

19. Safety Responsibilities



safety responsibilities

If an event organizer employs people, they will generally be required to comply with the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSWA) which places legal duties on businesses involved in events to ensure the health and safety of their employees and the public.

However, events run by volunteers (where no one is employed) are generally not covered by health and safety law, unless someone is in control of premises see www.gov.uk/government/news/can-do-guidance-will-make-organising-volunteer-events-simpler (<http://www.gov.uk/government/news/can-do-guidance-will-make-organising-volunteer-events-simpler>)

The HSWA places general duties on employers, the self-employed and people in control of premises to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of their employees and anyone else that may be harmed by work activities or the workplace (e.g. the audience).

It also places duties on employers to provide their employees with:

- safe machinery, equipment and systems of work – this includes all equipment used at events, from structures to lasers and generators
- methods for ensuring equipment and harmful substances are used properly and stored safely
- necessary information, instruction, supervision and training
- a safe and healthy workplace
- a safe and healthy work environment, including adequate lighting, heating, ventilation and toilet facilities.

Even if people working under the control and direction of others are treated as self-employed for tax and National Insurance purposes, they may still be considered employees for health and safety purposes.

Health and safety responsibilities are defined by criminal law and cannot be passed on from one person to another by a contract. In any client/contractor relationship, both will have duties under health and safety law.

Note: Other legal requirements on event organisers, such as food safety, public health, nuisance and licensing law, are covered in other sections of this guide.