

Fire Safety at Events

Consider the risks of a fire breaking out at any event and, if one does, how it can be controlled quickly and safely without putting employees, volunteers or the public at risk.

Legislation requires that those responsible for organising an event (usually the event organiser, licence holder or person having overall control) must carry out a **fire-safety risk assessment** and put in place measures to **minimize the risk and deal with a fire** if one breaks out.

At smaller events, fire risks might be dealt with as part of an overall event risk assessment but this is likely to depend on the event and local circumstances. The local fire service should be able to advise on this.

Additional precautions may be necessary if there are high risk materials on the site, such as liquid petroleum gas (LPG).

Fire safety risk assessment

Consider the site, any structures and what could cause a fire to start, either by accident or deliberately.

The extent of the fire-safety risk assessment will depend on the nature and complexity of the event as well as the site. Where an event is particularly complex, or involves high risk activity, it will probably be necessary to seek advice from a specialist.

It is particularly important to consider safe occupancy capacities and the ability of escape routes to cope with the numbers attending.

[Fire risk assessment – HSE Checklist](#)

Ignition Sources and Fuels

Fires can be caused by several ignition sources:

- Arson/wilful fire raising
- cooking and catering appliances, including barbecues
- cigarettes, matches and lighters
- fixed and portable heating appliances
- hot works, such as welding, hot cutting, angle grinding, blacksmiths
- faulty or misused electrical equipment or wiring
- lighting equipment and light fittings
- pyrotechnics and fireworks
- vehicle exhausts
- lightning strike
- fire used in performance (e.g. flame eater).

Some materials may also be particularly vulnerable to fire, such as:

- non-flame-retardant tents and marquees, backdrops, drapes, scenery and display stands
- packaging materials, litter and waste materials
- flammable gases (LPG cylinders)
- fuel stocks for generators
- dry vegetation (e.g. stubble fields)
- seating, cushions, soft furnishings, temporary floor and wall coverings
- vehicles

Event organisers should try to eliminate or control these materials and/or of sources of ignition.

Stay Alert – sharp eyes, save lives

Make sure that all those working on the site, whether employees or volunteers, are aware of fire risks and know how to alert the right people if a fire starts. In some cases, it may be necessary to have specific people responsible for monitoring fire risks, such as fire marshals.

Ensure adequate arrangements are in place for alerting people if a fire starts and for communicating both with staff/volunteers and the public. This could be by a public address system onstage, and use of screens or loud hailers.

Access for emergency vehicles

Provision must be made for emergency vehicles to access the site, and a route planned and share beforehand.

Means of escape and evacuation routes

Make sure there are arrangements for everyone to be able to escape safely from every structure and from the site itself without being overcome by fire, heat or smoke. This should include those with disabilities.

Those in control of some structures with special features, such as fairground rides or inflatables, need to make special arrangements to ensure that people can escape if a fire breaks out. Event organisers should check that they have plans in place.

Exit routes and any fastenings on exits should be checked both before and regularly throughout the event. Evacuation plans should include the unfastening of these exits.

Firefighting equipment

Event organisers should ensure that there is adequate firefighting equipment on site in relation to the risks. This should include fire extinguishers and, possibly, a local water supply.

Fire extinguishers should be located by each exit and source of ignition (generator, hot food trader etc.). which type will depend on the likely source of ignition:

<div> <div>FIRE EXTINGUISHER TYPES</div>  </div>						
	Wood, Paper Cloth Etc	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗
	Grease, Oil, Paint, Solvents	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
	Magnesium, Aluminum, Etc	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
	Electrical Panel, Motor, Wiring Etc	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
	Cooking Oils, Animal Fats, Etc	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓

Event organisers and their **employees/volunteers should not attempt to fight fires unless they have been trained to do so** and in the use of any firefighting equipment on site.

It is good practice for a senior member of the event organising team to be trained in firefighting or to employ someone on site who has this training.

You must notify the Site Permissions team if you include any of the following in your event: fireworks, pyrotechnics, fire pits and bonfires.