

WELCOME

Recently it seems that risk management is becoming increasingly difficult to grasp and everywhere we turn there is a new law or someone is requesting more documentation.

This is largely the case, however it is mostly warranted, and once we understand it properly would not want to do it any other way.

I don't believe there is anyone in this room who would enjoy running an event or a show at which they are aware people will be hurt, possibly fatally.

STAKEHOLDERS

There is an incredible amount of obligation for the event organizer or producer. You must first appreciate Fringe the Council, WorkCover, Police, MFB and others are all partners in your event and should something go wrong they might well be liable for some of the blame.

It is important therefore that you have an excellent relationship with all Stakeholders, as I am yet to see an event go ahead where someone or all concerned did not turn a blind eye to some risks no matter how insignificant.

This means you must as with any of your businesses build up good will with the stakeholders as you may just all require each others support one day in a court of law.

HAZARD & RISK ASSESSMENTS

Hazard and Risk assessments must be conducted during the design of your event not at the end of your event!

Hazard and Risk assessments are the backbone of every good safety plan.

For too long we have focussed on attracting huge crowds to our events with little or no thought as to their safety. We must all move with the times, as some risks appear virtually overnight such as mosh pits and crowd surfing or sporting heroes throwing garments into crowds.

This is where our duty to perform risk management begins.

We must first conduct a Hazard and Risk assessment of all known hazards associated with our event.

This process should have input by a committee of all interested parties and you have an obligation to search for hazards far and wide. You must look up on the Internet etc.

Just because an accident has not occurred due to a known hazard, does not mean it will not. Example: The Grand Prix rally at Bright 2003.

You then need to rate the risks associated with the hazards and explore the measures you are able to use to eliminate or mitigate the risks.

This process will give you a resultant risk rating and a list of controls and people responsible for implementing the controls.

SAFETY CHECKLISTS

From the hazard and risk assessment process you are able to come up with a safety checklist, which encompasses all of the controls addressed in the hazard and risk assessment.

The checklist also contains other vital points to ensure safety is a part of the overall management of your event.

The checklist can be understood and used by all staff and volunteers at your event creating a safety culture.

The checklist will highlight areas of concern for management.

This checklist becomes a vital tool at your event.

INCIDENT REPORTING

Effective incident reporting is one of the most valuable tools you have as an event organiser or producer. If you create your incident reporting procedure properly you will achieve:

- Safety awareness among all staff.
- Immediate remedy of hazards as they occur.
- Evidence of hazards, which occurred to use in future planning.
- Claims defence and support documentation to assist your organization in case of litigation.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN

The nature of conducting an event, will in most circumstances raise the issue you are creating an overall hazard," the event" by the sheer numbers of public gathered or the environment in which they are gathered. This will dictate the need for an emergency plan.

The emergency plan will contain:

- Emergency contact list
- Evacuation routes
- Assembly areas
- Policy statement
- Hazard and risk assessments
- Safety Checklists
- Road closures & pedestrian management
- Area Maps
- Management arrangements
- Communications
- Prevention arrangements

PRO ACTIVE RISK MANAGEMENT

Now you must implement pro-active risk management.

No matter how good your planning is there is always someone or something which will bring you undone.

You need lots of eyes and ears on the job. You must create a safety culture with your fellow workers and volunteers. No one person can watch everything.

These people need to be trained and given the tools such as checklists and incident sheets in order to be able to perform these tasks.

They also need to be able to consult with someone if there is an issue they need advice or support with.

If the safety is not managed as a holistic part of your event you have failed in your duty of care.

You are now well on the way to creating an overall safety plan for your event which will be requested by the authorities to enable them to assess the needs of your event.

PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE

No matter what type of event you are staging, Fringe Festival recommends you have public liability insurance as an integral part of your risk management plan.

You should check with the venue where you are performing at as to the extent of their Public Liability cover to see if you would be covered. For all events held in parks, gardens, streets and other public spaces you should arrange your own Public Liability Insurance cover. The City Council your event is taking place in will require their interests be noted on the certificate of currency. Your broker will arrange for Council's interests to be listed. For high-risk activities a higher value of Public Liability Insurance may be required.

Remember when planning your event the more risk there is to the general public the less chance you have of obtaining Public Liability Insurance and the more expensive it will be.

Some of the events during Fringe Festival will have Public Liability Insurance in place as a part of Fringe Festival's Risk Management Plan.

You should check with the Management of Fringe as to whether an event is covered by their policy.

You need to be aware that just to defend a moderate claim for an incident, which is not the fault of the event organiser and is well documented can cost the insurance company around \$40,000. Keep in mind when your weighing up the value of your risk management efforts you will have an "excess" of possibly \$5,000 payable by you, on each claim made against you.

The only way insurance premiums will reduce is through a long-term strategy of effective risk management to reduce incidents and claims.

SAFETY STEPS FOR FRINGE EVENT MANAGERS

Step 1

Conduct hazard identification of your event or show at the conception stage.

Step 2

Eliminate or reduce hazards as much as possible.

Step 3

Conduct a standardised hazard and risk assessment of remaining unavoidable hazards.

Step 4

Introduce controls to reduce the risk rating to an acceptable level.

Step 5

Design safety checklists, and a risk management plan which ensure the controls, are all in place and effective.

Step 6

Design an incident reporting procedure, which creates immediate hazard identification and allows for controls to be put in place.

Step 7

Appoint capable personnel responsible for administration of your risk management plan

LEGISLATIVE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY OBLIGATIONS FOR EVENTS

The *Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004* outlines the legislative responsibility for safe work environments.

The Act, at section 21, establishes a general “duty of care” that an employer owes to its employees, including general public, independent contractors and employees of the contractor. Liability arises where a person is “exposed” to the risk of injury to health and safety. This means, it is not necessary for a person to have been actually injured but merely “exposed to risk.” **Put in context, event planners must focus their attention on the risk to health and safety rather than the consequences of an offence.**

Fringe Management have for a number of years accepted their obligation to conduct a safe festival and they have achieved this with a high degree of success. It is up to each and every one of you to continue this tradition and to assist Fringe management in their endeavours to conduct a safe festival, not just for Fringe but also for the industry as a whole

CONCLUSION

None of these measures will guarantee a completely safe event but they will go quite some way towards it.

You will feel prepared and will be able to cope with emergency situations with the confidence of knowing you have done everything possible.

If we all start to accept our duty of care to the general public there will be less incidents and insurance companies will be keener to insure events.

These measures will assist you to obtain insurance.

These measures will provide you with valuable back up in the case of claims made against you and will go a long way towards being able to prove you have not been negligent.

All of us have been performing some form of risk management all of our lives. In fact most event organisers are proficient in risk management without realizing it. However some do not have the necessary skills to develop a safety management plan. I believe all event managers will eventually perform their own Hazard and Risk Assessments and Safety Management plans once they are clear on the concept.

The maximum benefit of Risk Management is obtained if it is applied to the event from the outset.

If you choose to ignore all of these opportunities to manage risks you will live in fear of disaster and be defenceless when it occurs.

We must all pull together keep each other honest and move with the times.

I will be attending production meetings closer to the festival and will assist with your event risk management plans at that time. In the meantime feel free to contact me with any enquiries.

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