

# HANDin HAND



Specialty  
Human  
Services



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## SPECIAL EVENT RISK MANAGEMENT

Special events and fundraisers are vital to the operation of many social service organizations, and they are not without risks.



Special events often involve activities outside the scope of an organization's normal operations. It is important that these unique risks be considered and addressed.

The following are potential mishaps:

- Food poisoning at a fish fry
- Collapse of a registration tent
- Car accident due to alcohol consumption at a dinner dance
- Theft of a cash box at a street fair
- Spectators injured by the collapse of temporary bleachers

Whether it is an annual parade, a walk-a-thon or a golf tournament, there are steps that can be taken to ensure the success of the event and



“First ask yourself: What is the worst that can happen? Then prepare to accept it. Then proceed to improve on the worst.”

*Dale Carnegie*

safety of all involved.

### Planning and Preparation

Planning is an essential part of event success. While many of the risk management concerns remain the same, (i.e. facility safety, fire prevention, first aid, etc.) the extent of the risk and necessary precautions will vary based on the type of event activities and number of people attending. Each event should have a Special Event Risk Management Plan. By failing to plan, you run the possibility of injury to participants, spectators or property.

### Recordkeeping

Keeping proper records will aid in identifying and controlling risks. Events typically require pre-event inspections, contracts, insurance, and post-event evaluation.

Paperwork and records that should be kept include:

- Risk Management Plan
- Staff/volunteer applications and training records
- Event site and utility maps
- Copies of permits, licenses, and certifications
- Emergency evacuation plan
- Contractor agreements/safe work procedures
- Certificates of insurance
- Maintenance and repair records



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[www.hsd.gaic.com](http://www.hsd.gaic.com)

## Safety Checklist

An event safety checklist is a guide to the many issues that should be considered when planning an event. Depending on the event, some of these issues may require more detailed management than others.

A sample special event checklist is provided below:

# SAFETY CHECKLIST

## ACCESS and EGRESS

- Adequate number of entries/exits
- Entries/exits clear and accessible
- Exit pathways well defined and clearly marked

## ELECTRICAL

- Wiring up to code and in good condition
- Adequate voltage/wattage for event use
- Electrical equipment protected from weather
- Sufficient emergency generator power available
- Premises inspected by a licensed electrician

## FIRST AID/COMMUNICATION

- Stations suitably located, identified and supervised
- Facilities adequate for event type
- Mobile communication between event personnel, first aid and security

## STAFF, VOLUNTEER and CONTRACTORS

- Background screening
- Training with records kept
- Copies of applications and resumes kept

## PERMITS, LICENSING AND REGISTRATION

- City, town and state permits obtained
- Food handling/sales permits obtained
- Liquor licenses/permits obtained

## TRAFFIC FLOW

- Clearly defined areas for traffic, separated from pedestrians
- Provisions for emergency vehicle entrance/exit
- Fire hydrant access

## AMUSEMENT STRUCTURES

- Structures have current license/certification
- Electrical inspection up to date
- Appropriate space, perimeter protection and lighting

## PARKING

- Sufficient number, type and handicap accessible
- Adequate signage, lighting and access to site
- Adequate security

## SEATING

- Sufficient seating
- ADA accommodations
- Bleachers inspected for safety

## FOOD SAFETY

- Adequate refrigeration, storage, heat and prep areas
- Licensed/certified food handlers
- Proper food handling procedures

## ALCOHOL SAFETY

- Adequate training for distribution (TIPS Program)
- Require identification, wristbands
- Make alternative transportation available

## FIRE PREVENTION

- Fire detection and suppression systems
- Local and central station fire alarm system
- Personnel trained on use and response
- Site inspection by local fire department

## UTILITIES/SITE SERVICES

- Location of underground services (electricity, gas, water) known
- Overhead power lines identified
- Event personnel have maps of service main locations

## SAFETY CHECKLIST cont'd

### EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- Plans and procedures documented
- Staff and volunteers trained on procedures
- Evacuation route posted and practiced

### SIGNAGE

- Entries, exits, toilet facilities, emergency phones
- Hazardous areas signage – authorized personnel only
- Multi-lingual

### STAGING AND PLATFORMS

- Electrical equipment appropriate for outdoor/heavy use
- Adequate access/egress around staging and platforms
- Erected, inspected and dismantled by qualified personnel

### MAINTENANCE

- Maintenance personnel onsite
- Personnel have event managers contact information
- Maintenance records accessible before/during/post event

### INFLATABLE STRUCTURES

- Structure properly secured
- Qualified safety inspection performed and documented
- Weather monitored and shut down procedures known

### AMENITIES

- Adequate toilet and hand washing facilities
- Clean water available to staff and participants
- Adequate trash disposal

### CROWD MANAGEMENT

- Occupancy monitored and limit not exceeded
- Event safety rules and regulations posted
- Security personnel visible

### INSURANCE/LEGAL REVIEW

- Review coverage for event with agent
- Obtain certificates of insurance from all vendors, contractors and co-sponsors
- Waivers obtained from participants
- Avoid signing waivers of subrogation; opt for mutual hold-harmless agreements
- Organization should be named as an additional insured on the policies of vendors, contractors and co-sponsors
- Report all incidents to insurance agent and carrier
- Legal review of all contracts



“By failing to prepare,  
you prepare to fail.”

*Benjamin Franklin*





“Next week there can’t be any crisis. My schedule is already full.”

*Henry Kissinger*



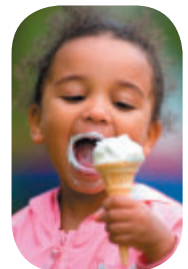
## Post Event Analysis

Post-event evaluations provide the opportunity to discuss what went well, what didn’t, and what could be improved. As with any area of event safety, all parties involved should be represented in this process. Keep careful documentation in order to update the Special Event Risk Management Plan and implement improvements for future events.



## Summary

The event planner’s task of reducing threats and risks can be overwhelming, but planning is the key to event success. This success is not only measured by the number of participants or the funds raised, but also by the safety of those attending. Use these tools to plan your next special event.



## Additional resources:

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) – [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov); Great American Insurance Company Specialty Human Services – [www.hsd.gaic.com](http://www.hsd.gaic.com); The Weather Channel – [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com); Department of Homeland Security – [www.whitehouse.gov/homeland/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/homeland/); American Red Cross – [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org); National Terror Alert Resource Center – [www.nationalterroralert.com](http://www.nationalterroralert.com); Federal Emergency Management Administration – [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

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