



# Event Safety

a guide for organisers

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**This booklet contains notes on good practice which are not compulsory but which you may find helpful in considering what you need to do.**

## Introduction

When large groups of people gather in confined spaces dangerous situations can arise.

This was clearly shown at the Hillsborough Stadium disaster in 1989 and the Bradford Football ground fire in 1985. Following these two tragedies, new laws were introduced to increase safety at sports grounds and the Football Licensing Authorities and the Safety at Sports Grounds Advisory groups work hard to promote safety at sports events.

However, many public events are not covered by the strict controls that govern sports events and often take place without consultation with the safety expertise that is available through Local Authorities and the emergency services.

The information given by the Council is free and is often in addition to any legal requirements and statutory guidance that may apply to your event.

Of course, if the Council identifies public events that are likely to take place with the potential to compromise the safety of people attending them, then clearly it may have to take action to prevent such events from taking place, unless necessary safety improvements are implemented.

As well as offering guidance to anyone organising a public event, Breckland Council will endeavour to ensure that such assistance is consistent and will encourage a minimum standard of safety at all events held throughout Breckland.

This booklet is a brief guide explaining what to do if you are organising a public event. The guidance is applicable to a wide range of events including fairs and galas, firework displays, pop concerts, air shows, motor sports and religious events.

The booklet also contains safety checklists, which you can use to guide you when organising general events. The information contained in this booklet is designed to guide you towards the safe planning of a wide range of events. In addition you can take advantage of the expertise available to you and obtain more detailed specific advice from Breckland Council.

## What do you need to do?

We want to help event organisers to make their events as safe as possible.

In order to assess the risk presented by your event and thereby determine the degree of assistance that can be offered, it would be helpful if you could tell us:

- The named organiser of the event with contact details
- The time and date of the event.
- The type of event you are planning
- How many people you are expecting (if more than 50).
- Details of any special or unusual activities.
- The results of any risk assessments that you have carried out.
- If your event is open to the general public.
- If your event is intending to take place on the highway.
- If your event is intending to be in a public place, such as a park, town centre or open space
- If your event is in a private venue, but because of its size or the type of activity planned, there may be a concern for the safety of those attending or people nearby.
- Whether food and drinks will be available.

Ideally you should give us at least 28 days notice for a small or medium sized event and at least six months notice for major events when planning is likely to take a long time.

- Small Sized Events i.e. Village fete
- Medium Events i.e. Carnival
- Large Events over 499 people in attendance or those which involve road closures

## **Do I need a licence?**

Under the Licensing Act 2003 a licence is required for premises where any of the following are provided:

- Retail sale of alcohol
- Performance of a play
- Exhibition of a film
- Indoor sporting events
- Boxing or wrestling (indoors or out)
- Performances of live and recorded music
- Dancing
- Provision of facilities for making music or dancing (i.e. hire of a hall)
- Supplying hot food or hot drinks between 11.00 pm and 5.00 am

If any of these activities are taking place then it is likely you will require a licence. Please contact the Licensing Team at Breckland for further advice.

## **What happens next?**

For small and medium sized events we will make a note of your plans and possibly send you some safety advice. Normally we will not take any further action. However, in some cases, we may ask you to change some of your plans to improve safety at your event.

For larger or more complex events, we may take a more active role; For example, we may want to meet with you to discuss your plans and arrangements in more detail.

## **Who is responsible for safety at public events?**

The organiser and /or landowner are responsible for safety at public events. We strongly recommend that you take out insurance to cover the event you are organising.

We expect you to have a named person who is responsible for the safety at your event. For larger events this may be a dedicated safety officer with a support team.

## Expected Standards

All events are different and it isn't possible to provide specific guidance for every possible eventuality. However there are minimum safety standards that must be met, which are:

### Event Safety Checklist (tick box as required)

- Have the following key personnel been identified? Event organiser, safety manager, chief steward, stewards?
- Do you have permission from the land owner?
- Is the site suitable for your event? (Is there a more suitable site?)
- Have you carried out a risk assessment to make sure you have all the necessary health and safety measures in place?
- Have you decided who should be responsible for health and safety at your event?
- Have you provided necessary information for example, maps and site plans details of gas/electricity installations and an outline programme of events?
- Do you know how many people you are expecting?
- Do you know where the entrances and exits on your site are?
- Are the entrances and exits controlled, stewarded, suitable for prams and pushchairs and appropriately signed?
- Do you have trained briefed and clearly identifiable stewards?
- Have you met the needs of people with disabilities?
- Have you set up a reliable system of communication between key people?
- Have you set up a reliable system of communication with the audience/crowd?
- Has a control point been identified, call signs predetermined and announcements prepared?
- Are crowd control barriers necessary?
- Are emergency procedures in place and have these been agreed with the emergency services?
- Can emergency vehicles get on and off the site easily?

- Do you have effective fire control measures in place?
- Do you have adequate first aid facilities?
- Do you need any other special arrangements for example, for lost children, lost property, drinking water, toilets, noise control or parking?
- Do you have an emergency plan? Does it cover everything? Has it been viewed by Breckland Council? Who will make the decisions during an emergency? Will you stop the event during an emergency? Have you asked for advice from the emergency services about emergency routes?
- Is a Premises Licence or Temporary Event Notice required from Breckland Council?
- Do you have insurance cover?
- Please note that, apart from emergencies, the emergency services may charge if you ask them to be present at your event.
- Have you carried out a hazard analysis of the food safety risks involved in the preparation or handling of the food & drink you will be offering? You need to identify critical steps in food preparation or handling and put in place suitable control measures. You should also monitor these control measures. If you are using caterers, they should be able to provide this information. (see page 11)
- It is advisable that you have a system in place to cater for lost children. Depending on the size of the type / size of the event, a specific lost children service may be required. Contact the group for more details.

## **Noise Nuisance - Checklist**

Many outdoor events, particularly those held during the summer, incorporate some noise activities. These may include music, fireworks, fairgrounds, public address systems or generators. Most of these events occur only occasionally at any one venue, but sometimes events occur regularly at the same site. Noise can therefore be a source of annoyance to local residents, and measures should be taken to minimise it.

Those responsible for arranging events should consider the potential for noise at the planning stage. The Pollution Control Team within Environmental Health can be contacted for advice. Considerations should include:

### **Music Noise**

- What type of music– live or recorded?
- Where will the music be played?
- What time will the music be playing?
- For how long?
- Where are the nearest residential premises?

### **Fireworks**

- What time will the display take place?
- How noisy will the fireworks be?
- Have you advised local residents?

### **Fairgrounds**

- Where will the fair be located?
- Will it clash with other music noise?
- Have you advised the operator of noise restrictions?
- What time will it be operating?

### **Public Address System**

- Are they volume controlled?
- Will they be used as little as possible?
- Do they just cover the area required?
- Do they incorporate directional speakers?

### **Generators**

- Are they necessary – could mains power be supplied?
- Can temporary shielding be provided?
- Do they incorporate sound insulation?
- Are they sited away from housing?

For further information, contact the Environmental Protection Team.

## Your Event – Things to Consider

### Risk Assessment

You must carry out and provide a written risk assessment as the first step in planning your event. This will ensure you have adequate health and safety measures in place.

We can provide help and support with this task.

#### **For example, you need to know:**

- Do you have enough adequately trained marshals for your event?
- Do they have correct equipment to do their job?
- Are they wearing high visibility clothing?

You will also need to take out insurance to cover your event.

Contact your insurance provider for advice and give them all the details of your event. In some cases a specialist insurance provider may be required, contact the group for more details.

### Stewards

You must have enough stewards for the size and type of your event. The number of stewards you need will depend on several factors.

- If the event is indoors or outdoors.
- How many children are likely to attend?
- If it is dark or light.
- If there are unsound surfaces.
- If the weather is bad.
- If vulnerable people are there.
- If alcohol is being served.

Smaller events may use helpers and volunteers as stewards, while major events will often need professional stewards hired for the occasion. All stewards must be properly trained and briefed.

### **Communication**

You must have a reliable method of communication in place for the event. It is essential for stewards and organisers to be able to communicate during the event. In addition, there should be at least one office on site, jointly staffed by all the organisations taking part.

Equally vital is the method of communication with the public. This is particularly important if the site has to be evacuated.

### **Evacuation**

You must have an evacuation procedure as part of the risk assessment for your event. For indoor events, the building you are using may already have an evacuation procedure in place.

However, this is far less likely for outdoor events. Please ask for our help in establishing an evacuation procedure for your event.

### **First Aid**

You must provide and pay for an agreed level of first aid, paramedical and medical facilities at your event. We can help you liaise with the Ambulance Service and voluntary groups.

### **Fire Safety Arrangements**

You must agree arrangements for fire prevention, detection and control with the Fire Service before your event. We can help you liaise with the Fire Service.

### **Security**

You must ensure any special security measures are in place for example, if you have VIP's at your event, or large amounts of cash. The Police can advise you on this issue.

### **Barriers**

There are many different types of barriers – please ask us for further advice about this.

Please note – raised concert style 'pop barriers' can only be used if you have trained and experienced stewards who are familiar with how they work.

Any temporary structure, which is load bearing, must comply with health and safety laws and building control regulations. We can help you liaise with the Council on this.

### **People with Disabilities**

You must ensure that all arrangements you make, including emergency procedures, meet the needs of people with disabilities.

### **Signs**

You must provide clear direction and information signs at your event. Multilingual signs may be needed.

Any temporary signs on the highway will need to be approved by the Highways Department at Norfolk County Council.

### **The Environment**

You must look after the environment when planning your event. For example, you must make sure that the site is suitable for the type of event that you are planning, and take account of local concerns such as noise and litter. Where possible the site should always be left in the same condition as it was before the event. A reinstatement fee may be imposed by the landowner if the site has been damaged.

### **Food Safety**

If you are preparing food for your event it is essential you contact Breckland Council's Food Team. The team will be pleased to advise you how you can easily comply with food law and prevent food poisoning.

If you are a food business your business must be registered with your Local Authority by law. If you are employing caterers they should be registered with their Local Authority. Contact the Food Team on (01362) 656313.

### Facilities

You must decide what facilities will be needed at your event, such as hot and cold drinks, toilets, PA systems, lighting and temporary structures (shelters and stages).

### Law

You must comply with all laws and regulations at all times.

### Planning and Programming

Careful planning is vital to make the event, that you are organising a success. You may find some of the following points worth considering when planning your event:

- Decide on the type of event and the date 9-12 months ahead;
- Establish a working group or committee if necessary and have named organiser(s) identified.
- If you are looking for sponsors, begin to approach local businesses and companies 9-12 months ahead. Longer if you are planning a major event;
- Inform the Breckland Council to check if you need any permission on any aspect of your event as soon as you have formulated ideas;
- Book your venue/site 6-12 months ahead and confirm in writing;
- Arrange for local publicity;
- Check the availability of sound and light equipment, marquees etc;
- Send out first press release as soon as dates are firmed up;
- Book first aid, caterers, judges, compares, dignitaries and any other services 6 – 9 months ahead;
- If holding competitions send out schedules and rules 2 – 4 months ahead;
- Start looking for volunteers and staff 2 – 4 months ahead;
- Talk about finances as early as possible and any other funding opportunities; there will be cut off dates for various funding applications so be aware of the time scales involved;
- Order posters and publicity 3 months ahead and send out 6 –8 weeks prior to the event;
- Apply for licences at least 3 – 4 months ahead, earlier if you can;
- Create other plans to achieve publicity and target sponsors;
- Notice for your event or activity should be given Breckland Council. The minimum notice for small/medium events is 28 days. In the case of a large scale event at least 6 months notice should be given;
- Choose a time and date for your event that will suit the audience it is intended for, also check that no similar public events are taking place at the same time.

### What to do when things go wrong

Remember as the organiser of the event, you are responsible for the safety of everyone who is involved. If anyone is hurt or injured because of your negligence, you will almost definitely end up in court.

If an incident does occur at any event in the Council's area the investigation will look at the following areas:

- Were plans in place to manage a major incident?
- Were the risk assessments completed, including all of the items included in the checklists?
- Were there enough emergency services resources on site?
- Was there a detailed casualty treatment, management and evacuation plan?
- Were the emergency procedures properly explained and practised?
- Was there a clear chain of command and control?
- Were communications between key personnel and the crowd adequate?

Remember careful planning and organisation will help ensure that your event is successful and above all else safe.

### Further Information

To obtain further information before notifying us of your event, please get in touch with us:

Breckland Council  
Elizabeth House  
Walpole Loke  
Dereham  
Norfolk  
NR19 1EE

Tel: 01362 656870  
Fax: 01362 656835  
Web: [www.breckland.gov.uk](http://www.breckland.gov.uk)

### Email Addresses

Health and Safety: [healthandsafety@breckland.gov.uk](mailto:healthandsafety@breckland.gov.uk)

Licensing: [licensingteam@breckland.gov.uk](mailto:licensingteam@breckland.gov.uk)

Food Safety: [foodteam@breckland.gov.uk](mailto:foodteam@breckland.gov.uk)

Environmental Protection: [envprotect@breckland.gov.uk](mailto:envprotect@breckland.gov.uk)

Civil Contingencies: [emqplan@breckland.gov.uk](mailto:emqplan@breckland.gov.uk)

## **Useful Publications**

The following is a list of useful publications which give excellent advice about event safety.

### **The Event Safety Guide**

ISBN 0717624536 £20.00 - available from HSE Books - Tel: 01787 881165

### **Giving your own firework display**

ISBN 0717661628 £7.95 - available from HSE Books - Tel: 01787 881165

### **Fire Safety Risk Assessment - Open Air Events and Venues**

ISBN 978851128235 £12.00 (free to download below) Tel: 0870 1226 236

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/fire/pdf/158379>

### **Safer food, better business for caterers**

FSA Publications on 0845 606 0667

<http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/sfbbfullpack.pdf>