

# A practical guide to event organisers in Oxfordshire



This guide has been produced by local authorities and emergency services in Oxfordshire.

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## An introduction to holding a public event

Thousands of residents and visitors enjoy the wide range of public events on offer in Oxfordshire every year.

Public safety should be a top priority at any event being held. Organisers who have any doubt about the safety of their event should be cautious about holding it.

Safety Advisory Groups, or SAGs as they are known in Oxfordshire, aim to ensure people remain safe at events.

This includes small and large scale events, as well as those held on roads which inevitably involve a degree of risk.

The number one priority for event organisers must be to minimise the risk to both participants and the general public. Organisers should also think about the impact and potential inconvenience the event have on the settled community, for pedestrians and traffic not attending the event.

Organisers should consult with the relevant SAG for their area when planning an event. They may be invited to SAG meetings to discuss their proposals. Organisers should contact their SAG at least 3 months prior to the event where possible.

To notify the SAG please complete and return the event notification form at the back of this leaflet.

## The Safety Advisory Group's role

The group is made up of representatives from:

- Local authorities (Licensing, environmental health, trading standards and highways)
- South Central Ambulance Service
- Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Thames Valley Police
- Emergency planning

It considers all event notifications and offers advice and guidance to anyone planning or organising an event.

Generally, the police and the county council highway authority do not support any event that takes place on the public highway due to the inherent dangers to public safety. They may ask event organisers to make contingency plans to deal with any potential public safety issues as a result of an event being held.

Organisers should be aware there may be a charge for emergency services or local authority resources, if they are required. Advice given by the SAG to event organisers will be documented. If there is an incident resulting in court or public inquiry proceedings the group is obliged to notify any investigating authorities about the safety advice given in advance of the event.

Its advice is in addition to any legal requirements and government guidance which should be considered (see useful publications on page 8).



## Planning an event and giving sufficient notice

At least three months notice should be given to the SAG for small to medium sized events and those where road closure orders are required.

At least six months notice is required for large or major events.

For every event there must be a competent, named organiser(s) identified at the earliest opportunity.

If members of the public are invited to participate in a staged and planned event, the organiser is responsible for public safety. There is also a responsibility on the venue / land owner to ensure the safety of the public who attend the event.

## Risk assessments and health and safety issues

A risk assessment is a careful examination of the potential risks an event may create. It also includes information on how these risks maybe reduced or eliminated.

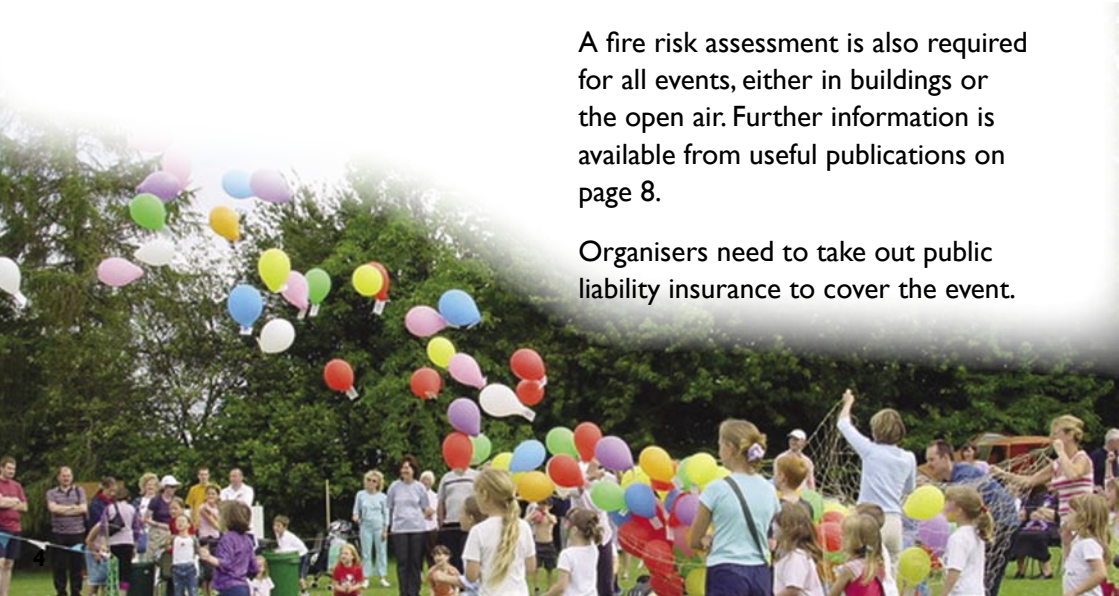
Organisers will need to carry out a risk assessment to ensure all the necessary health and safety measures are in place. A standard risk assessment form can be obtained from local authorities and organisers will find it useful to read Five Steps to Risk Assessment (full details included in useful publications on page 8).

The risk assessment must include all aspects of the event including:

- crowd control
- evacuation procedures
- barrier safety
- traffic management
- medical provisions

A fire risk assessment is also required for all events, either in buildings or the open air. Further information is available from useful publications on page 8.

Organisers need to take out public liability insurance to cover the event.



## Licences

Organised entertainment held in a public or private place may require a premises licence from the relevant local authority. You may also need additional licences for specific entertainment such as live music. Organisers must give reasonable time for a licence to be processed. As part of the licensing process the organiser will need to consider the four licensing objectives:

- Prevention of crime and disorder
- Public Safety
- Prevention of public nuisance
- Protection of children from harm

Further information regarding this can be obtained from the local authority where the event is taking place.

## Environmental issues

### Venue suitability

Event organisers must take into account environmental concerns. For instance, whether the venue is suited to the type of event proposed and any appropriate legislation such as the smokefree legislation or noise pollution.

### Noise control

Events with loud music, or using a public address system may cause noise disturbance. Advice should be sought from competent professional about suitable noise control.

## Local residents

Attention should also be given to the concerns of local residents in respect of noise and litter. Public facilities such as toilets, hot and cold drinks, PA systems, lighting and temporary structures should also be reviewed.

## Animal welfare

The local authorities have a responsibility to ensure the health and welfare of animals. Organisers should give careful consideration to the welfare of animals taking part in any event.

## Food

Any food preparation must be carried out in hygienic conditions and comply with the relevant legislation.

## Temporary structures

Any temporary structure which will bear loads must be installed in strict compliance with health and safety regulations.

## Emergency services

Following consultation with the emergency services (ambulance, fire, police), an agreed level of medical, security and fire related services will be agreed and provided at the organiser's expense. The contact details for the emergency services can be obtained from your local authority.

## Medical provision

Emergency medical provision for the event should not rely upon the emergency services, advice can be sought from South Central Ambulance Service.

Consideration must also be given to the impact of the event on the local NHS Ambulance Service provision to the local community eg road closures.

Medical services are extremely busy and should be booked well in advance of the event.

Ensure that the medical services provider has a 'duty order' detailing the operation of services for the event and a Contingency Plan for Major Incidents. These plans may require validation and approval by South Central Ambulance Service.

First aiders, ambulance and medical workers should:

- be at least 16 years old and not over 65 years old
- have no other duties or responsibilities
- have identification
- have protective clothing
- have relevant experience or knowledge of requirements for first aid at major public events
- be physically and psychologically be equipped to carry out the assigned roles
- Also, first aiders under 18 years old must not work unsupervised

First aid at events is not about having 'a mate who does a bit of first aid equipped with a box of plasters', nor is it necessarily having the company first aider, appointed under the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981, providing services to members of the general public, unless they are competent and comfortable to do so. Public first aid is a very different scenario to the workplace.

First aiders should not have other jobs to do as well - for example stewarding or security, although that does not stop stewards or security personnel from being first aid trained. The question one must ask is if the first aider is doing first aid, who is doing the other job that was assigned to that person.

## Traffic management

Organisers will need to consider the impact the event will have on the road network. They may need to prepare a traffic management plan, consulting with Oxfordshire County Council Highway Co-ordination and Thames Valley Police.

Closing public highways can be a complex legal matter. Organisers should contact the local authority where the event is taking place or Oxfordshire County Council Highways. An application should be made in writing to the appropriate local authority so the implications of the closure can be assessed. Only closures of minor roads or streets can generally

be considered and there can be a charge to obtain an order. All temporary signs will require specific approval from Oxfordshire County Council Highways.

'Rolling' road closures for parades, marches and processions cannot be provided by the police or the local authority.



## Other considerations

### Trading Standards

Where an event incorporates the use/storage of fireworks there may be a requirement to obtain a registration or licence under The Manufacture and Storage of Explosives Regulations 2005.

Where an event involves the dispensing/storage of petroleum spirit, a licence may be required under The Petroleum (Regulation) Acts 1928 and 1936.

Where an event incorporates any display, exhibition or performance that involves any vertebrate animal(s), the person

responsible for said animal(s) is required to be registered under the Performing Animals (Regulation) Act 1925.

Registrations/licences under the above legislation are administered and enforced by Oxfordshire County Council's Trading Standards service.

### Disabilities

Disabled spectators and participants should also be considered during the planning of an event.

### Stewards

Adequately briefed stewards may be needed at an event. It is not the role of the police to provide stewarding at events, or to provide training. It is essential stewards and organisers are able to communicate effectively with each other and the public.

In many circumstances stewards and security guards are required to be licensed by the SIA by law. Organisers will need to ensure all stewards and guards are appropriately trained and licensed. For further information visit [www.sia.org.uk](http://www.sia.org.uk)

## Legal requirements

The members of the SAG will not be held responsible for any personal injury (including sickness and death) or loss of or damage to any property (including property owned by one or more of the SAG members) caused by or arising from the holding of an event. It is the event organisers' responsibility to ensure all necessary steps have been taken.

## Useful publications

The information contained in this leaflet highlights the importance of making safety the number one priority when planning an event. The following publications may be useful for event organisers.

### **Five steps to risk assessment**

Produced by the Health and Safety  
Executive ISBN: 9780717661893

### **The Event Safety Guide: A Guide to Health and Safety and Welfare at Music and Similar Events**

Produced by the Health and Safety  
Executive ISBN: 9780717624539

### **Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds**

Produced by the Department for Culture,  
Media & Sport ISBN: 978011702074

### **Managing Crowds Safely**

Produced by the Health and Safety  
Executive ISBN: 9780717618347

### **The Highway Code**

Produced by the Department of Transport  
(D of T) ISBN: 9780115528149

### **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005**

Produced by the Department for  
Communities and Local Government  
(DCLG) ISBN: 0110729455

Information is also available on  
[www.firesafetyguides.communities.gov.uk](http://www.firesafetyguides.communities.gov.uk)

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

Produced by the Department for  
Communities and Local Government.  
ISBN: 9781851128235

Information is also available on  
[www.firesafetyguides.communities.gov.uk](http://www.firesafetyguides.communities.gov.uk)

### **Working Together on Firework Displays: A Guide to Safety for Firework Display Organisers and Operators**

Produced by the Health and Safety  
Executive ISBN: 9780717661961

### **Giving Your Own Firework Display**

Produced by the Health and Safety  
Executive ISBN: 9780717661626





## Contact details for local authorities in Oxfordshire

Each of the local authority groups in Oxfordshire co-ordinates a SAG. For more information contact the authority where the event is taking place:

### **Cherwell District Council**

Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury OX15 4AA

Tel: 01295 252535

Visit: [www.cherwell.gov.uk](http://www.cherwell.gov.uk)

### **Oxford City Council**

Town Hall Offices, St Aldates, Oxford OX1 1BX

Tel: 01865 249811

Visit: [www.oxford.gov.uk](http://www.oxford.gov.uk)

### **Oxfordshire County Council - Highway Co-ordination**

Speedwell House, Speedwell Street, Oxford OX1 1NE

Tel: 01865 815700

Visit: [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk)

### **South Oxfordshire District Council**

Benson Lane, Crowmarsh Gifford, Wallingford OX10 8ED

Tel: 01491 823000

Visit: [www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk)

### **Vale of White Horse District Council**

Abbey Close, Abingdon OX14 3JE

Tel: 01235 520202

Visit: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk)

### **West Oxfordshire District Council**

Elmfield, New Yatt Road, Witney OX28 1PB

Tel: 01993 861000

Visit: [www.westoxon.gov.uk](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk)

## Event notification form

For all events, return this to the appropriate local authority - contact details are on page 9.

Name of event:

Name of organiser:

Contact address:

Contact telephone number:

Type of event planned:

Proposed location:

Date and time of event:

Expected number of people attending:

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Name of event:

Name of organiser:

Contact address:

Contact telephone number:

Type of event planned:

Proposed location:

Date and time of event:

Expected number of people attending:

# Cherwell

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