



A Guide to Organising a Small Public Event Safely

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Introduction

This guide provides some safety information for small events attended by the public, such as fund raisers, discos, cheese and wine tastings and so on, for which a temporary event notice application has been made. You need only take account of as much of the advice in the guide as applies to your event. Organisers of some events will need to give consideration to all the matters raised in the guide, whilst other events will only be affected by a few sections. It's difficult to be specific because all events and the venues where they are held are different. The same basic health and safety principles apply though – thorough risk assessments need to be carried out for every event, and then suitable precautions put in place. Hopefully this guide will help organisers to do this, but if you need any further information or advice contact the Commercial Protection Team at Westmorland and Furness Council on 01768 212491 or email env.health@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk.

1 Risk Assessment

The first thing to do when looking at what safety measures need to be taken for any event is to carry out thorough and comprehensive risk assessments. This isn't as difficult as it seems. What you need to do is to follow the five steps to risk assessment:

- Step 1 – identify all possible hazards (anything that could cause harm to anyone)
- Step 2 – decide who might be harmed and how
- Step 3 – evaluate the risks (the likelihood and effect of a hazard happening) and decide on precautions
- Step 4 – record your findings and implement them
- Step 5 – Review your assessments and update if necessary

You need to decide on the precautions you should take to minimise the risks, work out how to put them into practice and where appropriate keep a written record of your actions.

Some of the things you might want to look at are:

- What space is available for people attending the event?
- What fire precautions are required?
- Are there sufficient entrances and exits and do they provide safe access and egress for pedestrians and vehicles?
- How will people get to the event and does that present hazards?
- Are people and vehicles safely separated?
- What arrangements are there for parking?
- How will you ensure temporary structures are safe?
- How will you ensure back stage facilities are safe?
- What space is available for toilet facilities?
- Will there be adequate access for emergency vehicles?
- How close are emergency services and how will they get to the site?

- What are the ground conditions like? Will it be necessary to fence off hazardous areas, eg holes, drops, ponds etc?
- Are there noise sensitive buildings close by? Could any natural features assist in noise reduction?
- How easily available are utilities and services, like gas, electric, water and drainage and do they present any hazard in themselves (overhead cables, drainage ditches, below ground gas mains and electric cables)?
- How will the site be affected by inclement weather?
- Is there a need for rendezvous points?
- Will the event involve camping and what facilities will be available/will be provide?

Obviously this isn't a full list – as mentioned above, all events and the venues where they are held are different.

2 Fire Safety

A fire risk assessment must be carried out. Guidance is available regarding fire safety in the workplace. <https://www.gov.uk/workplace-fire-safety-your-responsibilities>

People should be able to walk to safety along a clearly recognisable route by their own unaided efforts, regardless of where a fire may break out at the event. Consider carefully arrangements for people with disabilities.

People will often try to leave the site the way they entered. Where this is not possible because of the position of the fire or smoke, stewards should be trained to route people away from the fire to a place of safety.

The following matters may need to be considered:

- The number and size of exits are sufficient for the number of people present and are distributed appropriately.
- Exits and gateways are unlocked and if necessary, staffed by stewards throughout the event.

- All exits and gateways are clearly indicated by suitable signs, illuminated where necessary.
- Suitable fire fighting equipment has been provided.
- Suitable lighting, including emergency lighting if necessary is provided on escape routes.
- There is an effective means of giving warning in case of fire.
- Whether there are any special risks, such as inflammable materials, gas cylinders, sources of ignition

3 Electrical Installations and Lighting

Electricity can cause serious injury or death to performers, workers or members of the public if the installation is faulty or not properly managed. The following points should be considered when planning an installation:

- The location of any existing overhead power lines or buried cables
- The total power requirements for the site
- Access to a network power supply
- The use and location of generators
- Earthing
- Positioning of temporary overhead or underground cables
- The location of the stage(s)
- The main isolators controlling the electrical supplies to stage lighting, sound, special effects, emergency lighting and lifting equipment
- The location of mixer positions
- Special power supplies for certain equipment (eg imported from US)
- Power supplies required for portable tools etc

- The electrical requirements for emergency lighting and exit signs
- Power supplies for catering, first-aid posts, control room

All electrical installations and equipment must comply with the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989. Only a competent electrician should carry out electrical work.

The electrical installation should be inspected and tested according to BS 7909:2011 before any event commences.

See also Specification for Electrical Installation – Information Sheet, which is enclosed.

4 Stewards

Depending on the size of the event you may need to designate people as stewards. They could be volunteers or employed. They should be suitably instructed about what their duties are and they should be physically capable of doing the job. In certain circumstances, such as where a lot of people will be attending the event, you may want to give them a written statement of their duties and, where appropriate, a checklist and layout plan showing the key features of the site. You may want them, for example, to assist people to move towards the emergency exits. If the event is to take place in the evening you should provide them with torches. You may also want them to control parking. It may be that you will want to provide them with high visibility jackets, depending on their duties. It should be made clear to them that they should not put themselves at risk whilst performing their duties.

5 Traffic management

Traffic management proposals need to be planned to ensure safe and convenient site access and egress and to minimise off-site traffic disruption.

Consideration should be given to the following points:

- Traffic signs if required
- Traffic marshalling. (See above under Stewards)
- Vehicle parking and management.
- Pedestrians.
- On-site vehicle management and temporary roadways.

- Lift trucks and other vehicles.

6. Toilets

Adequate provision for toilets must be made for the proposed capacity of the event. The guidelines below set out a recognised standard:

Table 1 below provides guidance on sanitation provision at a variety of event types when facilities provided are either toilet blocks or self-contained toilets where basins are NOT internal. *Please refer to table two below for appropriate ratios if the facilities provided have internal basins.*

| | Female Toilets | Male Toilets | Urinals | Accessible Toilets for disabled & wheelchair |
|---|----------------|--------------|-----------|--|
| For Events with a gate time of less than 6 hours duration | 1 per 100 | 1 per 500 | 1 per 150 | 1 per 50 |
| For events with a gate opening time of 6 hours or more but with little or no alcohol or food served | 1 per 85 | 1 per 425 | 1 per 125 | 1 per 45 |
| For events with a gate opening time of 6 hours or more with alcohol and food served in quantity | 1 per 75 | 1 per 400 | 1 per 100 | 1 per 40 |
| For campsites at major events swapping emphasis from urinals to wc's for males | 1 per 75 | 1 per 150 | 1 per 250 | 1 per 40 |

Table 2 below refers to self-contained toilets with internal basins ONLY. Please note that ratios of accessible toilets are not affected by this recommendation since their internal basin needs to be a specialist unit with a hand pump and external units typically with a foot pump are unsuitable.

| | Female Toilets | Male Toilets | Urinals | Accessible Toilets for disabled and wheelchair |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|---|
| For Events with a gate time of less than 6 hours duration | 1 per 80 | 1 per 400 | 1 per 150 | 1 per 50 |
| For events with a gate opening time of 6 hours or more but with little or no alcohol or food served | 1 per 68 | 1 per 340 | 1 per 125 | 1 per 45 |
| For events with a gate opening time of 6 hours or more with alcohol and food served in quantity | 1 per 60 | 1 per 320 | 1 per 100 | 1 per 40 |
| For campsites at major events swapping emphasis from urinals to wc's for males | 1 per 60 | 1 per 120 | 1 per 250 | 1 per 40 |

You should also consider where the toilets will be sited, how they will be lit, how they will be maintained and how to dispose of the waste.

7 First Aid

You need to think about first aid provision. Depending on numbers attending, you might want to look at having trained first aiders at the event. The standard for an event of up to 500 is usually two first aiders, but as a minimum you should provide a properly stocked first aid kit.

8 Noise and Vibration

High sound levels present a risk to hearing, for both those working at an event and for the audience, and may cause a nuisance to individuals living in or working at neighbouring properties.

High levels of vibration may also affect the integrity of temporary and permanent structures both on and off the site.

When planning your event, you should keep in mind the impact of sound and vibrations on workers, audience and neighbouring properties.

Please note you may receive correspondence from other sections of Westmorland and Furness Council, including the Environmental Protection Team in relation to noise and public nuisance.

We hope you have a successful, entertaining and safe event. If you need any further information or advice, please do not hesitate to contact us.