

Module 12

Health & Safety Requirements

1. Planning for safety

Effective planning is concerned with prevention through identifying, eliminating and controlling hazards and risks. The amount of time that needs to be set aside for planning will be very much dependent upon the size, type and duration of the event. For large events, experience shows that 6-9 months beforehand is not too early to start.

2. The phases of an event

The planning issues for an event can be considered in separate parts:

- The 'build-up', which involves planning the venue design, selection of competent workers, selection of contractors and subcontractors, construction of the stages, marquees, fencing, etc;
- The 'load in', which involves planning for the safe delivery and installation of equipment and services which will be used at the event, eg stage equipment used by the performers, lighting, public address (pa) systems, etc;
- The 'show', which involves planning effective crowd management strategies, transport management strategies and welfare arrangements. Planning strategies for dealing with fire, first aid, contingencies and major incidents are important;
- The 'load out', requires planning for the safe removal of equipment and services;
- The 'breakdown', which includes planning to control risks once the event is over and the infrastructure being dismantled. Collection of rubbish and waste-water disposal present risks and these aspects need to be planned and managed.

2.1 Planning for the build-up

To minimise risks during the build-up, ensure that the venue is designed for safety. It is also necessary to ensure that any infrastructure which will be used at the event, such as stages, seating, tents, marquees or other structures will be erected safely and be structurally safe once erected and used. Prepare plans to show the location of the stages, barriers, front-of-house towers, delay towers, entries and exit points, emergency routes, first-aid and triage areas, positioning of toilets, merchandising stalls, etc. It may be necessary to obtain plans of existing premises from the owner, occupier or venue manager in which your event is to be held. Copies of these plans may need to be given to the contractors building the infrastructure to ensure correct positioning of the various structures to be used at the event.

Ask contractors and subcontractors to provide copies of their own health and safety policies, and details of any hazards and risks associated with their work, before the build-up commences. Documents and calculations will also need to be obtained in relation to the stages, seating or other temporary demountable structures. These plans, documents, and calculations will be needed when discussing your event with health and safety inspectors, local authority licensing officers and officers of the emergency services.

Plan the arrival of the contractors and ensure that their activities on site are co-ordinated with others. Also plan the provision of first aid and welfare facilities for the people who will be working on site, and ensure that they are suitable, in sufficient numbers and available from the time that work begins.

It is good practice to draw up a set of site safety rules and communicate these rules to the contractors before or as soon as they arrive on site. They can be posted in the form of signs in site offices and other areas. Contractors will then be aware of safe working practices required of them at the particular site or venue.

2.1 Planning for the load-in

Once the infrastructure has been built all other equipment and services will need to be brought to the site and installed in or on the structures, eg the loading of the performers' equipment onto the stage (which is likely to involve manual handling procedures) and the delivery of equipment to be used in the bar areas. These operations will also need careful planning.

2.3 Planning for the show

Planning for the show requires preparing strategies for crowd management, transport management, fire, first aid, major incident and contingency planning. Successful planning for the show requires a team approach. It cannot be achieved by one individual operating alone but requires seeking information and advice from the emergency services (such as the police, fire brigade, etc), the health authority, local authority, any existing venue managers, stewarding, and security contractors.

Create an event safety management team to co-ordinate the planning aspects of the show itself. The event safety management team could include members of the local authority and emergency services. It may also be advisable to set up a series of safety planning meetings so that information can be exchanged between the parties and to ensure that the relevant agencies are aware of the planning process. Table-top emergency planning exercises to test the validity of the emergency plans for the larger and more complex events may also be useful.

3. The event safety management plan and event safety team meetings

To provide a comprehensive overview to all these planning aspects, it may be helpful to produce an event safety management plan. The constituents of an event safety management plan could include the following:

Event Management

- The event safety policy statement detailing the organisation chart and levels of safety responsibility;
- The event risk assessment details of the event including venue design, structures, audience profile and capacity, duration, food, toilets, refuse, water, fire precautions, first aid, special effects, access and exits, music levels, etc;
- The site safety plan detailing the site safety rules, site crew managers and safety coordinator, structural safety calculations and drawings;
- The crowd management plan detailing the numbers and types of stewards, methods of working, chains of command;
- The transport management plan detailing the parking arrangements, highway management issues and public transport arrangements;
- The emergency plan detailing action to be taken by designated people in the event of a major incident or contingency;
- The first-aid plan detailing procedures for administering first aid on site and arrangements with local hospitals.

Remember that the constituents of the event safety management plan are your working documents and will need to be reviewed and updated as new information is received either before or during the event. It is only necessary to produce this plan for the key members of your event safety team. Ensure that there is full document control so that redundant or superseded documents are not mistaken for the final version.

Event safety planning meetings are an ideal way to ensure that the event safety management team members are updated on the content of the plan, as well as providing a mechanism for ensuring a flow of safety information on a regular basis. These meetings can be arranged in the weeks or days leading up to the event. If the event is to take place over a few days, eg festivals, meetings should take place at least once each day of the event.

4. Planning for safety in Large Events

Normally the 'Large event' is one which has one or more of the following components:

- Multi-stage;
- Multi-performance;
- Multi-activity;
- Multi-day;
- Physical size of venue (outdoors).

The significant factor is, however, the size of the audience -commonly 15 000-35 000 but sometimes in excess of 100 000. It would be easy to regard a large event as being the same as any event but with more facilities, services and workers, etc.

Planning and management

The need for extensive consultation and planning cannot be overemphasised. The formation of an event safety management team, comprising representatives of the emergency services and local authority, is a useful method of addressing the practicalities of event organisation. Team meetings can be scheduled before, during and after the event and can run in parallel to any formal public entertainment licence procedure. Given a sufficient lead-in period, it should be possible for the safety management team to develop into a working unit that can resolve any difficulties.

4.1 Crowd management

While the proposed attendance figure is the key to the provision of services and facilities account should be taken of the number of guests and staff. Dependent on the event, up to 10% of the capacity could be guests or staff at the event with the consequent additional load on site infrastructure. Also consider easing local traffic congestion by opening the site early and restricting exits.

Incremental occupation of the site should be accompanied by a similar incremental provision of services. In some instances for nominally non-camping events, it may be useful to make contingency camping provision and low key entertainment on a normally silent night. There is, however, a danger of changing the nature of the event for subsequent years. Ticket pricing structures may control arrival, particularly in terms of late Friday arrivals for a Saturday event. At a large event the layout should take account of audience movement across the site and minimise cross flow and points of congestion. Ideally a wheel layout, with entertainment at the hub and camping at the rim, could be combined with one or more of the following:

- Area or cellular stewarding to maintain a controlled scale of audience movement;
- Dynamic entertainment management where the programmes on separate stages are integrated into the audience management programme;
- Ensuring that timing and running orders are adhered to, to avoid conflicts at the end of performances;
- Gradual close down of main stages;
- Continuing (perhaps for 24 hours) low level entertainment such as cinema or markets;
- No entertainment within the defined areas of campsites.

4.2 Major incident planning

The size and complex infrastructure associated with a large event reinforces the need for a comprehensive major incident plan. The event safety management team in consultation with the local authority emergency planning officer, who would know about local arrangements, should develop the plan. The following aspects should be considered.

- Is the evacuation of the entire site practical or would selective evacuation be preferable?

- Is the evacuation of the site desirable, given that under some circumstances food, water and sanitary facilities may still be operational on a scale not available elsewhere?
- What infrastructure is available elsewhere?
- What would be the impact of a mass exodus from one part of the site on other parts or on the locality?
- What implications are there for public address systems in various emergency situations?

4.3 Transport management

If public transport links are available they may be encouraged by the use of integrated ticketing. Depending on the event and availability, many people may choose integrated coach/event travel. In rural locations, or where other transport is unavailable, a high proportion of the audience will, almost inevitably, travel by car and the logistics and impact on the locality should form an early item for consultation. Traffic should be removed from the public road system onto site, as quickly and efficiently as possible - the use of professional stewarding may be the best option. Within the site, parking areas should be divided into easily identifiable zones (perhaps associated with nearby camping) and traffic should be routed to avoid designated pedestrian routes/areas.

4.4 Information and welfare

The provision of a comprehensive information and welfare service that can assimilate and co-ordinate information in an active way as the event progresses allows other agencies, such as medical and police services, to undertake their specialist functions. In general terms, everything possible that an individual requires for the duration should be readily available on the site. It is particularly important that there are a sufficient number of food stalls to cater for the audience demands.

4.5 TV/media

The presence of national and international media may in itself influence the progress of an event. In particular, incorrect ticket availability broadcasts may

cause problems. Ensure that channels of accurate information are available for co-ordinated release to the media.

4.6 Venue and site design

The site design for a multi-day event must recognise the need for 24-hour access to facilities for both the audience and for servicing the facilities.

4.7 Fire safety

Discussion should take place, pre-event, on the areas of responsibility for fire safety teams. There needs to be a clear understanding of the circumstances under which the local fire brigade will attend and lines of communication must be established. There should be a policy and procedure in place for safely dealing with small arena fires.

4.8 Sanitary facilities

The availability of water is a limiting factor on the audience size at all green field events. In particular, the logistics of moving large quantities of liquid, whether water or effluent needs to be addressed. While flush toilets are a preferred option, they are vulnerable to failure of water supply and can be very difficult to bring back into use when the supply has been restored. The use of fewer toilet blocks with more units can, subject to proper access routes and efficient continuous servicing, mean that a greater number of toilets will remain in operation. For overnight or multi-day events, there will inevitably be a peak morning demand, particularly if showers are provided in camping areas.

4.9 Food and drinking water

Supplies of both food and drinking water must be adequate for the duration of the event; the facility for campers to buy basic commodities such as bread, milk, etc, needs to be available. To ensure sufficient supplies of water there will need to be a considerable amount of temporary pipe work, which is susceptible to damage and vulnerable to contamination. Consideration should be given to splitting

up the water supply on the site into several independent supply zones. In this way the consequences of a serious incident affecting the water supply will not affect the whole site. It may be necessary to protect the quality of the supply by increasing chlorination above normal mains levels. The use of percussion taps will help reduce waste.

4.10 Health and safety of event workers

Set up a proper management infrastructure with delegation of responsibility. The safety Management team should include people with experience of previous or similar events. One of the issues that will be encountered with large events running over many days is one of fatigue among both management and contractors. All will be working long hours under stressful conditions and if this is not addressed, the quality of decisions, some of which may be critical, could be poor.

5. Planning for Safety in Small Events

Here we will discuss small events taking place either wholly or partially in the open air or in Marquees or other temporary structures, it may also contain useful safety advice for small events taking place indoors in fixed buildings.

5.1 Planning and management

All event organisers must be clearly aware of their responsibilities for the audience and other participants at their event, including performers, traders, etc. Small-event organisers should not assume that because a proposed event is deemed to be small, the associated risks are less. Not only will the number of people attending be significant for the event management, but the activity itself and the audience type will also influence the safety requirements. Simple hazards on green field sites, such as rabbit holes, old barbed wire in long grass, the presence of recent animal droppings, etc, are as much a danger to a small audience as to a large one.

A safety policy statement should be produced that describes how the event organiser intends to manage safety; that has specific

responsibilities; and how these will be carried out. The risk assessment and safety policy need not be long or complicated, but should clearly demonstrate the approach taken to ensure the safety of all those involved in the event.

A safety management team should be formed to put the actions outlined in the safety policy into practice. Two to three people would be sufficient for a small event. A list of site safety rules should be drawn up and distributed to all workers or helpers who need to be aware of safety procedures. Ensure that any contractors or subcontractors hired to build the stages, erect marquees or stalls, etc, are competent in managing their own health and safety on site. Ask for copies of the contractors' safety policies, risk assessments for their work and safety method statements.

5.2 Staffing

Small events may operate with small budgets and rely on enthusiastic helpers rather than paid employees or contracted service companies. The crucial aspect is good co-ordination by the event management team and close supervision, support and monitoring of helpers. The organising group can sometimes provide many services at small events such as catering and stewarding, rather than buying them in from commercial companies. All helpers will need to be aware of legislation, regulations and guidelines affecting the provision of services. Management of workers and helpers requires clear job functions and responsibilities to be identified. It is particularly important for inexperienced workers and helpers to receive proper training and supervision.

Everyone working or providing services at the event should be clear about what they are required to do, how to do it and when it needs to be done. This can be achieved by preparing a schedule when work is required to be carried out and by whom, and informing everyone involved.

6 Levels of provision of site services and facilities

6.1 Local authority liaison

Small-event organisers should consult with the relevant local authority officers and emergency services representatives with responsibility for the event. These officers will be prepared to offer advice and assistance including whether an entertainment licence is required or not.

Provide the local authority with sufficient written information to enable officers to understand the nature of the event. This documentation will in any case already have been prepared as part of your event planning.

It should include:

- A description of the event, including build-up and breakdown time, audience size, type of activities, etc;
- A site plan showing relevant features and relationship with the neighbourhood;
- A list of key members of the organising team and their responsibilities;
- The risk management strategy, including a copy of the risk assessment, safety policy and site-safety rules.

Further documentation should be available on site during the event, including:

- The safety policies, risk assessments and safety method statements for any contractors or subcontractors hired to erect stages, tents, marquees, stalls, etc;
- Risk assessments and safety documentation of any activity associated with the entertainment such as bouncy castles, trampolines, etc;
- Statutory test certificates for any work equipment brought onto site, such as electrical equipment, generators, lifting equipment.