

Cornwall Council Guidance for Small and Community Events



1. Introduction

Even small community public events like fetes, craft fairs and car boot sales require planning and preparation to make sure they are safe and enjoyable.

This document provides guidance on organising small and community events in Cornwall.

As a general rule, if your event will have less than 500 visitors, it's a small or community event. If it will have 500 or more visitors, it's a large event and will need extra planning and preparation. See our [guidance for large events](#) for details.

2. Planning your event

When you decide to run a small or community event, you need to think about who will be attending, the facilities they will need, what kind of activities you will have and any safety requirements.

Who will be attending your event?

- How many people are you expecting at your event?
- What facilities will you need for your visitors? This includes toilets, first aid, drinking water and refreshments.
- Is your event for specific groups, such as children, teenagers, older people or people with disabilities?
- Do you need any specific facilities for these groups?
- What do you need to do to [manage crowds safely](#)?

What type of activities will your event include?

- Will the activities involve any hazards, such as animals, water or sports?
- Do you need any specialist equipment, such as fairground rides or bungee jumps?
- Does any of the equipment need a certificate of erection by a competent person?
- Do any of the activities need barriers to keep visitors safe?
- Have you put together an event plan covering all your health and safety arrangements? This will help you carry out your [risk assessments](#).
- Will you be charging an entry fee or fees for any of the activities?
- Do you need a [licence](#) or [Temporary Event Notice](#) for any of your event's activities?

3. Getting started

When you start organising your event, you'll need to think about who will help you with this, how your site will be laid out, possible safety hazards, how you'll deal with emergencies and your contingency plans.

Set up a committee

If your event is going to be bigger than a bring-and-buy sale, you will probably need other people to help you organise it.

Set up a committee and give each committee member specific responsibilities. Choose one person to be the event manager and work with organisations like Cornwall Council,

the police and other emergency services. Choose another person with suitable experience to look after health and safety. If your event will have stewards, another committee member will need to coordinate and supervise the stewards.

Tell the emergency services and Cornwall Council about your event

Contact the local police, fire brigade, ambulance and first aid providers. Tell them about your event and ask them for advice. You may need to contact other emergency services, such as the coastguard if your event will take place at sea.

To notify Cornwall Council of your event, please complete an [Event Notification Form](#).

Site plan

Draw up a site plan showing all of your event's planned attractions and facilities. Include entrances and exits, walkways, vehicle access and emergency evacuation paths.

Risk assessments

Work out which hazards at your event will need an individual risk assessment. Carry out an initial assessment and update your event plan with the actions needed to make things safe. Include details of when the action should be completed.

Emergency plan

You will also need a formal plan setting out how you will deal with any emergency situations at your event. A small event will only need a simple emergency plan. If you are organising a larger event, you may need to talk with the emergency services, local hospitals and our emergency planning officer to make sure you have considered all types of emergencies and how you would deal with them.

4. Facilities

Some of the facilities at your event, like marquees and catering, could pose safety issues. So you need to plan their location carefully and make sure that safety checks are carried out.

Temporary structures

If your event will include temporary structures like staging, tents, marquees or stalls, you should choose an experienced supplier. You will need to agree with your supplier details of who will put up the structures and what safety checks will be carried out. Make sure to include the location of any temporary structures on your site plan.

If your event will include hazards such as moving machinery, barbecues, vehicles or other dangerous displays, you will need to have safety barriers. The barriers may need specified safety loadings (you should check with the company providing your barriers), depending on how many visitors you expect.

Catering

Use registered caterers and take care over the location of any catering facilities. They should be near water supplies but well away from any children's activity areas. You must also ensure that there is enough space between catering stalls to prevent the risk of fire spreading.

You can contact Cornwall Council's Public Health and Protection team on 0300 1234 212 or email envhealthandlicensing@cornwall.gov.uk for more guidance.

5. Crowd control and stewards

Depending on the size of your event, you may need to make arrangements for crowd control. This could include stewards, safety barriers and a public address system.

Numbers attending

You will need to work out how many people your event can handle safely. The numbers may depend on the type of activities you are offering. Some attractions may draw lots of visitors. You may have to count the number of visitors attending to prevent overcrowding.

Stewards

Larger events may need stewards to deal with crowd control, guide vehicles, clear emergency exits, keep a look out for hazards and sort out any problems with bad behaviour. If you are holding an all-day event, you will need a rota so that you have stewards available at all times.

You should fully brief your stewards on all aspects of the event, including crowd control and emergency arrangements, and give them written instructions, site plans and checklists. Your stewards must be properly trained in basic first aid and firefighting.

Make sure visitors can easily identify your stewards. Stewards may also need protective clothing such as hats, boots, gloves or coats and torches for evening events.

Ensure your stewards are able to communicate with each other, their supervisor, the person responsible for health and safety and the event manager.

6. Traffic control

Most events will need some sort of traffic control. This could include clearly labelled entrances and exits, stewards to guide traffic and help with parking, and access arrangements for emergency vehicles.

On-site traffic

Contractors and performers may need to bring their vehicles on site to load and unload equipment. Cars and pedestrians should be kept apart. You will need separate entrances for each. You may also want to limit vehicle access to set times before and after the event. You will need specific arrangements for emergency vehicles.

Most events need a parking area, and you will need stewards to look after this.

Off-site traffic

Discuss traffic control for your event with the police. You will need clear direction signs on the approaches to your site entrances and stewards to guide traffic entering and exiting the site (direction signs may only be erected by an approved body with the consent of the Council. Signs may only be erected to aid traffic management and not for advertising purposes).

You will have to apply for a traffic regulation order or highway authority approval if your event requires road closures, signs on the highway, traffic diversions or cones. You can do this by completing our [Event Notification Form](#).

Public transport

For larger events, you should contact local rail and bus companies to find out whether there will be enough public transport. You should also tell local bus companies if your event will lead to road closures or diversions.

7. Health and Safety

When you are planning your event you will need to think about health and safety issues involving contractors, performers, utilities and facilities, noise and clearing up after the event.

Contractors

If you are using contractors for your event, check that they are competent to safely carry out the work. You may find it useful to ask for personal references which you could follow up. You may also wish to check copies of your contractors' safety policy, risk assessments and public liability insurance certificate of at least £5m.

Give your contractors a copy of your [event plan](#) and make sure they work to your specifications.

Performers

Performers must have their own insurance and risk assessments. Ask for copies of these. If there will be amateur performers at your event, make sure you discuss your health and safety rules with them and give them a copy of your event plan.

Utilities and facilities

If you will be using electricity, gas or water for your event, you must ensure the facilities are safe.

You must check all portable electrical appliances and their extension leads for electrical safety and keep a record of the test. Make sure any equipment you hire comes with a certificate of electrical safety.

If your event is outdoors, you should use residual current circuit breakers (RCCB). Where possible you should step the power supply down to 110 volts. Ensure cables are safely channelled so they don't cause an electrical or tripping hazard. You should also think about any hazards that could be caused by extreme weather conditions.

Keep portable gas supplies for cooking to a minimum, and store them in designated areas away from the public. You will need to do the same for any other fuel supplies and items such as portable generators. Generators should have safety barriers to prevent public access. Show all fuel and utility arrangements clearly on your site plan.

Contingency plans

Think about what you will need to do if there are extreme weather conditions on the day of your event. Will you need to cancel the event? Could you move it to another indoor venue? Are there any other facilities you would need to bring in at short notice to cope

with the weather? If the weather prevents the main attraction from turning up, how will you deal with the disappointed crowds?

Clearing up

You will need to make arrangements to get rid of rubbish during and after the event. Assign someone to empty the bins and clear the site. At some events there could be discarded hypodermic needles, and you will need specialist training and equipment to dispose of these safely.

Noise

It is your responsibility to limit the effect of noise from your event on properties nearby. You can cut down on noise issues by taking care over the location of speakers and stages, how long the event lasts and what time it finishes.

If noise from your event is likely to affect properties nearby, you should write to the residents in advance, providing your event dates and times plus a contact name and telephone number.

You should check noise levels during the event and reduce them if they are too high. More advice on noise is available from our Public Health and Protection team on 0300 1234 212 or envhealthandlicensing@cornwall.gov.uk.

8. Event Safety

Careful planning and organisation will help to make your event safe and enjoyable for everyone involved.

You may also find the Health and Safety Executive's [The event safety guide](#): A guide to health, safety and welfare at music and similar events useful.

If you have any doubts about the safety of your event, don't hold it.

Just before your event, you will need to carry out a detailed final [safety check](#). Carry out a walk through inspection of the site, make a note of any issues and take action to put them right.

You may want to carry out further inspections during your event. Each time note any issues and actions taken to deal with them, and keep a copy of the event checklists.

9. Insurance

As an event organiser, you are responsible for the safety of everyone involved in your event, and you could be personally liable if anyone is hurt or injured due to your negligence.

You will need public liability insurance of at least £5m to cover you against any civil lawsuits. You should also think about whether you need cancellation insurance i.e. cancellation due to bad weather etc. You should be able to obtain both from any reputable insurance company.

10. Risk assessment

Health and safety legislation applies to nearly all events, even small ones. You will need to assess your event's risks beforehand and take appropriate steps to reduce them.

You must have a named person who will be responsible for safety at your event. Larger events may need a dedicated safety officer.

All events must meet recognised safety standards, and as the event organiser you must take all reasonable precautions to ensure your event takes place safely.

To do this you will need to carry out a written risk assessment, which involves identifying all hazards for your event, assessing the level of risk and taking action to reduce any risks to an acceptable level. The Health and Safety Executive's [Five steps to Risk Assessment guide](#) explains what is involved.

If your event includes more than one attraction, you may need a written risk assessment for each activity. You will need to keep a copy of each risk assessment.

Any contractors involved in your event will also have to carry out risk assessments. You should ask for copies of these. Contractors could include companies providing play equipment, public address systems, electricians and other services.

11. Safety checklist

Below are some of the safety issues you should consider before your event takes place.

- Do you have a named event organiser, safety manager, chief steward and stewards?
- Do you need any special permission from any people or organisations?
- Is the site suitable for the event?
- Have you carried out a risk assessment to ensure all the necessary health and safety measures are in place?
- Have you kept a copy of the risk assessment?
- Have you briefed the safety manager?
- Have you provided all the necessary information – maps, [site plans](#), details of gas and electricity installations, an outline programme of activities?
- How many people are expected to attend the event, and how many can the site hold safely?
- Have you located all of the site entrances and exits?
- Are all the entrances and exits signposted, controlled, stewarded and suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs?
- Do you have trained, briefed and clearly identifiable stewards?
- Do you have suitable disabled facilities?
- Do you have a reliable communications system for key people?
- Do you have a reliable system for communicating with your visitors?
- Do you have a control point and call signs (how will you summon help and communicate in the event of an emergency)?
- Have you prepared emergency announcements?
- Do you need crowd control barriers?

- Are your emergency procedures in place, and have they been agreed with the emergency services?
- Can emergency vehicles get on and off the site easily?
- Do you have effective fire control measures in place?
- Do you have suitable first aid facilities?
- Do you need any special arrangements for lost children, lost property, drinking water, toilets, noise control or parking?
- Do you have a procedure for Reporting Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences?
- Is your emergency plan in place? Does it cover everything? Who will make decisions during an emergency and how? Will the event be stopped if there is an emergency?

12. After your event

After your event is over, you will need to check the site condition and report any accidents or claims. You should also ask for feedback from staff, stallholders and contractors on what went well and what could have been better so that you can improve your event in the future.

Site condition

Inspect your site to make sure you haven't left anything behind that could be hazardous to others. You should also check for any damage that might have been caused by your event.

If you are leaving any structures up overnight, such as marquees or stages, you will need to make sure they are in a safe condition and safe from possible vandalism. If you are leaving a lot of structures up overnight, you may need specific security arrangements.

Accidents

You will need to report any accidents that occurred during your event. At the time of the accident you should take down the names and addresses of any witnesses and take photographs to include with your report. You should also complete an accident form and send a copy to the landowner.

You must tell your insurance company about any accident, and you should take action to prevent similar accidents taking place.

Claims

You should contact your insurers immediately if anyone says they will be making a claim following an accident at the event. Your insurers may require a copy of the completed accident form.

Event feedback

Event organisers, key stakeholders, festival and event staff, security, contractors, vendors and entertainers should all be given the opportunity to feedback and evaluate the event. This should include what worked, what didn't, why it didn't work and how it could be fixed. This feedback will help you to improve your next event.

You can find a sample debrief/evaluation form in the toolkit on www.cornwall.gov.uk/eventstoolkit

13. Useful Links

More information and help can be found on the [My Community Starter website](#).

[Cabinet Office Organising a voluntary event: a 'Can do' guide](#)

14. Further information

Please contact Cornwall Council Event Planning for further information. Contact details can be found on www.cornwall.gov.uk/events