

Module 11

Communication & Customer Service

1. Communication

Effective communication is of prime importance if an event is to run smoothly and safely. Communication requirements of all the organisations, involved in the event (assessed individually or jointly) need to be examined thoroughly. This includes examining the general and operational management of the event, handling routine health, safety and welfare information and communicating effectively in the event of a major incident.

Key communication issues can be explored from two main perspectives:

- Inter-professional communication;
- Public information and communication

2. Inter-professional communication

Communication during the event planning phase .The communication network during this phase is wide and involves a range of communication activities and information requirements:

- Intelligence gathering about the event characteristics, etc;
- Liaison meetings;
- Seeking appropriate licences;
- Preparation of detailed plans for arrangements on and off site;
- Commercial arrangements - ticketing policy, publicity, contracts, etc.

Everyone involved in the planning of an event will need to keep proper records of decisions and ensure that relevant information is communicated to others. It is particularly important that statement of

intent documents is clear and unambiguous in their definition of roles and the responsibilities of different agencies and individuals.

2.1 Preparation of key support documentation

Unambiguous use of language is crucial in providing a clear and reliable communication framework. Avoid jargon and acronyms wherever possible. Where they are necessary, it is worth including a glossary of terms within the main planning documents.

Agree special terminology to be used by people preparing plans, documents and communication procedures in relation to:

- Naming different control points and control workers;
- Labelling different types of rendezvous and collection points;
- Providing unique reference labels for key locations within and around the venue;
- Clear naming conventions for categories of people involved on site;
- Compatible terminology for assessing risks and grading levels of urgency;
- Clear contact protocols for establishing communication.

Wherever possible, plans should say who does what, not just what is to be done. For example, 'the incident control room must be informed, is not as helpful as, 'the duty officer must inform the incident control room'.

Relevant maps and site plans are crucial. Visual data should show key routes for vehicles and people, and restrictions on access. A gridded site plan for the venue and its immediate surrounds is recommended. Discrepancies can result in delayed responses, misdirected resources and communication channels being unnecessarily blocked with requests for clarification and attempts to sort out the confusion.

Pay attention to labelling features and functions consistently in different documents. If a feature occurs more than once (eg if there are several

first-aid points) each should have a unique reference. Consult before altering plans so that the consequences of changes can be considered.

Consider appointing a network co-ordinator as a single point-of-contact. Such a person would receive, collate, cross-check and spread information about radio-channel frequencies, call signs, phone lines, alert cascades, camera points, sitting of control equipment, contact lists, etc.

Ensure that major incident plans are compatible with emergency plans drawn up local authority or emergency services. Make sure that relevant information is easily available to people in control rooms at remote locations.

Many other types of documents (technical diagrams, safety certificates, licences, approvals, minutes of meetings, etc) will figure in the overall communication processes, reference, guidance, authorisation or approval. Keep all documents up to date and inform people involved in the planning process of any changes immediately.

2.2 A framework for handling the event

There is a need for a framework that allows effective communication:

- Within each organisation (individual emergency services, event organiser, stewarding organisations, local authority);
- Between different agencies (police to fire, stewarding organisation to ambulance, venue operator to police, etc).
- Such a framework involves both on-site and off-site links so that organisations which need to respond to events on site can be easily contacted; appropriate organisations can be informed of events on site that may have off-site repercussions.

2.3 Communication controls in incident control rooms

Consider the following matters in relation to your event. Power supplies for communication equipment should be independent of production power supplies and with independent back-up facilities. Test power

supplies for their ability to provide continuity of communication when switching over to auxiliary power. It is important that the back-up supply is adequate. In a major incident, this supply may need to last beyond a scheduled event finish time. Ensure that incident control rooms or 'units' have a clear view over as much of the event as possible, are easily accessible and have adequate space for equipment and for workers to operate effectively.

Links should be available to allow communication between key personnel. Arrangements should ensure that communication is possible between incident control rooms and critical locations and activities. Co-locate communication controls for stewarding/security, emergency services, local authority and first-aid providers wherever practicable.

Staffing should be sufficient to allow for periodic policy and review meetings between personnel from different organisations. Radio controllers must have the option to stop 'talk-through' facilities if an urgent situation develops. Route all cabling and wiring through areas of low risk from fire or other damage. Arrange for maintenance workers to be on hand to carry out any necessary repairs or adjustments. Appropriate levels of soundproofing are essential and where appropriate, provide workers with headsets to cut out interference from noise within a busy control room. Provide key items of documentation and stationery in all control rooms: site plans, key contact details, alerting cascades, message pads, log sheets, etc. Display frequently-used information clearly (site plans, key contacts, etc) and make sure facilities such as wipe able boards or flip charts are available for writing up incident-specific information as it arises. The need to maintain and operate emergency communications from an alternative site

2.3 Off-site links

Provide details of the event in the control rooms of each of the emergency services and ensure that communication lines, whether by radio or telephone, to the local headquarters of all emergency services are available at all times so that emergency calls can be made instantly. Consider arrangements for communicating with organisations that are affected off site by movements of large number of people, eg

traffic police, British Transport police, transport providers, etc. This is particularly relevant when unforeseen events (such as curtailment of an event) could have significant knock-on effects at locations remote from the event itself.

2.4 Radio communication

Depending on the size of the event, there can be many radio sets and networks operating simultaneously on site. Inform contractors of the frequencies that are available, before they hire radios. The network co-ordinator can collect information on all proposed frequencies and consult with the Radio-communications Agency and local emergency services.

Each organisation requiring radio communication will need to consider what operational channels are necessary for identified functions or areas. In addition, emergency services will have to consider the need for command channels at large events.

Radio is an important medium for general operational requirements and a prime medium for responding to emergencies. Pre-event checks are therefore essential. Carry out full perimeter tests to ensure coverage is adequate. At an outdoor site, appropriate positioning of masts, antennae and repeaters may require research and testing. The erection of temporary structures can have a significant impact on radio coverage and corrective measures may be necessary.

Background noise is obviously a huge problem when working in any large audience and when there is loud music. The issuing of full ear-defending headsets should be considered for key workers in high-noise areas and remember to fully charge all batteries at the start of the event. Adequate numbers of spare batteries and charging facilities are essential. The risk of wearing such equipment will have to be assessed in relation to any physical-injury hazards associated with the kind of tasks they have to carry out.

2.5. Telephone equipment

Provide external lines for immediate telephone contact between the venue control points and emergency services control rooms off site. Do not use external telephone lines designated for emergency use for other communication.

Field telephone networks (or internal telephone networks in a venue such as a sports stadium or arena) provide vital links between on-site communication controls and other key points around the venue. Cell phones are widely used and provide extra communication options. However, they should not be relied upon for important links and especially not used for emergency communication.

2.6 Closed circuit television (CCTV)

A valuable safety and security tool is CCTV which can assist crowd management. Certain Fundamental questions are worth considering in the event planning stage:

- Will the use of CCTV make the event safer?
- Where should cameras be located?
- Will there be sufficient light?
- Who should have control over them?
- Who should have viewing access?

The CCTV images can greatly enhance the potential to identify problems in a crowd resulting from surges, sways, excessive densities or public disorder.

2.7 Communication procedures

There must be a clear framework of information flow procedures - people need to know who should inform whom of what, when, and by what means.

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Prime concerns are:

- Tight radio discipline with proper use of call signs and contact protocols;
- Making the purpose/function of a message clear (is it a question, warning, request for action, command, prohibition, etc);
- Concise and precise information;
- Cross-checking that messages have been received and interpreted correctly;
- Relaying message content clearly and unambiguously;
- Keeping accurate records of communication activity;
- Keeping accurate logs of decisions and actions.

2.8 Message delivery and acknowledgement

Workers must be aware of the possible consequences if messages are not properly communicated and understood. There will be marked differences in levels of local knowledge among workers at and around the event and therefore procedures for acknowledging or reading back messages should be introduced.

Situation reports

Develop procedures for providing information from the scene of an incident or emergency.

Note that:

- A practised format helps the person providing information to include necessary details for an appropriate response;
- A familiar communication pattern helps people receiving information to anticipate and recognise items;
- This assists the receiver to note the information ready for subsequent use or relay.

A situation report format must work equally well for any type of incident. It is particularly
Important to include the following items of information in such a report

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- Identification: call signs, names of calling and called parties;
- Location: exact details of where the incident is;
- Incident: precise details of what is involved;
- Requirements: details of services, equipment and agencies required.
- Obtain acknowledgement that these key items have been received and understood before giving further details. If more information is available, further items that are particularly important in second or further transmissions are:
 - Warnings: details of any hazards (present or potential);
 - Access: any details about what might affect access to the scene, or advice on the quickest access route;
 - Casualties: any details known about injured or sick people;
 - Control point: details of who to contact and where, for more information from the scene;
 - Other information: any other relevant information.

2.9 Alerting procedures

Different levels of urgent response may be necessary, for anything from serious injury or sickness of a single person, to a large-scale response to a major incident that requires full and urgent evacuation. Accurate information is vital to appropriate decision making. Since each link in a communication chain is a potential source of misunderstanding or breakdown, alerting chains between informants, decision makers and response providers should be as short as possible.

Alarms or threats will have to be evaluated on their merits, but in those circumstances where the first response is to investigate further, specific instructions or coded announcements should reach all those who have an emergency role. All workers involved should 'stand by' at designated emergency positions and await further information.

2.10 Regular updating

Good use of communication channels that allow easy access to information is essential. Whiteboard logs are a simple example of this. They are effective 'broadcasting' mechanisms. Providing ready access to information and reducing verbal and hand-written exchanges. Much thought has to be given, therefore, to anticipating the information requirements of others.

2.11 Record keeping

Keeping records and logging information throughout the course of an event is a key activity. Logs must show key events and actions in sequence and are a valuable tool for keeping workers informed of the progress of any incident.

2.12 Training, briefing and preparation

All organisations have a responsibility for training their workers appropriately, covering everything from using appropriate radio discipline to keeping a decision log. There must be proper briefings for all workers about their duties for the event. This includes briefing workers offsite who need to be aware of special arrangements for an event, eg those in incident control rooms.

3. Public information and communication

3.1 Types of information

The information requirements of the audience range from performance details, ticketing Arrangements, travel options, recommended routes, location of facilities, venue layout and welfare information right through to urgent contact messages or emergency instructions. Anticipating public information needs has an important bearing upon welfare and safety. Consider what information the audience will require if the event is cancelled or curtailed and how to provide that information. Well-informed people are less likely to be frustrated, aggressive or obstructive. Advance information on how

to get to the venue, where to go on arrival or what will or not be allowed, all reduce frustration and irritation. If there is a need to communicate rules and restrictions, people are more likely to comply if they are aware of the reasons behind them.

3.1.1 Communication channels

Communication channels include:

- Publicity material and tickets;
- Media (press, radio, TV);
- Route-marking,
- Signs;
- Notices, information displays; screens, scoreboards;
- Face-to-face contact;
- Emergency public announcements;
- PA systems.

3.1.2 Alarms

Audible alarms are useful alerting devices but convey little information. The activation of an audible alarm will most often need to be followed by an explanation about what to do, or simply information that it has been a false alarm.

3.1.3 PA systems

PA systems are a vital channel of communication with the audience. Output should be clear and intelligible for everyone of normal hearing in all parts of the venue, including people in the immediate surrounds. Ensure that the PA announcer has a good view over as much of the venue as possible and good communication links with control points. In the event of a major incident, override facilities must allow announcements to be made over the PA system without interference from other sound sources. Agree the circumstances in which this will happen in your major incident plans. The PA system should be fully tested before the event. It should have a back-up power supply that

allows it to continue to operate at full load in the event of an emergency.

The availability of vehicle-mounted PA systems around the venue has also proved important when there is a need to communicate with peoples arriving at, or leaving, the venue. In the event of an evacuation there will be a need to communicate with the people outside the venue. The power requirements for these systems will need to be planned.

3.1.4 Screens, scoreboards

Video screens and scoreboards are a useful communication channel for putting out public announcements. They can provide information without interruption to a performance. For urgent public announcements, however, they can reinforce the message and give information to those who have hearing difficulties.

3.1.5 Loud hailers

Provide loud hailers at strategic points in the venue for use by stewards and police for urgent communication and as a back-up in case the PA system fails. Train workers how to use them and where they are located. Keep batteries fully charged.

3.1.6 Staff (face-to-face contact)

Direct contact between personnel and the public is obviously a vital communication channel, particularly in the safety chain. Approachable and helpful stewards have a particularly important role in creating a positive relationship with the audience. Their role in giving people clear and concise directions and assistance in an emergency can be a vital one. Staff with any safety role should be easily identifiable by tabards or other high-visibility items of clothing. These allow the public to seek them out as a source of assistance and to recognise their authority when appropriate. If people are being directed along a route of safety, stewards in high-visibility clothing can help indicate the way much more clearly.

When problems are being dealt with, high-visibility clothing also helps colleagues, supervisors or CCTV controllers to pick them out and spot when they may be in difficulty or need support.

In some cases, for workers who do not normally need to be visually conspicuous but may need to be identifiable for certain contingencies, reversible jackets that are high visibility on one side are worth considering.

3.1.7 Emergency public announcements

Where there is known danger, early warning is essential. Many estimates of crowd evacuation times only calculate the time between a crowd starting to move and the time the area has been cleared. However, in many situations, the time between first requesting people to evacuate an area and when they start to comply is a significant factor in the overall evacuation. Persuasion time must be added to movement time.

One reason often given for not indicating the cause of an evacuation is the fear of causing panic. Lessons learned from previous incidents and experimental research indicate that complacency can be a much greater danger. If panic occurs, it is usually only when people's escape time is so compressed that they feel they no longer have the chance to escape. Delayed communication has generally been found to be a far greater danger. Accurate and timely information is therefore essential.

People will respond better if the information comes from a source that is recognised as having authority or from someone the listeners respect. There is therefore a choice between using an authority or an empathy figure. If the latter seems to be the best option, seek the collaboration of the performers and brief them accordingly at the start of the event.

The major incident plan must indicate who has the authority to decide that an emergency announcement is necessary, who should make it and under what circumstances. Pre-plan the wording of

announcements or text messages as far as possible. Agree messages to be made, through consultation between organisations with a safety role.

Coded announcements may be needed to alert workers so that they can take up emergency positions. Once they are ready, information can be given to the audience. The audience should be attracted by loud and distinct signals (such as two-tone chimes). Succeed in attracting their attention before any information is given. Keep language simple, sentences short and positive whenever possible.

Instructions should tie in with route marking, signs and other visual cues. Announcements need to make clear and specific location references wherever practicable (if possible, avoid relative references that can be interpreted differently such as 'away from the front' or 'further back').

In serious situations, an integrated approach would combine spoken announcements, text displays and directions from stewards in high-visibility clothing. Different people will respond to cues differently and this approach also recognises that some channels are not available to people with hearing or sight impairments. Reinforcement and repetition is needed to keep people on course.

Key elements should be repeated: what action is required, the nature of the incident, where to go, what to do on arrival. People should be told that it will be repeated as they proceed along their route. If not, they may be afraid of missing information and impede flows by stopping to check, seeking an authority figure to ask, or waiting for a further announcement.

Keep people up to date with the situation, even if no changes have occurred. Telling people that there is no change is still information, pre-empts individual queries and removes pressure from workers. Broadcasts are much easier and much more efficient than individual responses.

Even when people have left a venue they will need to know when and if an event will be restarted, whether and when they can collect vehicles, and what to do if the event is postponed, rescheduled or cancelled.

3 Customer Service

Customer satisfaction is the positive emotional state reached by a customer after purchasing a product or service. A customer is satisfied when they feel they have received at least as much from a buying experience as the effort they put in, and when they reach the conclusion that their buying experience was as good as they believed it would be.

The better you understand your existing customers, the more likely it is you will be able to:

- Increase their loyalty,
- Address any potential issues before they are tempted to defect, and
- Effectively attract—and keep—new customers

5. Customer Service skills required in an event coordinator

A special event with its stunning decor and smoothly running programme is actually the end product of a great deal of work by a true professional. An event coordinator takes pride in the delivery of excellent customer service and a seamless event. The top skills necessary for pleasing clients in this field include a sharp focus on details, a genuinely pleasing behaviour, the ability to withstand pressure and the natural desire to provide the best service possible.

5.1 Details-Oriented

An events coordinator must know his job thoroughly if he is to please his customers. He should be able to assess situations quickly and provide exactly what is needed. He should not overlook any detail in planning and executing events.

5.2 Organised

To provide customers with the best service, an event coordinator needs to keep excellent records. He should have contact information for vendors and other important contacts available at a moment's notice. He must be carefully organised in every aspects so as to never appear frazzled in front of clients.

5.3 Engaging Personality

Someone adept at customer service has an engaging personality. He is smiling and reassuring to persons who might be under stress about their events. The events coordinator should be able to communicate effectively with all types of people with diplomacy and charm. According to Entertainment Management Online, good interpersonal skills are invaluable to this job.

5.4 Good Negotiator

Clients want to know they are getting the best price available for their events. The events coordinator must, therefore, be a sharp negotiator who can get more for less. This professional should have good relationships with vendors so as to obtain discounts and special deals.

5.5 Eye for Design

You need to impress your customers with your ability to design an eye-pleasing event. An Event Coordinator should know how to set up a creative, classy and attractive scene which will please clients and their guests.

5.6 Energetic

Customers are naturally sceptical of an events coordinator who is slow to respond to their needs. High energy is necessary at all times for you to handle all the various roles you must perform. Stay motivated by getting rest in your off times and taking care of yourself physically.

5.7 Solutions-Oriented

Take care of your customers as an Events Coordinator by being solutions-oriented. There will be many situations which require prompt attention and the ability to find the best answers.

5.8 Motivated

A good customer service professional likes what he does. The internal motivation to work directly with people has to be there if he is to perform his job well. He has to enjoy the challenges of putting together events for his clients.

5.9 Unflappable

The ability to remain calm and to think clearly under pressure will make your work successful. Clients need to see that you can maintain your composure under the most stressful of incidents.

5.10 Resilient

You should be able to bounce back from bad experiences to be successful as a Coordinator. To please clients, you might often have to make last-minute changes and come up with new ideas and plans. Your resiliency will often be tested; you must withstand the storms in order to stay in the profession.

6 Customer Service Tips

The following key tips for good customer service will help staff provide superior quality service to clients, customers or members of the public attending events.

6.1 At the first Point-of-contact

When addressing customers always try to be attentive, respectful, and listen to what they are saying. Customers will feel valued and comfortable knowing you are paying attention to them.

Some tips for good customer service are where appropriate to address the customer by name as often as possible as it will signal a personalised element to your customer that you value them as a person.

Addressing Customer Requirements

One of the most frustrating problems many customers face is being passed from pillar to post when there is a problem. This can occur in many ways, for example in face to face situations, over the telephone, or through an online customer service link. It is therefore important that problems and issues are dealt with quickly and professionally with the minimal waste of time to the customer. Try and make the customer's experience of using your services as smooth and hassle free as possible.

6.2 Providing Professional Customer Service

Clients who are paying for a service expect to receive value for money. It is vital therefore when dealing with clients enquires that you or your staff have knowledge of the service or product provided, the prices involved, terms and conditions, guarantees, promotions etc.

If this information is not readily at hand the client/customer needs to be reassured that you will find out the answer. Some tips for good customer service in this area are, if you are unable to provide an immediate answer reassure the customer that you will find out the answer as quickly as possible. The golden rule is *“never make a promise to a customer unless you know you can deliver on it.”*

6.3 Understanding the Demanding Customer

There will always be customers who will be difficult to please no matter how hard you try to please them. In such situations the golden rule is to remember they are 'right' so it is important to listen carefully to what they are saying without interrupting.

Treat customers in a caring and warm manner as this will help to build trust and confidence. Also – try to understand the customer's concerns and

questions. By offering excellent customer service, the demanding customer will feel valued and if their problem is resolved will return for repeat business and recommend your business to other people.

Staff employed at managing events should be trained for dealing with difficult people

6.4 Dealing with Difficult Customers/People

This can be a nightmare for most staff working in the customer service area. There are a number of tried and true tips for good customer service that can be used to calm and resolve problems involving difficult customers.

The most important ones are to;

- Listen and take an interest in what is being said as some customers will be angry or upset and will try to take out their frustration on the first staff member they speak to and can result in the customer yelling, swearing and making threats.
- Remain quiet until the customer is finished telling what their problem was as it will help to calm the situation. You will then be in a better position to communicate with the customer.
- Write down what the customer is saying while he is talking to you as it will help to reassure them that you are interested and making a record of what happened. This will in turn help to calm the situation and make the customer feel valued.
- Apologise for what has happened and reassure the customer that you will do your best to help sort the problem out.
- Try to resolve the complaint or problem quickly as possible. It is well known that customers who are treated with respect and honesty will receive loyalty in return and repeat business.

The two most important terms in providing quality customer service are: there should equal opportunities for all and there should not be any discrimination for any individual based on his/her membership to a certain group or category.

Equal opportunity; is a condition that all people should be treated equally irrespective of their , power, religion, sex, ethnicity, race, caste, or “involuntary personal attributes” such as disability, age, or sexual preferences.

Discrimination; is the prejudicial treatment of an individual based on their membership in a certain group or category. It involves the actual behaviours towards groups such as excluding or restricting members of one group from opportunities that are available to another group.

7 Inclusive planning for people with disabilities

7.1 Planning considerations

The challenge for event coordinators is planning events so the needs of all groups are taken into account. In the UK it is illegal to discriminate against people with disabilities in terms of:

- Access to premises and spaces used by the public
- Provision of goods, services and facilities
- Education.

7.2 How to plan for people with disabilities

- Ensure the information to be distributed (eg programmes/site maps) on the event takes into account the needs of people with disabilities
- Train staff/volunteers on dealing with people with disabilities
- Consider the needs of people with disabilities when choosing the venue/site, facilities and services
- If appropriate, factor in the needs of people with disabilities in making transport and/or accommodation arrangements

- Be aware of contacts to assist in making the event inclusive of people with disabilities.

7.3 Using the right language

An important part of making events inclusive of people with disabilities is the use of language. In the Britain context the phrases “people with a disability” or “people with disabilities” are the generally accepted terms to use when discussing disability. This is because these terms place the emphasis on the person first and foremost and the disability, whatever that may be, second. In the context of facilities, such as toilets and phones, the term that is used to denote that they have been designed to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities is ‘accessible’.

7.4 Event information

Firstly, all event information should be written in plain English using clear language and short sentences. This will help people from non-English speaking backgrounds and people with intellectual disabilities. Secondly, event information (particularly site/venue maps) needs to carry the universal symbols of access with a statement underneath identifying the person in the organisation responsible for access matters and their contact details.

7.5 Universal access symbols

If your event involves registration forms these should contain provision for people with disabilities to list their needs so that you can plan for their inclusion in the event.

7.6 Staff training

Staff and volunteers should all be made aware of the provisions that have been made for dealing with people that have disabilities and ideally, have training in basic disability awareness.

7.7 Venue/site selection and design

Part of the criteria for venue/site selection should be access provisions for people with disabilities. Managers of such facilities should be able to provide information regarding these matters. If the event is conducted outdoors give consideration to wheelchair access throughout the site and meeting the various needs of people with disabilities (eg appropriate toilets). One way of 'trailing' a site's access potential is to borrow a stroller and push it around the site with a view to identifying problem areas.

8. Facilities for People with Special Needs

Consider provision for people with

- Difficulty in walking;
- Mobility problems (including wheelchair users);
- Impaired vision and/or hearing.

Event publicity should provide a contact number where people with special needs can obtain information on site arrangements. When designing your site or venue consider how people with special needs can best be accommodated. This includes easy access and adequate means of escape in an emergency. The number of wheelchair users who can be admitted will be dependent upon a number of factors including the structural and internal layout of the venue. Wheelchair spaces in parts of a seated area should allow for adequate room for manoeuvring a wheelchair. Generally, a manual wheelchair needs approximately 0.9 m width and 1.4 m depth. Electric wheelchairs need more space.

8.1 Access

Place parking facilities for people with special needs at the most directly accessible point to those areas set apart for wheelchair users. Spaces allocated should be wider than normal (about 3.6 m) to allow room to manoeuvre. At outdoor events parking for people with special needs should also be placed at the most directly accessible point to the allocated seating areas, as well as the most directly accessible point to designated and accessible campsites. Thought should be given to the means of having direct and safe access links between

the designated parking, camping and seating areas. Use flat surfaces or ramps to provide access from parking or drop-off areas to designated areas.

8.2 Ramps

Ramps for wheelchairs should have an easy gradient and it is suggested that it should not be steeper than 1 in 12.

8.3 Viewing areas

As standing audiences can cause surging movements, all people attending the event that have any mobility difficulties should be located in an area where they will not be affected. When setting aside viewing areas for people with special needs, ensure that the area has a clear view of the stage, often beside the 'mixing' tower. The area should be constructed using non-slip materials with direct access to an exit.

8.4 Support

Stewards or special needs assistants should be in attendance to ensure that facilities which are provided for people with special needs are available for the intended purpose. Consider providing designated 'ground support' workers.

8.5 People with impaired vision

People with impaired vision or colour perception may have difficulty in recognising information signs including those used for fire safety. Signs therefore need to be designed and positioned so that they can easily be seen and are distinguishable. Good lighting and the simple use of colour contrasts can also help visually impaired people find their way around. Where practicable, consider admitting guide dogs.

8.6 Evacuation

People in the audience may be affected by a range of disabilities, including restricted mobility, epilepsy, impaired hearing, mental health problems, etc, so their needs and requirements should be included in major incident and contingency plans. Where they exist, electronic display systems should be

used to give information, including evacuation messages, particularly for people with impaired hearing.