

Guidance for the organisers of activities

June 2017

Events, Festivals, Outreach Programmes, School Visits, Public Engagements etc

Occupational Health and Safety Service
HSD083M



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

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Background

Historically the core activities of the University were teaching and research but in the past 15 years there has been a massive expansion of events of all types that have included the 800th anniversary celebrations, night time in the museums and e-luminate etc. All these have extended to what can be called 'wider learning'. Sometimes these activities are run at local departmental or institutional level such as University Library 600th anniversary and Fitzwilliam Museum 200th anniversary celebrations and sometimes they are held across the University such as the Science Festival or Festival of Ideas. These events are aimed at wider public engagement often encouraging members of the public, families and children to take part in activities or see parts of the University not usually open to the public. Events often take place away from the University in public spaces, Colleges, schools, hospitals even car parks as well as Departments and Institutions.

The approach

The most effective way of ensuring a safe and successful event is a risk based approach. The organiser of the activity or event must ensure that the risks are effectively managed and controlled and to think about what might cause harm to people (everyone we come into contact with) and decide whether we are taking reasonable steps to prevent harm, eg to carry out an appropriate risk assessment.

Planning and Preparation

Planning and preparation well in advance is the key to a successful event. This may include pop-up laboratories in a marquee or school children coming into a department. The following must be considered:

1. The Departmental Safety Officer must be notified of the event or activity at the earliest opportunity.
2. If a marquee is being erected a safety and insurance check must be made of the company by the event organiser.
3. Ensure that the provision of electrical power for lighting, equipment etc, with checks on the loading and all the equipment is PAT tested. This is the responsibility of the event organiser.
4. The organiser must ensure that the appropriate fire safety arrangements are in place including fire extinguishers, fire blankets, signage, including no smoking signs, and appropriate fire exits. Any concerns should be raised with the University's Fire Safety Office via their shared mailbox UniversityFireSafety@admin.cam.ac.uk or telephone 37822.

Risk Assessment

The risk assessment process is not about creating mountains of useless paperwork but about identifying sensible measures to consider and control the risks of the activity. Think about how accidents and ill health could happen and concentrate on the real risks – those most likely to cause the most significant harm eg e-luminate – external electricity supply. For some risks, other regulations require specific controls eg archaeologists demonstrating the use of hand held x-ray machines to members of the public. Where this is the case the risk assessment can help to identify where you need to look at certain risks and these particular controls in more detail. These control measures do not have to be assessed separately but can be considered part of the overall risk assessment.

Identify the hazards

The most important aspect of the risk assessment is to accurately identify the potential hazards associated with the event or activity. As part of the general planning of the event, the organiser needs to think about the potential hazards and what is it about the activity that could injure or cause harm and all those who may be affected; eg staff, students, members of the public including children, contractors who may be setting up demonstrations, other users of the building etc.

Some hazards may be easily identified such as slips and trips eg panning for gold in the Geography Department Science Festival and others such as identifying insects in the field eg BioBlitz, a little more difficult (possibly flooded fields, insect stings or bites).

Some tips to help you to identify the real hazards:

- Look at similar events and activities
- Talk to Science Festival or event co-ordinators
- Get everyone involved to share their ideas
- Look at past events to see if there are any relevant accident, incident or ill health records
- Take account of one off events or activities
- Look at the Safety Office website for examples
- Visit the HSE website www.hse.gov.uk.

Who might be harmed?

Think how staff, students, volunteers, contractors who may be installing equipment, exhibitors, members of the public (families, school groups, vulnerable groups) and other visitors eg gardening clubs visiting Madingley Hall, tourists etc may be affected. For each hazard you need to be clear who might be harmed and how.

- Some groups may have particular requirements eg specific training or briefings for events for volunteers before the event starts.
- Children and vulnerable adults may require greater supervision depending on their age or particular circumstances eg 1:1 parental or care support.
- If the event is being held off site eg the Grand Arcade, Grafton Centre or on one of the Cambridge greens a site visit should be undertaken as part of the planning process.

Evaluate the risks

Having identified the hazards you have to decide how likely it is that harm will occur and what to do about it. You are not expected to eliminate all risks but what you need to do is have a common sense approach to effectively control and manage the event with sensible and appropriate control measures eg a popular oversubscribed event can be effectively managed with the event being a bookable ticket only event and having sufficient stewards on duty.

Generally you need to do everything 'reasonably practicable' to prevent people from harm, you are not expected to anticipate unforeseeable risks.

Some practical steps may include:

- Consider a less risky option eg demonstrating the effects of cryogenic liquids use smaller volumes
- Use a barrier or a screen to prevent access to the hazard
- Safe systems of work for the event
- Issuing personal protective equipment eg children handling plaster cast dinosaur bones in the Earth Sciences Sedgwick Museum such as gloves
- Provision of adequate welfare, first aid and washing facilities for school groups visiting the Fitzwilliam Museum
- Involving all the people staff, students and volunteers who will be supervising or helping out at the event providing clear instructions on what is expected when helping out at an event and the process to follow if problems do occur
- Informing Security/Fire Office well in advance that the event is taking place – location and particular arrangements.

Record your findings

You should include a record of your significant findings, the hazards, how people might be harmed and what control measures are in place. The risk assessment must be appropriate for the event and show.

- That a proper check has been made and could include a sketch or layout of the area.
- Details of all the people who may be affected.
- You have taken account of the numbers of people involved eg the night time in the museum activities at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.
- The precautions in place are sensible and easy to implement eg booking only events.
- Involve all the people, students, volunteers as well as staff in the process.
- The organiser of the event needs to show clear leadership and ownership.
- The greater the hazard the more robust and reliable the control measures need to be.

Review the Risk Assessment

Many events involve several different activities so adopt a dynamic approach and review what you are doing on an ongoing basis.

- Have there been any significant changes.
- Can we make any improvements.
- Has anyone involved identified a problem.
- Have we learnt from past problems, accidents, incidents or near misses.

The risk assessment must be up to date and relevant for the activity.

Further information

There is a wealth of information available to help to ensure the risk assessment is effective and not just a paper exercise.

- HSE's risk management pages which includes templates and examples www.hse.gov.uk/risk.
- University Safety Office web pages <http://www.safety.admin.cam.ac.uk>.
- National Council for Voluntary Organisations ncvo@ncvo.org.uk.
- Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults <http://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/policies-procedures/children-and-vulnerable-adults-safeguarding-policy>.

Appendix 1 – Example of Cambridge Festivals Risk Assessment

Further Guidance

HSE Guidance on running events safely

www.hse.gov.uk/events-safety/index.htm