

Help with your risk assessment

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

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 (please refer to the Site Use and Access Guide in the *Appendix*)

- 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?
Eg 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? Eg. 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? E.g. 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?
- 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?

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 have hot food prepared 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 Questionnaire** 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)

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 in the Appendix.

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 to 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>