Event Organisers Toolkit

Fêtes. Road-races. Cycling meets. Bring-and-buy sales. Weddings. Businesses are increasingly looking for ways to generate new revenue streams by organising or allowing, outdoor events on, or through, their property.

The production, operation and running of events is a complex matter as the laws which impose duties upon organisers of events, especially from a liability perspective, are surprisingly wide. Organising an event involves a balance between allowing the spirit of an event to thrive and regulatory compliance.

Here are some of the common duties you should be aware of as an event organiser:

- **Occupier’s Liability**
  Under the Occupiers Liability Act 1957, an occupier of premises owes a ‘common duty of care’ to ensure as far as reasonably possible that all those on site will be safe. The duty applies equally to guests visiting your site as well as employees or contractors working at the event.

  If a member of the public attending your event were to suffer serious injury or die in an accident caused by a failure of your employees or agents to safely erect temporary steps then the consequences could be far reaching. The same would apply if one of your employees suffered serious injury or died due to inadequate supervision or safety precautions taken during their work.

- **Health and Safety at Work**
  All entertainment events are classed as work activities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. Event organisers, concert promoters, licensees, specialist contractors and venue owners all have a statutory duty to protect the health and safety of their workers and others who may be affected by their work activity.

  Responsibility for the management of risks for the safe set-up, delivery and take-down of the entire event rests with the event organiser, the manager and/or owner of the venue, licensee and/or promoter depending on the contractual arrangements under which the event is to be run.

- **Equal Access for the Disabled**
  Under the Equality Act 2010, event organisers must take reasonable steps (and, if necessary, make reasonable adjustments) to ensure disabled visitors and employees have equal access to the premises and any demountable structures.

Fortunately, there is a wide range of insurance cover available. There needs to be because the implications if things go wrong can have a devastating effect upon businesses and those who run them. The critical consideration is to ensure that all potential liabilities are recognised and covered as far as possible.

- **Property**: cover for premises against damage, office contents, musical instruments, hired-in equipment, marquees, audio & visual equipment and plant, merchandise stock, CDs, and promotional materials.
- **Business Interruption**: should there be fire, flood, power or a telecommunications failure, then business interruption insurance offers protection for income streams during physical and technological disruptions.
- **Employers Public and Product Liabilities**: Employers liability insurance is of course compulsory and it should cover not only your own full time employees but part-time contractors, volunteers and freelancers. Audiences will be covered by public liability insurance and food/drink and merchandise by product liability cover.
- **Legal Expenses**: provides cover for legal advice and representations of your company in health & safety issues and employment and contract disputes.
- **Professional Indemnity**: provides cover against claims of negligence, breach of duty or mismanagement.
Cancellation Insurance: Cancellation cover replaces lost revenue and reimburses expenditure incurred from an event which is necessarily and unavoidably postponed, abandoned, cancelled, curtailed or relocated in circumstances beyond your control.

There are a number of practical steps that an organiser should also consider taking to ensure the smooth running of their event including:

- **Police and emergency services.** Organisers should befriend the local police and all other emergency services.
- **Security.** All security must be properly vetted and licensed.
- **Traffic/noise.** Organisers should befriend the local residents, and ensure they are on-side to extinguish the possibility of any complaints of nuisance.
- **Recording/broadcast.** If the organiser is intending to, or to allow, recording or filming of the event for broadcast then public release notices should be put up around the premises.

Business owners in the hospitality sector should embrace and promote the opportunity of allowing on-premises events. It is worth investing time to understand the regulatory environment because well organised events can be good fun and a good money-spinner for businesses seeking new and diverse revenue streams.

Further resources

Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
Guidance on running events safely.
http://www.hse.gov.uk/event-safety/index.htm

Institute of Hospitality ebooks held in the eResources Collection:


Local Authorities (UK)
Councils can provide businesses with materials regarding event planning including information about event applications, licences and working with a Safety Advisory Group and local constabularies.