

# **CROWD MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE (Appendix 1)**

Link to guidance: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/event-safety/crowd-management-assess.htm>

## **ASSESS CROWD SAFETY RISKS AND IDENTIFY HAZARDS**

You and others involved in crowd management must think about what may cause harm to event staff and visitors through crowd movement, dynamics and behaviour as people arrive, enter, move around a venue, exit and disperse.

Remember to consider young people and people with disabilities or learning difficulties when deciding the appropriate action to take.

Take reasonable steps to eliminate or reduce the risks. This process is known as risk assessment and is something duty holders are required to do by law.

Risk assessment is about identifying and taking proportionate measures to control the risks in the workplace, not about creating huge amounts of paperwork. If a company has fewer than five employees the risk assessment does not need to be written down.

As an early priority, organisers should establish that they can manage a crowd safely for the type of event and at the venue chosen. Even if the event is free or takes place on urban streets or open spaces, you should still apply the same crowd management principles to help make it as safe as possible.

## **IDENTIFY KEY HAZARDS AFFECTING CROWD SAFETY**

### **Hazards from crowd dynamics**

- Surging and swaying leading to crushing between people and against fixed structures
- Falling and being trampled underfoot
- Dangerous behaviour, such as climbing onto equipment/structures or throwing objects

### **Hazards from venue or event activity**

- Pedestrians and moving vehicles sharing the same space
- Audience being close to an activity, for example in motorsport or at an air show
- Collapse of a temporary structure
- Poorly maintained and inadequately lit pedestrian routes
- Poor ground conditions
- Lack of suitable entrances and exits
- Stalls and concessions obstructing crowd movement and leading to congestion at entrances and exits during busy periods
- Inadequate site design, leading to crossflow of people
- Failure of equipment, such as turnstiles
- Sources of fire, such as cooking equipment

## **Determine the number of people who will attend**

Many arrangements will depend on the size of the crowd. When forecasting the expected turnout, you could consider:

- previous attendance figures
- numbers visiting similar events (speak to other organisers)
- pre-event registration and participation entries
- advance ticket sales
- the level of publicity and popularity of the activity or performers
- which days are going to be particularly busy, eg first or final days
- whether any extra visitors will attend special activities taking place at the event
- variable factors, such as the likely effects of good or bad weather, local economy, transport problems, public holidays etc

## **Assess the venue/site suitability**

The event venue/site, whether permanent or temporary, should be designed so that people can assemble, enter, move around and exit the space safely. In an emergency, they should also be able to evacuate quickly to a safe place.

A key part of your assessment will be to determine the venue's safe capacity. For outdoor spaces, where the boundaries of an event are less well-defined, break the task down into zones, such as arrival and exit points, viewing areas and the spaces inland around attractions or structures like bars and stages.

Visit the venue to help you predict and deal proactively with a crowd's likely actions. For example, people may:

- park illegally so that they can make a quick getaway, but obstruct access for emergency vehicles
- wait for friends/family at or near entrances/exits and obstruct the flow of people
- suddenly change direction and obstruct the flow of people, e.g. fans leaving a concert early may rush back if they hear a favourite song during the encore
- congregate in prohibited areas and be reluctant to move away, even if asked to do so

*You can find more detailed guidance on assessing venue/site suitability, including determining a safe capacity, on the HSE website under venue and site design.*

## **Do an audience profile**

A number of factors can influence how a crowd behaves. For example, the age range of a performer and the type of performance can help you predict behaviour and make appropriate arrangements for it.

Visitors may be unfamiliar with venue layout and its facilities. People may even become disorientated if they arrive in the light and leave in the dark so ensure there is enough lighting to help them.

Inadequate management of queues or delays may cause people to surge towards the doors when they are opened or climb over barriers, leading to overcrowding problems

in other areas. People may climb onto structures, such as scaffolding, to get a better view and encourage others to follow, putting them at risk of a fall. Assess the likelihood of this happening and take steps to manage it.

You may be able to use certain forms of behaviour to your advantage. For example, once an orderly queue is set up, it tends to attract people and introduce some order into crowd patterns.

Several acts performing at the same time may result in considerable crowd movement. For example, where one particular performer has a large or enthusiastic following, the audience may suddenly surge forward and crushing could result.

Smoke or similar effects (eg dry ice effects at a concert) can mean people are likely to respond more slowly to smoke generated by a fire.

Those not satisfied with the quality of a performance or outcome of a sporting fixture may become aggressive, offensive and uncooperative. Being intoxicated and/or recreational drugs can of course exacerbate this behaviour.

### **Assess existing precautions – what more should be done?**

Some hazards may already be controlled, whether by deliberate measures (recently improved lighting on stairways) or by the circumstances in which they are found (eg street lighting outside the venue may incidentally light the venue entrance stairs). You should therefore identify the precautions and decide whether they are adequate or whether more should be done.

Examples of putting controls in place show additional steps you might take to address risks you have identified.

### **Create a crowd management plan**

Once you have assessed the risks, you should create a crowd management plan. Use any venue/site design drawings to help you with this.

Your plan should also include how you will respond effectively to accidents and other emergencies.

### **Review your plan**

Organisers, their stewarding contractors and other agencies involved should periodically check the methods for managing crowd safety to ensure they are working and being followed.

### **After an event**

It is also good practice to debrief after an event and certainly after any significant incident/emergency or when any changes in venue design or procedures are considered.

Include other agencies like the police and local authority in the debrief process. Listen to problems and successes and make improvements for future events.