



# Community Events

A guide to holding safe events

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*This document is intended to provide general guidance. No responsibility can be accepted by the author and its contributors for any inaccuracies or omissions. Organisers of events should always take their own appropriate advice and have full responsibility for all their undertakings.*



## Introduction.

**This guide has been produced** to help anyone who is planning to hold a public community event to organise and manage it safely.

**Anyone who organises an event**, regardless of whether it is managed by an individual, volunteers or professional event staff, has a responsibility to protect the health, safety and welfare of anyone who may be affected in any way by the event. It is the responsibility of the event organiser to ensure he or she is aware of, and complies with, all legislation relevant to the activity being undertaken.

**The responsibilities of an event organiser** extend to all event personnel including volunteers and to members of the public attending or affected by the event.

There are many different types of public events organised by local groups throughout the district, this guide, therefore is intended only to give organisers general advice towards safe planning and management and not to replace the need for consultation with Local Authorities or the Emergency Services. In addition to the advice given, there is a great deal of useful information available in publications produced by the Home Office and Health and Safety Executive. Lists of useful contact addresses and publications are included at the back of the guide.

**As an event organiser**, as soon as you acknowledge your responsibility towards the health, safety and welfare of anyone who may be affected by your undertakings, you have already taken the first step towards planning your event safely. This guide outlines the principles of safe management through Risk Assessment and by the production of a simple Event Management Plan. Whilst every event is different, there are a number of component elements consistent to each and everyone.

**This publication provides general guidance** about how to approach planning and management safely while leaving scope for flexibility to take account of the exact nature and size of your event. It is hoped that this guidance document will encourage event organisers throughout the district to adopt a common sense approach to planning events safely. The aim is that this should lead to Local Authority and Emergency Services personnel taking a helpful and co-operative approach towards sharing advice and expertise with the local and regional community. It should also lead to a more widespread understanding of the statutory responsibilities that apply to all event organisers.



## 1. Before the organising begins

**For the purposes of this guide**, a public community event is defined as ANY planned activity, which involves organisation by an individual or a committee and to which members of the public will have access, either free of charge or for an entrance fee. Events of this nature can range from small indoor events such as jumble sales, concerts, charity events or exhibitions held inside village halls or community centres to larger outdoor events such as fetes, country shows or craft shows or community celebrations, fairs, carnivals, processions, marches and cavalcades or firework displays.

**As a starting point** towards organising any event, it is very helpful to try to define your aims and objectives within a simple short paragraph. Ask yourself a few simple questions about your proposed event before attempting your definition:

**What type of event do we want to hold?**

**Why do we want to hold an event?**

**Who is the event for?**

**When do we want to hold the event?**

**Where do we want to hold the event?**

**Who is going to be involved in organising the event?**

**How long do we have to plan the event?**

If you write down the answers to these simple questions, you should be able to use your answers to form a simple definition of your aims and objectives. Some sample event definitions are shown below:

### **Example 1: Village Fair**

'We are aiming to encourage EVERYONE in our small village to participate in some way with a village fair on August Bank Holiday Monday. We want to use the local community centre and adjacent privately owned land and have 30 stalls and sideshows and a large bouncy castle for the children to enjoy. We hope the fair will attract people from outside our village and that we can raise at least £1000 towards the church clock restoration fund.'

### **Example 2: Table Sale**

'We are trying to set up a regular table sale on our local school playing field to enable local people to benefit from the opportunity to sell their goods and to

raise funds towards sports equipment for the school. We hope to establish a fortnightly event attracting a large number of people into our village on Sunday mornings'

### Example 3: Outdoor concert local council owned park

'We want to use a public park to hold a classical music concert on a stage in July next year. We want to end the concert with a large firework display and use lighting and special effects to enhance the concert. We hope to attract 2,000 paying customers and raise a significant sum of money towards a local charity'

**Once you have produced** a clear definition of your aims and objectives you have an extremely useful starting point for your planning. You may well wish to return to this definition as planning progresses to ensure you are staying true to your original aims and objectives. If your objectives include a requirement to raise funds for a charity or any other purpose or if there are any costs associated with any element of your event whatsoever, you will need to produce a detailed budget to determine the feasibility of your proposals.

**There are often costs** associated with ensuring your event is planned in a safe manner and you must ensure from the outset that these costs are considered and taken into account. You should not organise an event if budget limitations could lead to any compromises to public safety. (Note that the information included within this document relates to Safety Planning only and does not extend to offering advice about drawing up and managing event budgets.)

**You are now ready** to plan how you can achieve your aims and objectives safely. Breaking down your event into each component can help you determine the safety risks involved and to see whether each element is feasible. You can also check that you have the necessary experience and expertise within your team to safely plan each element on your own or whether you need to seek advice from other agencies.  
(see later section))



## 2. Event components & Risk Assessment

You have decided that you want to proceed with the event, and you have a definition of what you want to achieve. This may be your first event, or you may have been involved in organising events before. You may be working on your own to achieve your aims or working as part of a committee from your community.

It is important that individuals are identified to undertake the roles of:

- The Event Manager
- The Event Safety Co-ordinator

For smaller events, the Event Manager and Event Safety Coordinator may be the same person but generally there is a necessity for more than one person to be involved in organisation and safe planning.

You should write down the organisational structure for your event, naming the individuals who will take responsibility for each aspect of the management of the event. (Your event definition and management team structure will be important elements of your overall event management plan).

It is very important to allow sufficient time for planning your event and to remember that if licenses or permissions are required for the activities you wish to undertake, it is likely that you will need to provide the emergency services and your Local Authority with your proposals at least 2-3 months before your event is held. With larger events (particularly those that involve use of a public highway), anything up to a full year's notice may be required.

You are now ready to begin organising your event so you need to break down your definition into a number of component parts and work through how each of the components will be effectively managed to achieve your aims safely. Whilst events vary considerably, each and every one is comprised of a number of components, many of which are consistent to all events.

Below is a list of components, which are likely to apply to most public community events. You should start by considering exactly how each element relates to your own proposals. Extract each element and write a short paragraph about how you intend to manage each of them.

This process should help you highlight areas where knowledge in your team may be lacking and where you will need to seek advice.

For very small events it is likely that you will be able to make your own plans for ensuring public safety and you will not need to seek detailed advice.

However, you are still advised to let your Local Authority and Emergency Services know of your intentions, particularly as many types of events need specific permissions or Licenses.

## Components of a Public Community Event

(For the purpose of this exercise, the Chapter Headings from the Health and Safety Executive 'Event Safety Guide' have been used as the basis for the list.)

- Event Safety Plan and Safety Policy
- Venue and site design and facilities
- Written agreement from the owner of the land/premises
- Fire Safety
- Planning for Emergency situations (including possible evacuation)
- Public Liability and other necessary insurance)
- Communication (Telephones and two way radios)
- Management of crowds
- Event stewards and other event staff – voluntary or employed
- Transport management (including car parking and vehicle movements)
- Structures and structural safety (Stages, marquees etc)
- Crowd control barriers and other safety barriers
- Electrical installations and lighting (including generated power)
- Food, drink and water provision including License arrangements for provision of alcohol
- Merchandising
- Required Licenses and permissions
- Sanitary facilities
- Sound, noise and vibration
- Camping
- Children
- TV and media
- Control of access
- All night events
- Amusements, attractions and promotional displays
- Waste management
- Special effects, fireworks and pyrotechnics
- Facilities for persons with special needs
- Medical, ambulance and first aid management
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)
- Information and welfare facilities
- Performers
- Statutory Health and Safety Responsibility
- Other responsibilities governed by legislation
- Using the public highway for access /Closing of a public highway and all related issues

- Proximity of participants or spectators to waterways/Activities proposed on board water vessels

## Risk Assessment

**Having established the relevance of each listed element** and written a paragraph detailing how you intend to manage each element, you can take your elements one by one and start to work through the risks associated with each.

**As an event organiser**, you have a responsibility to ensure that your event is safe and you should undertake a documented Risk Assessment for all your proposed activities. It is important to remember that as the event organiser it will be you who will be liable should an incident occur and it can be proved that the incident occurred as a result of your acts or omissions.

**Assessing all risks** may appear to be an onerous task but it is a very useful mechanism for determining feasibility and safety requirements. The process will also enable you to clearly highlight areas where you need to seek advice and information from other agencies. You will also be able to refer to the assessments for similar previous events and therefore only have to do the same things once.

**The purpose of a Risk Assessment** is to identify hazards, which could cause harm, assess what may arise from those hazards and decide on suitable measures to eliminate, or control the risks.

**A hazard** is anything, which has the potential to cause harm to people.

**Risk** is the likelihood that the harm from a hazard is realised and the extent of it. In a risk assessment, risk should reflect both the likelihood that harm may occur and its severity.

**There is not a prescribed way** for presenting your Risk Assessments, but it is accepted practice to work to the principles contained within the Health and Safety Executive document '5 steps to Risk Assessment', a copy of which will be available from the Health and Safety Executive office.

### **Sample Risk Assessment**

#### *Bouncy Castle at Village Fair*

##### **Hazard Identified**

Possibility of persons falling from the structure either by tripping or by being pushed

##### **Who is likely to be at risk from this activity?**

Predominantly young children as this is the age group likely to be attracted to this particular activity and older children or adults who shouldn't be using the structure

***What are the current control measures to minimise the risk?***

- Bouncy castle is to be operated by a professional contractor who holds appropriate Public Liability Insurance
- Operator works on the basis of height restrictions for all those using the castle to ensure only children of appropriate height and similar age use the structure
- Operator provides 6 stewarding staff who ensure no-one using the structure is acting in an inappropriate manner

***Taking current control measures into account what are the remaining risks and what other actions are required to minimise those risks?***

With the current control measures undertaken by the operator, there is still a risk that too many children use the structure at any one time.

**Additional control measures**

The event organiser will ensure that the contract with the operator takes account of a maximum number of children using the structure at any one time and that the operator takes responsibility for imposing this restriction

***Taking into account the above, what is the assessment of the risk (low/medium/high)***

**Low to Medium**

It is important to note that whilst the event organiser in this example is intending to make the operator responsible for imposing certain restrictions, the overall responsibility for event safety still lies with the event organiser and the organiser will need to ensure that he/she is satisfied with the management arrangements for the attraction on the ground.

**Your documented Risk Assessments** will form an important part of your 'Event Management Plan' and it is important to return to your written Risk Assessments once you have proceeded with the organisation of your event to ensure that you are managing your event so as to minimise risks.

**If an incident occurs** at your event, you may be required to produce a written copy of your Risk Assessment documents and prove that your event was managed on the basis of the control measures you identified within the Assessment. In addition to your own Risk Assessments, it is important to ensure you have copies of any Risk Assessments undertaken by contractors or concessionaires operating any attractions, activities or equipment at your event.



### 3. The Event Management Plan

**Like the process** of assessing risks associated with the event, the formation of an Event Management Plan is based on common sense and planning.

**If you have followed this guide**, you will already have compiled much of the Event Management Plan document, including the following:

- Your definition of the aims and objectives for your event
- The structure of your event management team
- The names of your Event Manager and Event Safety Co-ordinator
- A list of the component parts of your event
- Paragraphs detailing how each component is to be managed
- Risk Assessments for your event and all associated activities

**It is useful to think of this document as one that, in the absence of the event organiser, could enable the event team to proceed with the event in exactly the same way as the organiser intended.**

**If you approach your Plan** on this basis, it should become clear to you how much detail you need to include in the document. It is at this stage in your planning that you will need to ensure you have enough knowledge and expertise to manage your event safely and effectively.

**Unless you are organising** a very simple event on a very small scale, it is likely that you will need to contact a number of outside agencies to ensure that you have all the information you need and that you are not proceeding without necessary permissions and Licenses.

**Once you have taken** the necessary advice and ensured there are no objections to the event, you will be in a position to complete your written Event Management Plan. You will then be ready to proceed with the practical work required to:

- meet the aims and objectives of your original event definition.
- ensure you manage each component event in accordance with your Management Plan, and
- ensure you manage the event with the control measures defined in the Risk Assessments.



## 4 Where to go for advice and information

**The aim of this guide** is to work towards a consistent approach towards providing event safety advice and sharing information throughout Craven. All Local Authorities and the Emergency Services have a part to play in this.

**As you break your event down** into its component parts, you will, inevitably, come across areas where you feel the necessity to seek clarification or advice from your Council or from the Emergency Services. Apart from offering you useful information, these agencies can recommend a number of useful publications to further assist you with your planning.

### The Police

**Police should be informed** of all public events so that they may consider the implications for public safety within the terms of their responsibilities.

**Assessment of the need** for Police attendance and action at public events will be principally based upon the need to discharge core responsibilities, which are as follows:

- Prevention and detection of crime
- Preventing or stopping breaches of the peace
- Traffic regulation and control within the legal powers provided by law
- Activation of an emergency plan where there is immediate threat to life and co-ordination of resultant emergency services

**Additional to the above**, local police will offer advice on the general arrangements as they impinge on policing and whether the event activities require a police presence. They will also advise you as to whether you may incur any charges for provision of their services.

### The Local Authority (or County Council)

**It is important to understand** that different Local Authorities may hold the information and expertise you require within different parts of the organisation, so you'll need to be quite specific in your request for information to ensure you get to speak to the right person from the outset. In some situations, you may need to speak with officers from more than one part of the organisation, particularly if your event is quite complex.

**Your Local Authority** or County Council should be able to offer advice on some or all of the following:

- Your duties under Health and Safety legislation including carrying out risk assessments and planning for emergencies

- Food hygiene and safety (if food is going to be sold, provided or prepared)
- The necessity for any Licenses for your event either for the purpose of 'Public Entertainment' or for the sale of goods and costs involved
- Public Liability Insurance
- product safety (where goods are going to be sold or distributed)
- trading standards issues
- required consents for road closures (in consultation with local police) and costs and time involved
- road closures and assistance with local traffic management (in conjunction with the local police) and costs and time involved

Should you want to use land or premises owned or operated by the Council for the purpose of a public event, your Local Authority will be able to provide you with details of Terms, Conditions and related costs for the hire of council land or premises.

## The Ambulance Service

**The ambulance service** should be able to offer you advice on the following:

- Whether a statutory ambulance service presence is recommended for your event and whether you will incur any costs for provision of this
- Whether your event warrants the necessity for setting up a triage (casualty assessment centre)
- In the event of a major incident which hospital casualties from your event are likely to be taken to
- What vehicle access they will require in the event of an emergency
- What level of First Aid cover you should provide at your event and whether you will incur any costs for the provision of this

## The Fire and Rescue Service

**The Fire Brigade** should be able to offer you advice on the following:

- All matters related to fire safety

- What access they will require for fire fighting vehicles in the event of an emergency
- Provision of on-site fire precautionary and fire-fighting arrangements

## The Health and Safety Executive

**The Health and Safety Executive Office** should be able to offer you advice on the following:

- Your duties under Health and Safety legislation including carrying out risk assessments and planning for emergencies
- What publications are available to you to assist with the safe planning of your event

## Safety Advisory Groups

**Local Safety Advisory Groups** should be established for those major events that require detailed planning and a co-ordinated response from the emergency services and the Local Authority.

**The groups should comprise representation** from Police, Fire and Rescue, Ambulance and Local Authority and ought to liaise with event organisers in the interests of public safety.

**Whatever information you seek**, you must remember that at all times you, as the event organiser, remain fully responsible for the safe planning of your event.

**If in any doubt**, seek further advice, and do not attempt to undertake any activity for which you do not have the necessary Safety Advisory Groups experience or expertise.

**If you are planning your first event, start with something simple and once you have successfully achieved that, you can set your sights on something a little more complicated in the future**



## 5 Useful addresses

**Contact details** for the North Yorkshire Emergency Services, Local and Unitary Authorities and the County Council are listed below. The details are correct at time of press. Please note that these details may be subject to change.

### **Police Headquarters**

Newby Wiske Hall  
Northallerton  
North Yorkshire  
DL7 9HA  
Telephone: 0845 60 60 24 7

### **Fire and Rescue Service**

North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters  
Thurston Road  
Northallerton  
North Yorkshire  
DL6 2ND

Tel: 01609 780150

### **Health and Safety Executive**

HSE Information Centre  
Broad Lane  
Sheffield S3 7HQ  
HSE Info Line 08701 545500  
[www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

### **Ambulance Service**

#### **Tees, East & North Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust Ambulance Headquarters**

Fairfields  
Shipton Road  
York  
YO30 1XW

Telephone 01904 666000  
Fax 01904 666050

## **County Council**

North Yorkshire County Council  
County Hall  
Northallerton  
North Yorkshire  
DL7 8AD

Telephone: 01609 780780  
Fax: 01609 778199

## **Craven District Council**

Town Hall  
Skipton  
North Yorkshire  
BD23 1AH

Tel: 01756 700600



## 6 Further reading

**The Health and Safety Executive and the Stationery Office** (formerly HMSO), produce many free or priced publications, some of which are listed below. HSE books are available from:

### **HSE Books**

PO Box 1999  
Sudbury  
Suffolk  
CO10 2WA  
Tel: 01787 881165  
Fax: 01787 313995

### **The Event Safety Guide**

A guide to health, safety & welfare at music and similar events  
HSG195  
HSE Books 1999  
ISBN 0 7176 2453 6  
Website: [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk)

### **Stationery Office publications are available from:**

The Publications Centre  
PO Box 276  
London  
SW8 5DT  
Tel: 0870 600 5522  
Fax: 0870 600 5533

Some of the publications detailed below may be available to at the offices of your Local Authority or to purchase at Managing Health and Safety reputable book stores.

### **Five Steps to Risk Assessment**

A step by step guide to a safer and healthier workplace  
INDG163 HSE Books 1998  
ISBN 0 7176 15650 – Single copies free

### **Working together on firework display**

A guide to safety for firework display organisers and operators  
HSG123 HSE Books 1999  
ISBN 0 7176 2478 1

### **Managing Health and Safety**

Five steps to success  
INDG275 HSE Books 1998 –  
Free leaflet

### **A step by step guide to COSHH assessment**

HSG97 HSE Books 1992  
ISBN 0 7176 1446 8

### **Everyone's Guide to RIDDOR**

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous occurrences  
Regulations 1995  
HSE Books 1996  
ISBN 07176 24412  
single copies free

### **Fairgrounds and Amusement Parks**

Guidance of safe practice  
HSG 175 HSE Books 1998  
ISBN 0 7176 1174 4

### **Guide to Fire Precautions in existing places of entertainment and like premises**

The Stationery Office 1994  
ISBN 0 11 341079 4

### **Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982**

Ch30 The Stationery Office 1982  
ISBN 0 10 543082 X

### **Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975**

Ch52 The Stationery Office 1975  
ISBN 0 10 545275 0

### **Managing Crowds Safety**

A guide for organisers at events and venues  
HSE 154 2000  
ISBN 0 7176 1834 X

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the references listed in this publication, their future availability cannot be guaranteed

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