiser's best tool for determining potential hazards connected to their event is a risk assessment. A risk assessment needs to identify the activities which comprise an event and the hazards which are associated with each activity, together with a risk rating.

Any contractors involved in your event must also carry out risk assessments. Accordingly, if you are employing contractors/other organisations it is your duty to ensure that you obtain copies of the risk assessments.

The following guidance should aid you in carrying out your risk assessments. Please also see the example form which provides detailed examples of some event components. The paragraph numbers below relate to the headings on the Event Risk Assessment Form for ease of reference.

1. Identifying the Activity / Area of Concern

An activity is anything which is taking place as part of your event, ie: stalls, face painting, fairground rides, car boot sale, staged events, music, dancing, sports activities, fireworks, laser show, parade, marquee/tent, food, alcoholic refreshment, etc. In addition, within the activities column you must also include the provisions you must make to enable the activities to take place safely, ie: first aid, stewarding/security, crowd management, car parking, site fencing/barriers, fire precautions and equipment, potential major incidents, evacuation procedure (due to emergency or inclement weather), stages/marquees/temporary structures, waste collection/handling/disposal, cash collection and signage. Please note that these lists are not exhaustive.

All activities must be clearly identified on the event/site layout plan you submit.

2. Identifying the Hazards

All hazards must be identified for each activity. A hazard is something with the potential to cause harm, ie: slipping/tripping/falling hazards, hazards relating to fire risks or fire evacuation procedures, any chemicals/fumes/substances hazardous to health, moving parts of machinery, vehicle movement, electrical safety including use of portable electrical appliances, lifting/carrying/moving, high noise levels, poor lighting/heating/ventilation, any possible hazard from specific demonstrations/activities, crowd intensity and pinch points – ie: areas where there is restricted access/exit for the amount of people.

This list is not exhaustive and care should be taken to identify any other hazards associated with the specific activities within the event.

3. Identifying the Persons at Risk

For each hazard identified, list all those who may be affected. Do not list individuals by name, just list groups of people, ie: stewards, employees, volunteers, contractors, vendors/exhibitors/performers, members of the public, people with disabilities, children/elderly people, expectant mothers and local residents. This list is not exhaustive.

4. Identifying the Current Risk Factor

Risk is the chance that someone will be harmed by the hazard. The extent of the risk arising from the hazards identified must be evaluated, ie: high, medium or low, and actions then taken to minimize the risk. You should be taking into account any information, instruction and training regarding the event and the activities involved; and compliance with legislative standards, codes of good practice and British Standards. Examples of risks and their categories are as follows:-

High An inflatable bouncy castle which is not tied down being used in adverse weather conditions by young children; or a fairground chair ride without sufficient safe space around it.

Medium Face painting being undertaken without the knowledge of children's allergies.

Low A mime artist performing amongst the crowd.

For each risk consider whether or not it can be eliminated completely. If it cannot, then decide what must be done to reduce it to as low a risk as far as is reasonably practicable an.

5. Identifying the Actions to be Taken to Minimize each Risk

All identified risks can be minimized by taking appropriate action, ie: preventing access to the hazard by enclosure/segregation, safe working procedures, adequate

signage/training/instruction, find a substitute for that activity/machine etc, provide welfare facilities for removal of contamination/first aid, removal of the hazard, etc. Personal Protective equipment should be considered as a last resort. This list is not exhaustive.

For the examples listed in (4) above, action taken to minimize the risk could be to secure the inflatable with guy ropes; supply sufficient barrier-ed space around the fair ride; ask parents/guardians regarding allergies; supervise the mime artist.

(6) Identifying the New Risk Factor

Once you have identified the action to be taken as per (5), insert the appropriate new High, Medium or Low risk rating.

And finally ...

Please print your name, sign and date the form.

Review and Revise

Please remember that If the nature of the activities or hazards change during the planning of the event, the risk assessment will need to be reviewed and updated.

Further information

- Reference documents which will also assist you are as follows:-
- The Event Safety Guide . A guide to health, safety and welfare at music and similar events (HSE 1999)(“The Purple Book”) ISBN 0 7176 2453 6
- Managing Crowds Safely (HSE 2000) ISBN 0 7176 1834 X
- 5 Steps to Risk Assessment: Case Studies (HSE 1998) ISBN 07176 15804
- The Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (The Stationery Office, 1997) (“The Green Guide”) ISBN 0 11 300095 2
- Safety Guidance for Street Arts, Carnival, Processions and Large Scale Performances (Independent Street Arts Network),
www.streetartsnetwork.org.uk/pages/publications.htm.
- Guide to industry best practice for organizing outdoor events, PAS 51: 2004 (BSI)
www.bsi-global.com