

Keep it safe, keep it legal!

Book Aid International cannot take responsibility for any injury, losses or damage caused or sustained as a result of fundraising events held on our behalf. It is the responsibility of the event organiser to comply with legal and safety regulations.

Here are some ideas to help you to think through the safety of your event, and ensure that it meets legal regulations.

Risk Assessment

It is advisable to carry out a risk assessment to ensure that you have proper plans for public safety at your event. A risk assessment is a careful examination of what, in your event, could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm.

Event safety

Your risk assessment will help you to consider any safety precautions that you may need to carry out to ensure your event is safe and legal. Things to consider are:

First aid

Having a first aid box and qualified first aider present at any event is good practice. When you are planning larger events, speak to organisations like the British Red Cross Association or St John's Ambulance for advice.

Fire

Fire safety should be an element in your risk assessment. Contact your local fire brigade safety officer for advice on necessary precautions. Depending on their advice, you will need to provide fire extinguishers, fire point notices, etc and ensure a fire assembly point is defined. Make sure that you comply with the fire safety requirements of the venue.

Evacuation

No matter where your event will take place, you will need an evacuation plan. Seek advice from the janitor, manager or person in charge who may have their own evacuation plan in place.

Security

Consider the safety of staff and volunteers if large amounts of cash are expected to be collected. Consider how you will get the money from the venue to the bank, and who will take care of it overnight if necessary. Have a minimum of two volunteers collecting and counting donations.

Stewards

If your event is small enough you should be able to manage with helpers and volunteers. If planning a larger event, you may have to consider hiring in a professional company. All stewards need to be properly briefed and trained.

Food safety

Events involving the production, supply or sale of food (either by you or catering companies), must comply with a number of regulations. External catering companies must

be registered with your local council. Ensure you have a copy of their licence and insurance details prior to the event. Visit the website for your local council or phone them for advice.

People with disabilities

Your arrangements must make provision for people with disabilities. Your risk assessment must include hazards specific to people with disabilities - access, comfort areas, toilet facilities, safe viewing areas, carers, emergency procedures etc.

Licenses and permissions

There are a number of rules and regulations regarding licenses and permissions that your event may have to comply with. It is best to inform your local authority and check for any legal permission you may have to consider.

If you are holding a raffle, check the rules with your local authority or the Gaming Board of Great Britain. Small raffles held as part of a larger event are fine as long as ticket sales and the announcing of prizes take place during the event, and there are no cash prizes.

You will need a licence from your local authority for any of the following activities. State that the event is in aid of Book Aid International and quote Registered Charity in England and Wales No. 313869

- Music and dancing
- Sale of alcohol
- Extended hours
- Provision of food or drink
- Copyright and royalties for drama or film shows
- Collecting money or selling goods in a public place

Collections

If you're trying to raise sponsorship or collect donations, its best to ask people that you know. Remember, it's illegal to collect door to door without a license. If you are thinking of organising a collection, please contact us on 0207 733 3577 for advice. You must not collect money in the street or any other public place without a license from your local authority or the police.

What to do if things go wrong

Careful preparation and planning will help you organise a safe and successful event. In the unlikely event of something going wrong, this preparation will be important. Keep copies of your risk assessment and event safety checklist and make them available as required.

Undertaking a risk assessment:

1. Identify the hazards

Physical hazards - such as vehicles, guy ropes, slippery surfaces, electrical dangers and fire

Hazardous substances - such as fumes or gasses.

Environmental hazards - such as noise, poor lighting, weather or unsupervised water areas

Psychological hazards - such as long hours, inadequate breaks or stress

Ergonomic hazards such as poor seating, lengthy periods standing, repeated lifting or lifting heavy loads

2. Decide who is at risk and how they could be harmed – For example:

Staff or volunteers

Contractors or vendors

Young people

Staff or visitors with disabilities

3. Controlling the risks

Do the existing precautions:

Meet legal requirements?

Comply with known event standards?

Represent good practice?

Reduce risks as far as is reasonably practicable?

If not, then you need to consider an action plan to categorise remaining risks as high, medium or low. The aim is to eliminate hazards altogether or to limit those risks in order of preference by:

1. Combating the risks at source – treatment is better than warning signs
2. Preventing access to any hazards – consider barriers, marshals or route markings
3. Reorganising work to ensure adequate comfort breaks for volunteers
4. Provide protective clothing where necessary – i.e. high visibility vests
5. Provide adequate welfare facilities such as washing and toilet facilities

4. Recording the findings

Write down your findings of you risk assessment and plans.

5. Review and revise

Regulations require risk assessments to be 'suitable and sufficient'. Yours can be as short and concise or as long and detailed as you require. All plans change and when they do, you should just spare a few minutes to review your assessment for any changes.