

3. Assessing Risks



assessing risks

Anyone organising any event – no matter what the size - has a responsibility to ensure the safety of all those working with them, whether employees, volunteers or contractors, as well as those attending the event.

Documenting what you have done to minimise risks is also important as, should something go wrong, you may need to be able to show that you took every reasonable precaution to make the event safe.

The process for doing this involves ‘walking’ through every aspect of the event, both mentally and physically, to identify things that could cause harm to people, the likelihood of that happening and what can be done to minimise the risk of it happening.

Some risks may be common to every event, such as people working at height (e.g. up ladders), electricity supply or vehicle movements. Others may be specific to the type of event, venue or location.

A simple guide on how to undertake a risk assessment can be found at www.hse.gov.uk/risk/ (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/>)

Keep an open mind

Not all hazards and risks may be easy to spot. Some may be obvious, such as someone tripping over a cable, others less so, but could have serious consequences (e.g. someone climbing into the roof of a stage to replace a light).

Organisers can only be expected to identify reasonably foreseeable hazards, given their own knowledge and experience. They are not expected to anticipated every far-fetched circumstance.

In some cases, such as with temporary structures, the risks may be better assessed by the contractor. However, the event organizer must ask them to supply a risk assessment.

Keeping Records

Recording in writing the risks that have been identified can both help event organisers demonstrate that they have taken appropriate precautions should something happen and also provide a checklist for monitoring risks throughout the event.

If the event organizer employs more than five people, there is a legal requirement to keep a written record of the risk assessments undertaken.

Specialist Advice

Bigger and more risky events may employ a specialist health and safety advisor to manage this.

More detailed information about the above can be found in the Purple Guide at www.thepurpleguide.co.uk
(<http://www.thepurpleguide.co.uk>)