

Risk Management Considerations for Special Events

Background Information

If you are renting out a facility owned by your municipality or organization for a special event, it is important to make sure you are protected. Create a special events policy and outline procedures that renters must follow when planning and executing their event. By instituting a special events policy, you can help to ensure that your organization's interests are protected and that all federal, provincial, and municipal laws are upheld.

Because so many different types of events can take place on municipal property (festivals, concerts, parades, fundraisers), it makes it difficult to come up with a standard, all encompassing special events policy. The following considerations should be included as a base, and then each individual event should be examined for unique risk issues.

Risk Management Considerations

Some events are held year after year without incident. That, however, does not imply that the proper precautions and risk control techniques are being implemented.

The first step in managing potential risks associated with a special event is to map out the involvement of all parties. Who is involved and what is the extent of their involvement?

Next, practice appropriate liability transfer techniques by matching the risk with the party in control. For example, if your only involvement is owning the premises where the event is being held, you will want to enter into an agreement whereby the organizer is required to:

1. Maintain specific minimum controls and obtain necessary approvals from the appropriate authorities, which correspond with the nature of the event.
2. Provide a hold harmless and indemnity in your favour.
3. Guarantee the indemnity by requesting proof of sufficient limits of liability insurance including your municipality as an additional insured.

Create a Special Events Policy

Contracts/Permits

Rental Agreements

All renters of municipal buildings or property should be required to sign a rental agreement. In the agreement, you should include a hold harmless and indemnification clause. Here is a sample clause, which should be reviewed by your legal counsel prior to use:

"As part of the consideration for the Municipality renting the above-noted facilities to _____, I on behalf of myself, the renting organization and its members agree to release and discharge, and to indemnify and save harmless the Municipality from and against all claims and proceedings, by whomsoever made or brought, in respect of any cost, expenses, losses, damage or injury arising by reason of my/our use of the rented facilities."

Insurance Policy

The renter should be required to obtain a general insurance policy covering the event. You should require your municipality to be added to the policy as an additional insured. Here is a sample clause, which should be reviewed by your insurance provider prior to use:

"The Municipality requires the applicant to carry Commercial General Liability Insurance in an amount not less than ____ million dollars. This insurance will be carried for the rental period and will have the Municipality shown as an additional Insured."

Ensure that you see proof of insurance and document it.

Special Occasion Permits

Ensure that the renter has the appropriate provincial Special Occasion Permit if alcohol is being served at the event. A Special Occasion Permit can be purchased in advance of the event.

Premises

The location of the event and the premises on which it is going to be held need to be suitable for the event. You must ensure that:

- The facility meets building and safety codes.
- The size of the premises is large enough to hold the expected crowd.
- Any trip and fall or other hazards are fixed or removed.
- Emergency exits are clearly marked and the pathways to them are clear.
- Ensure that there is adequate protection from the weather at outdoor venues – ie.) protection from the sun, rain, storms, etc.
- Ensure there is safe and hazard-free access to the premises.
- Make certain that there is adequate outside night lighting for the safety of the patrons entering and exiting the premises.
- Verify that all fire alarms, extinguishers, and sprinkler systems are running properly and tested.

Security

Security Plan

- The purpose of having a security plan is to ensure that all people and property at the event have the best possible protection.
- When creating a security plan, think about the worst case scenario and plan accordingly.
- Ensure that the organization renting out your property also has a security plan in place for their event.
- The security policy should be in writing so it can be used in defending event organizers against any conflicts over security negligence.
- Because every event is unique and will have different security needs, create a basic security plan and then customize it for each event.
- A security plan should include:
 - A schedule of all event activities.
 - A schedule of all security activities, before, during, and after the event.
 - Venue site plan, as well as a map of the surrounding area.
 - A description of the risk factors that are unique to the event, such as a large audience, sale of alcohol, violence and vandalism, no identification checking, etc.

- A list of all key personnel, including security guards, any emergency workers, facility managers, event organizers, etc.
- A command post should be established and its location, policies and procedures should be specified.
- A detail of post assignments including post locations.
- A section on security communications – two-way radios, cell phones, etc.
- Security transportation. – how security is going to move through the event, respond to emergencies, etc.
- A section detailing emergency procedures.
- Security job descriptions.
- All security personnel should have specific job descriptions and responsibilities, which could include:
 - Acting as a deterrent for potential disturbances.
 - Identifying and resolving potential incidents.
 - Checking for and removing prohibited items upon entry.
 - Identifying and appropriately dealing with intoxicated patrons.
 - Providing security for patrons in parking lots.
 - Preventing theft and damage.
 - Providing crowd control.
 - Ensuring the safe use of the facilities.
 - Properly responding to and controlling emergency situations.

Private Security vs. Law Enforcement Private Security

- The organization renting municipal property can make the decision between hiring a private security firm or law enforcement to undertake event security.
- Under the *Private Security and Investigative Services Act*, a security guard must be insured by an insurer licensed under the *Insurance Act* for liability in the proper amount.
- The *Private Security and Investigative Services Act* also states that every security guard must hold a valid licence. Proof of their licence should be a condition of employment.
- Ask for and check references.
- See a valid Certificate of Insurance from the security company.

- Have a written contract with the security firm, including an indemnification clause against liability due to any negligence from the security company.
- Check with the chambers of commerce and better business bureaus to see if there have been any complaints about the security company.

If hiring law enforcement, consider:

- What policies the City has in place regarding police security service at events.
- Charge back the cost to the organization.

Health and Safety

First Aid

- Have a designated First Aid tent or area set up with plenty of signs indicating its location.
- Ensure it is stocked with multiple complete first aid kits, including portable kits.
- Have cots or mats in place where patrons can lay down.
- Keep equipment such as Epi-pens and Benadryl liquid, on hand for dealing with allergic reactions.
- Consider obtaining an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) for events where paramedics are not present.

Emergency Services

For all large events, consider having paramedics and an ambulance on site. St. John's Ambulance can be contracted for services at special events.

Sanitation

- Ensure the venue has an adequate number of waste receptacles.
- Schedule for the emptying of waste receptacles to ensure that the venue stays clean and hygienic throughout the event.

Crowd Management

- Crowd management and crowd control are not the same thing. Crowd management refers to the measures taken to facilitate the movement and enjoyment of the crowd, such as seating, ushering, etc. Crowd control refers to the actions taken once a crowd is beginning to get out of control or has gotten out of control.
- It is important that these two concepts are defined and separated in the planning of the event.

Ushering

- The job of an usher is to help people to their seats quickly and safely.
- Well prepared ushers can help to ensure that the event gets started on-time and that people are where they are supposed to be.
- Ushers help to reduce crowd confusion because they know the venue and can help people to locate areas such as washrooms and concession kiosks.
- Ushers can alert security of potential problems and also help to spot safety hazards.
- It is important to remember that ushers are in no way required to or allowed to perform security functions.

Signage

- It is important to have clear, concise signage at the event.
- Signs should be posted throughout the venue in highly visible spots.
- Signs should be written in simple language that all patrons can understand.
- There should be signs indicating the various seating areas so that patrons can easily find their seats.
- Signs should point out things such as:
 - Location of the washrooms.
 - Location of the concession.
 - Location of the first aid area.
 - Venue rules.
 - Codes of Conduct.
- Noise Control.
 - Event organizers need to consider how noise will affect the surrounding neighbourhood.
 - Neighbours should be notified prior to the event and given an approximate schedule of events.
 - Consult your Municipal by-laws regarding specifics for noise control.
- Public Address System (P.A. system).
 - Ensure your venue has a working P.A. system.
 - The P.A. system is very important for providing safety and security information to the patrons, as well as directions in an emergency situation.

Alcohol

The management of alcohol at events is an extremely important and complex area. Please read more about Alcohol Policies and Procedures for further information.

Food

- There should be an adequate amount of food available for purchase at the event.
- There should be a variety of food available, including vegetarian and vegan options.
- There should be a variety of cold drinks available, including soft drinks, juices, and water.
- Food must be prepared in a sanitary manner, in accordance with local by-laws and public health guidelines.
- There must be food available for free or for purchase if alcohol is available at the event – check Special Occasion Permit rules and regulations.

Street Closures

- If the event requires street closures, check local by-laws for appropriate procedures.
- Inform all residents and businesses on the street of the road closure well in advance of the event, giving them an approximate time frame for the closure.
- Post an event organizer or volunteer at both ends of the road to inform drivers of the reason for the closure and to direct them around it.

Parking and Traffic

- Ensure that there is an adequate amount of parking at the venue.
- If there is not adequate parking, consider contracting out another parking lot or instruct patrons to use municipal lots.
- Ensure there is parking for the disabled as close to the venue as possible and that it is clearly marked.
- Post signs that clearly identify venue parking and lead the way from the parking lot to the venue entrance.
- Ensure there is adequate lighting in the parking areas for the safety of patrons and their vehicles.
- Consider having a member of the security team patrol the parking lot and be on hand to escort people to their cars if they wish.

Volunteers

Volunteers are an integral part of any event. Please read Risk Management Considerations for Volunteers for more information.

Inspections

1. Stipulate what must be inspected (ie. tents).
2. State that the inspections must be carried out by your building inspectors. Charge the cost of these inspections to the organizer.
3. State the required inspection by your fire department. Charge the cost of the inspection to the organizer.
4. Technical standards authorities (such as the TSSA in Ontario) - amusement rides, inflatables - know what falls under their jurisdiction and require that the event organizer abide by their requirements.