



The Independent Event Organisers Guide

From a community event of 500 people, to a major open air festival lasting several days. Good planning and management are fundamental to the success of any music show. And there are essential points to consider and prepare for, in order to build a proper plan for everyone involved.

Events are covered by legal requirements, with variations according to the event. Specific arrangements for the health and safety of those involved in events, including the provision of services and facilities. By applying a strategic approach to the type and size of event, it should be straightforward to decide which elements are relevant and what type of provisions are needed. Effective planning is concerned with prevention through identifying, eliminating and controlling hazards and risks. It is therefore necessary to have an appreciation of the information contained.

You are required to make and provide a plan for your event before it takes place. Ensure that any safety documentation is easily available for examination by health and safety inspectors or other local authority officers. Keep all involved parties updated and ensure all understand the management plan. Make suitable arrangements so that the local authority can contact you quickly for matters that may need further clarification.

It is usually necessary to obtain a public entertainment licence from the local authority for most music events. A TEN (Temporary Events Notice) is for under 500 people. You can apply for this online via:
<https://www.gov.uk/temporary-events-notice>

The planning issues for an event can be considered in this guide:

The 'build-up', which involves planning the venue design, site layout, selection of competent workers, selection of contractors and subcontractors, structures 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 and stage management. Transport, welfare arrangements. Planning strategies for dealing with fire, first aid, contingencies and major incidents, etc.

the 'load out', requires planning for the safe exit of people and equipment.

The 'breakdown', which includes planning to control risks once the event is over and the infrastructure being dismantled. Such as services arriving to break equipment down. Ground damage. Collection of rubbish and waste-water disposal present risks and these aspects need to be planned and managed.

The general principle behind venue design is to provide an arena in which the audience can enjoy the entertainment in a safe and comfortable atmosphere. The requirement for certain safety provisions, the type, number and specification of facilities and services will depend on the type of event and the outcome of the risk assessment.

It is important to visit the venue or site to carry out a preliminary assessment to determine suitability. The main areas for consideration are: available space for audience, temporary structures, backstage facilities, parking, camping and rendezvous points. Rough calculations of the available space are useful at this stage.

Factors to consider include the following:

***Ground conditions - are they suitable? Weather defluctive - Even and well-drained open sites are preferable. Will the structures go on safely? Avoid steep slopes, boggy areas, underground /overground services (pipes and cables etc).**

***Traffic and pedestrian routes and emergency access and exits.**

***Position and proximity of noise-sensitive buildings - are there any nearby? Is it possible to satisfy both the requirements of the audience and the neighbours?**

***Geographical location - where is the site located? How far away is the hospital, fire station, public transport, parking, major roads, local services and facilities, etc?**

***Do the surroundings form a natural amphitheatre?**

Where does the sun rise and set?

Could any natural features assist in noise reduction? Are there any natural hazards/features such as lakes and rivers?

***Location and availability of services - water, sewage, gas, electric, telephone (including overhead cables).**

Are there any restrictions or hazards?

The local authority will usually request a preliminary meeting so that the proposals for the event can be discussed. Members of the emergency services as well as health and safety inspectors may attend. It may be helpful to ask the local authority to provide you with a checklist of information required for prior approval along with the timescale for submitting the information – if there is anything else they may require from you. The information you supply should be sufficient to enable the local authority to examine your safety management systems and check any necessary plans, calculations and drawings. You are able to address and rectify any environmental issues that may be raised by local authorities.



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 planning.

Successful planning for the show requires a team approach. It cannot be achieved by one individual operating alone. It is a team effort from the emergency services, local authority, venue and event managers, stewarding, security, contractors, catering, bar, stage, sound, lights, structures, artists, media, etc.

Create an event 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. The tent could be managed by the supplier of services. It may also be advisable to set up a series of planning meetings so that information can be exchanged between the parties and to ensure that the relevant agencies are aware of the planning process.

To provide a comprehensive overview to all these planning aspects, produce an event management plan. The constituents of an event safety management plan could include the following: capacity, duration, food, toilets, refuse, water, fire precautions, safety rules, site layout, first aid, special effects, access and exits, music levels, site crew managers, safety co-ordinator, etc. 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. The stage plan including power, artist times, sound engineer, lighting operator, etc.

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.

The purpose of a risk assessment is to identify hazards which could cause harm, assess the risks which may arise from those hazards and decide on suitable measures to eliminate, or control, the risks. A risk assessment for the build-up, show and breakdown, can only be carried out once information has been received from the contractors, other companies and self-employed people who will be working on site. It will also be necessary to visit the site or venue to identify specific hazards.

Hazards associated with the assembly of large numbers of people may vary according to the nature of the event and these hazards should be similarly assessed in terms of risk. The previous history of the performers and the audience that they attract can provide valuable information. The overall event risk assessment will then indicate areas where risks need to be reduced to acceptable levels. Decide what further actions may be required, eg improvement in venue design, safe systems of work, etc.

When the music has ended, this does not mean that the responsibilities towards health and safety are over. Ensure that you have considered how and times the equipment and services will be removed from the stages, tents and marquees at the end of the event. Planning for the breakdown.

The stages, marquees and stalls have to be dismantled safely, timely, and in a controlled manner and removed from site. Plan to ensure the same site safety rules apply in relation to managing contractors during this phase of the event.

Ensure that the contractors or subcontractors you intend to hire, to build the infrastructure or provide other services, are competent in the management of their own health and safety when working on site. Simple checks of the contractors and subcontractors health and safety policies can be carried out and applicable safety method statements and risk assessments obtained and examined in relation to their proposed work.

Contractors, subcontractors and self-employed people need to appreciate the hazards and risk to others working on site and to co-operate with each other to minimise identified risks. The nature of each service is important when situating them. Effective co-operation can be achieved by working to prepared site safety rules and safety plans.

Having us involved gets you more of this knowledge and the documentation needed. We are literally giving away the information needed for a successful event management plan!

Support

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