

CLAS CIRCULAR 2012/01 (9 January 2012)

AN OCCASIONAL EVENTS CHECKLIST

Churches sometimes organise occasional events: parish suppers, discos, concerts, church fetes and the like. The regulation of such events – whether by the local authority or by licensing bodies – is becoming more complex by the year; and the following is intended as a helpful checklist of things that organisers need bear in mind. This checklist is based partly on an extremely useful guide produced by [Cambridgeshire ACRE](#) (Action with Communities in Rural England), partly on some very helpful advice from Ecclesiastical Insurance and partly material on various local authority websites. Other helpful sources are:

- the [guidance notes](#) on church functions produced by Methodist Insurance plc.
- a range of [guidance notes](#) on various topics from Ecclesiastical Insurance.
- the HSE's [Event Safety Guide](#).

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ADVANCE PLANNING: who's doing what?

If, for example, you propose to hire a bouncy castle for a fete you will need to order early – particularly for a bank holiday weekend when everyone else will be doing the same. So:

DECIDE AT THE OUTSET:

- WHAT is your event?
- WHEN is it to be held?
- WHERE will it be held?
- HOW will it be managed?
- WHO is going to be in overall charge? ***There needs to be one named person who is responsible for the whole event.***
- WHO are going to be the Appointed Persons for risk assessment, safeguarding, catering, site management, car parking and publicity?
- WHO will assume legal responsibility/liability?
 - for a single congregation, is it (eg) the PCC or the church stewards or elders and if so, has the event been appropriately authorised by minute?
 - for a joint activity by a number of churches (whether of the same denomination or different ones) what is the constitution of the organising group and does it have its own insurances etc? Have the participating churches each formally decided to take part and agreed their representatives to act on the church's behalf with appropriate authorisation by minute?

ADVANCE PLANNING: a preliminary checklist

- what notification and applications must you make?
- do you need:
 - an alcohol licence,
 - a lottery licence or
 - a music licence?
- do you need to notify the emergency services or the Highways Agency?
- do you have the appropriate insurance?
- have you enough people to run your event?
- will you need stewards (for example, to direct parking)? For guidance, see the HSE's [Managing Crowds Safely](#).
- will you need first aid cover?
- will there be children and/or vulnerable adults present? If so, what about safeguarding?
- will you be using contractors or sub-contractors for the event?

REMEMBER: *the organising committee has the primary 'duty of care' AND the Appointed Person undertaking the Risk Assessment cannot be the main event organiser.*

DO YOU NEED A SITE LAYOUT PLAN?

Depending on the nature and scale of the event, once you have agreed your venue it may be worthwhile and helpful to draw up a detailed site layout plan, including:

- entrances and emergency exits;
- location of all stalls, marquees;
- catering points;
- first aid provision;
- lavatories; and
- car parking.

INSURANCE COVER

You need to consider appropriate insurance early in the planning stage. Check with your existing insurer how far your existing policy will cover the planned event. If it does not:

- ask about extending your existing cover; or
- talk to an insurance broker about specific cover for the event.

In addition:

- if you are inviting other organisations, contractors, charities etc to take part check that they hold the appropriate insurance cover; and
- consider taking out event cancellation cover, since cancellation may involve irrecoverable expenses.

Whether you are extending your existing cover or taking out a one-off policy, be sure to tell your insurer of ALL activities taking place and make sure that the insurance company is aware of any special safety hazards such as on-site electrical equipment, a barbecue or a bouncy castle.

Give the insurer a copy of your site layout plan.

*ACRE suggests that the normal required public liability cover would be a minimum of **£5 million**.*

If refreshments are being made and/or supplied by the committee (rather than a contracted caterer) you will need insurance against food poisoning.

If you are expecting to take large amounts of cash you need to think of how to handle it. Try to avoid a large build-up of cash and arrange for a secure location for counting. If cash is not to be immediately banked or removed by a security company then you need to arrange secure overnight storage.

If you intend inviting VIPs or celebs you should take into account any special security measures that this may entail: your local MP would not normally have a bodyguard – but s/he almost certainly will if s/he holds a security-sensitive ministerial post.

Any marquee, tent or temporary structure erected as part of an event must be suitable for the purpose intended, of good condition and *must be erected by competent persons*, so:

- always engage the services of a specialist contractor to provide marquees and tents;
- check with the contractor what insurance cover he supplies as part of the Hire Agreement, so that you do not miss any cover or pay for what is already covered.

HEALTH & SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT

Health and Safety is extremely important and as event organiser you have a duty of care and legal responsibilities to ensure the health, safety and welfare not only of the public and participants who will be attending, but also of all employees, volunteers and contractors involved in arranging and staging the event. Therefore:

- you must undertake a Health and Safety Risk Assessment for the event and its associated activities; and
- you must take all reasonable precautions to ensure the event takes place safely and all activities at the events must comply with recognised safety standards.

A risk assessment identifies the activities comprised in the event and assesses the potential hazards associated with each activity, together with a risk rating.

Any contractors or other organisations involved in your event must also carry out their own risk assessments. However, if you are employing or inviting contractors/other organisations, it is your duty to ensure that you obtain copies of their risk assessments and satisfy yourself that these are adequate.

Where a person is erecting equipment, banners etc. at height, you must make a proper assessment of risk: advice is available in the [HSE Heightsafe leaflet](#).

Any temporary load-bearing structure, such as a stage, must be erected in strict compliance with H&S and planning legislation.

HAZARD CHECKLIST

Identify the activity / area of concern: *an activity is anything that takes place as part of your event*: stalls, face-painting, fairground rides, car boot sale, staged events, music, dancing, sports activities, fireworks, laser show, parade, marquee/tent, food, alcoholic refreshment, whatever. All activities must be clearly identified on your event/site layout plan.

Identify the hazards for each activity:

- slipping/tripping/falling hazards;
- fire risks or fire evacuation procedures;
- chemicals/fumes/substances hazardous to health;
- moving parts of machinery;
- vehicle movement;
- electrical safety, including use of portable electrical appliances;

- lifting/carrying/moving;
- high noise-levels;
- poor lighting/heating/ventilation;
- any possible hazard from specific demonstrations/activities; and
- crowd intensity and resulting pinch points restricting access or exit.

This list is not exhaustive and care should be taken to identify any other hazards associated with the specific activities within the event.

Identify the persons at risk, listed by groups:

- stewards;
- employees;
- volunteers;
- contractors;
- vendors;
- exhibitors;
- performers;
- members of the public;
- people with disabilities;
- children/elderly people; and
- pregnant women.

This list is not exhaustive.

Identify the current risk factor: Risk is the chance that someone will be harmed by the hazard and the extent of the risk arising from the hazards identified must be evaluated – high, medium or low – and actions then taken to minimise it.

You should take account of any information, instruction or training regarding the event and its activities and comply with all legislation, codes of good practice and British Standards.

For each risk, consider whether or not it can be eliminated completely. If not, then decide what must be done to reduce it to as low a risk as is reasonably practicable and safe.

Identify the actions to be taken to minimise each risk:

- preventing access to the hazard by enclosure/segregation;
- safe working procedures;
- adequate signage/training/instruction;
- finding a substitute for that activity/machine etc;
- providing welfare facilities for removal of contamination/first aid;
- removal of the hazard, etc; and
- personal protective equipment should be considered as a last resort.

This list is not exhaustive.

You must also include the provisions you must make to enable the activities to take place safely: first aid, stewarding/security, crowd management, car parking, site fencing/barriers, fire precautions and equipment, potential major incidents, evacuation procedure (due to emergency or inclement weather), stages, marquees or other temporary structures, waste collection, handling and disposal, cash collection and signage.

Identifying the new risk factor: once you have identified actions to be taken to minimise each risk, rate each risk as High, Medium or Low.

If necessary, review and revise: if the nature of the activities or hazards changes during the planning of the event the risk assessment will need to be reviewed and updated.

And finally (as mentioned above), ***the Appointed Person undertaking the Risk Assessment cannot be the main event organiser.***

SAFEGUARDING

Will children and/or vulnerable adults be present? If so:

- the lead person responsible for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults in the church in question needs to carry out a (written) assessment of the event in sufficient time to put further CRB checks in hand if necessary.
- if it is a joint event with a number of churches or congregations they will need to agree who the safeguarding lead will be.

The Vetting and Barring Scheme (and, consequently, the extent and nature of safeguarding/CRB checks) is currently under review by the Home Office – however, ***in safeguarding matters it is better to err on the side of caution.***

FOOD & DRINK

Caterers: The Food Premises (Registration) Regulations 1991 set out the requirements for registered food premises. Professional caterers should be registered under the Food Safety Act 1990. Where you wish to engage caterers to supply refreshments to the public, you will need to see evidence that each caterer:

- is registered as a food business with the local authority's Environmental Services department;
- has undertaken its own Risk Assessment;
- has its own insurance cover; and
- (if you require it to serve alcohol) has the required licences.

You will need to notify the local authority environmental health department in advance about when and where your event is to be held, along with an outline of the type of catering and facilities being provided.

If it is an open-air event with (eg) a burger or ice-cream van, check in advance the type of vehicle your caterer will be serving from and make sure generator covers and earth stakes comply with local authority requirements.

Remind the caterers that they must clear away and remove all their articles, litter, rubbish and property immediately after the event, unless otherwise agreed by prior arrangement.

DIY Catering: If you decide to do your own catering the Appointed Person should hold a Food Hygiene Certificate and there are certain rules that must be observed merely out of common sense:

- there should be adequate hand-washing and drying facilities;
- food should be prepared in a separate sink from hand-washing;
- raw and cooked food should be stored separately;
- food should be stored at the correct temperature;
- ideally, supply colour-coded preparation boards;
- supply disposable gloves;
- all food should be fully cooked at the required temperature; and
- **don't** serve hot drinks in thin, flimsy plastic cups.

If food or drink of any kind is being provided (whether or not prepared on-site), liability for food-poisoning should be included in the insurance cover and any advice given by the local Environmental Health Officer must be followed.

Makers of home-made cakes are deemed to be “volunteers” of the organisation organising the event and should be included in the organisation’s liability insurance cover.

Finally, you need to make adequate arrangements for the disposal of litter and food-waste.

Alcohol: It is illegal to sell alcohol unless:

- you already have a licence to do so; or
- the venue you are using has a Premises Licence and there is a named supervisor who holds a Personal Licence to sell alcohol; or
- you have served a Temporary Event Notice (for which see below) on the police and the local authority.

Giving bottles of alcohol as prizes in raffles and tombolas is exempt from the licensing regulations. But it is NOT permissible to sell tickets which can then be exchanged for an alcoholic drink or to ask for a donation in return for alcohol.

Will you need a premises licence? In the first instance, the Appointed Person must check with the local authority’s Licensing Officer to make sure that the licence you wish to apply for covers entertainment, *whether or not the majority of the event will comprise music and/or dancing*. The Appointed Person will need to indicate on the Application Form what is being applied for and what the licence is to cover.

Only twelve Temporary Event Notices can be given for the same premises in any one year (including outdoor venues).

The Appointed Person must submit the Notice in his or her own name; and **a single individual cannot have more than five Temporary Event Notices in any one year**.

A Temporary Event Notice is only for up to a maximum of 500 people, including all staff and performers. If the event is going to be bigger than that, the Appointed Person will have to obtain a Premises Licence – in which case *an application for a Premises Licence*

*must be made at least three months prior to the event. **Even if you are running your own bar you still have to follow the same basic legal requirements as a public house:***

- you must not serve alcohol to anyone under the age of 18;
- it is an offence under the Licensing Act 2003 to sell alcohol to a person who is drunk; and
- you must display the statutory notices: the Weights & Measures code and proper notice of cost and of volume per glass.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Depending on the kind of event you are holding, ACRE suggests that you contact the Ambulance Service, Fire Authority and Police with details of your event **at least three months prior to the event taking place** and provide them with a layout plan of your site, specifically marking access points for emergency vehicles.

Whether or not this is necessary depends on the nature and size of the event in question.

ELECTRICITY & GAS

Electrical equipment: Any electrical equipment used or brought in to the venue should be PAT tested, demonstrating that the electrical equipment is maintained correctly and has been subject to routine inspection and testing by a competent person. For further information see the HSE's short leaflet [Electrical Safety and You](#) and (for detailed guidance) [Electrical safety at places of entertainment](#)

Gas: LPG bottles/propane/butane: You need to make an assessment of the additional risk posed by propane or butane cooking, *particularly if it is inside a marquee, tent or similar structure*. If there is any doubt about the risk, your local Fire Service will give advice.

LOTTERIES

Does your event include a lottery or raffle? If so, **you will need a lottery operating licence if your lottery sells over £20,000 of lottery tickets in a single draw or £250,000 of lottery tickets in a calendar year.**

Further details on lottery licences are available on [the Gambling Commission's website](#).

There are some circumstances in which you **will not** need a lottery operating licence, of which the most important for your purposes are likely to be:

- [prize competitions and free draws](#);
- [small society lotteries](#);
- [residents' lotteries](#); and
- [customer lotteries](#).

BOUNCY CASTLES, PLAY EQUIPMENT AND SUCHLIKE

If the bouncy castle is hired with a supervisor, the suppliers MUST have their own Public Liability Insurance and Employer's Liability cover. If however, it is hired in and its use is to be controlled by yourselves then:

ALWAYS

- hire the inflatable from a reputable operator.
- check and make sure that the equipment has a current test certificate.
- follow the hirer's instructions.
- make sure that the blower is at least 1.2 metres from the inflatable: serious injury can occur if a user strikes the blower unit.
- make sure that the appointed adult representative is present in a supervisory capacity AT ALL TIMES: the vast majority of accidents occur through lack of supervision.
- have regard to the equipment's intended use;
- only allow children of similar age and size on the inflatable at any one time and remember that children who are outside the intended weight or height range can injure themselves and other users.
- avoid any overcrowding and ensure that the manufacturer's recommendations for numbers are not exceeded;
- position soft gym mats to cover any hard surfaces at the open front of the inflatable;
- make sure that users remove any potentially dangerous objects such as jewellery, buckles and shoes;
- ensure that the inflatable is anchored securely to the ground and *use every anchor point* – even in non-windy conditions the inflatable will move and creep; and
- deflate the inflatable after use to prevent unsupervised use.

NEVER

- allow users to climb on to the walls – that is how most accidents happen;
- deflate the inflatable while in use;
- use the inflatable if you have any doubt as to its safety;
- throw objects onto the inflatable;
- allow children onto the inflatable in high winds or wet weather; or
- allow children over the age of 12 years to use the inflatable;

Inflatable play equipment is inspected and certified under the Performance Textiles Inflatable Play Inspection Scheme for Bouncy Castles, aka PIPA. Further information is available at: <http://www.pipa.org.uk/index.asp>.