

# Health and safety at community events

If you are organising a community event then you should think about the health and safety of those coming to the event. Remember, if you employ any staff or make any charges to those attending then you have a duty to make sure the event is safe.

You may also wish to refer to the leaflet on insurance also included within this pack (this is also available on request from the Bracknell Forest Safety Advisory Group by emailing [licensing@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@bracknell-forest.gov.uk) or calling 01344 352000).

## Before you start

Visit the venue and think about the facilities available and what you are going to do. As a minimum you should consider the points below.

## Facilities

It's important that people enjoy themselves, so think about the following:

- Are there enough seats for everyone? It depends on the type of event and the people coming, but try to have seats for all those who may want to sit down.
- Are there enough toilets for the people attending? It is recommended that you have at least one toilet for every 50 people, but preferably more.
- Is there drinking water available? Most venues have a kitchen with drinking water, so if people need a drink are there any cups or glasses?
- Are there any heaters to use if it is cold?
- If it is hot can you cool the room? You may want to open doors or windows to let a draft of air through, but remember if you are playing music you may need to keep all doors and windows closed so you don't disturb neighbours.

## Slips and trips

Most accidents are caused by people slipping on floors or tripping over things. Look at the venue to see what you can do to stop this happening.

- Avoid having any loose cables trailing. Ideally don't have any cables where people walk, but if it can't be avoided then tape them securely to the floor. Always try to have cables away from where people walk.
- Is the floor clean before you start?
- If there are any spillages do you have something to clean it up, such as a mop and bucket?
- Is the carpet coming up or are there any places where people may trip? If so, speak with the venue and try to secure them or secure them with visible tape.
- If it rains, is there a mat in the doorway to help stop water being brought in?

## First aid

If anyone is injured do you know what to do?

- Is there a first aid box stocked with plasters and bandages?
- Is anyone trained in first aid? As a minimum you should have one person who can take charge and call an ambulance if needed.
- If the event is larger, and particularly if there is a risk of people being hurt, then consider using services such as St John Ambulance or the British Red Cross.

## Fire safety

- Are there fire extinguishers available and are there people trained to use them? It's important to use the correct extinguisher - the extinguisher's label should tell you what it can be used on. If in doubt ask.
- Is there a fire blanket in the kitchen?
- Think about what you would do if a fire is started. Only tackle a fire if you know what you are doing. The best advice is to evacuate the building to a safe place immediately and call the fire brigade.
- If you want any further advice contact the fire authority on 0118 945 2888.

## Electrical equipment

- All electrical equipment provided by the venue should be regularly tested for safety. Is there a sticker on it saying when the last electrical test was done? If not, then ask.
- Don't overload electrical sockets.
- Keep drinks and other liquids away from electrical items.
- If you are having any electrical items outside are the fittings suitable for outdoor use? There are specific types of plugs, etc that must be used if water may be present (including rain).
- Are electrical cables protected from damage?

## Risk assessment

It's a good idea to do what is called a risk assessment. If you are using the venue for any kind of business activity then you must do a risk assessment. This includes if you employ anyone or if you take money, even if it is for charity.

A risk assessment sounds complicated but really it's quite simple. There are a couple of basic steps to take:

- Think about how people can be hurt. For example is there something they can trip on such as a loose carpet? Are any heaters on the floor with hot surfaces?
- Think about who might be hurt and how. For example only people who use the oven or are in the kitchen are at risk of being burnt by it.
- Think about what you can do to stop being hurt. For example, don't let children near hot or dangerous equipment, secure any loose carpets.

You can find more information on risk assessments and a sample risk assessment template in the Safety Advisory Group's 'Guide for Event Organisers' which can be found at [www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/planninganeventinbracknellforest](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/planninganeventinbracknellforest) and is available on request from the Licensing Team by email to [licensing@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@bracknell-forest.gov.uk) or call to 01344 352000.

## Emergency arrangements

- Think about access for emergency vehicles.
- Consider your plan in case you have to cancel the event at short notice.
- Clearly define roles and responsibilities and nominate person(s) in charge of planning and running the event.

If you want any further advice or information on health and safety matters, or the legislation covering health and safety, please contact Environmental Health on 01344 352506 or [environmental.health@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:environmental.health@bracknell-forest.gov.uk). You can also find information at the Health and Safety Executive's website: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/> or via the HSE Infoline on 0845 345 0055.

## Remember ....

A few simple steps before the event can make all the difference and make the event run more safely and smoothly.