

Safe events - undertaking a risk assessment.

A risk assessment is a careful examination of what could cause harm to people during your event. It is important to consider all the potential risks at your event and assess what safety precautions will be necessary to ensure everyone's safety.

1. Identify the hazards

- Physical hazards - e.g. vehicles, guy ropes, slippery surfaces, electrical dangers and fire
- Hazardous substances - e.g. fumes or gases
- Environmental hazards - e.g. noise, poor lighting, weather or unsupervised water areas
- Psychological hazards - e.g. long hours, inadequate breaks or stress
- Ergonomic hazards - e.g. lengthy periods standing, repeated lifting or lifting heavy loads

2. Decide who is at risk and how they could be harmed – for example:

- Staff or volunteers
- Contractors or vendors
- Young people
- Staff or visitors with disabilities
- Attendees at the event

3. Controlling the risks

- Do the existing precautions:
 - ✓ Meet legal requirements?
 - ✓ Comply with known event standards?
 - ✓ Represent good practice?
 - ✓ Reduce risks as far as is reasonably practicable?

If not, then you need to consider an action plan to categorise remaining risks as high, medium or low. The aim is to eliminate hazards altogether or to limit those risks in order of preference by:

- a) Combating the risks at source – removal of risk is better than warning signs
- b) Preventing access to any hazards – consider barriers, marshals or route markings
- c) Reorganising work to ensure adequate comfort breaks for volunteers
- d) Provide protective clothing where necessary – i.e. high visibility vests
- e) Provide adequate welfare facilities such as washing and toilet facilities

4. Recording the findings

Write down your findings of your risk assessment and plans.

5. Review and revise

Regulations require risk assessments to be 'suitable and sufficient'. Yours can be as short and concise or as long and detailed as you require. Plans often change and when they do, you should just spare a few minutes to review your assessment for any changes.

Careful preparation and planning will help you organise a safe and successful event. In the unlikely event of something going wrong, this preparation will be important in providing you legal protection. Keep copies of your risk assessment and event safety checklist and make them available as required.

For more information go to the Health and Safety Executive website

www.hse.gov.uk/contact/faqs/riskassess.htm