



# Risk Management Considerations for Street Fair Organizers

## Vendors

All vendors need a vendor permit regardless of what they are selling. The permit will ensure that they have obtained permission to operate a merchandise booth and are legally allowed to sell their goods. Their permit should be placed in their booth for the duration of the event.

Food vendors also need to have a valid health permit. All merchandise sold needs to be family friendly, made solely by the vendor (i.e. not manufactured), legal and allergy warnings must be posted.

To ensure the sale of appropriate goods, have all vendors fill out an application form with detailed descriptions and pictures of any and all merchandise they will be selling prior to approving their participation in the fair. Any vendors found selling items that are not approved should be reprimanded and the items should be removed. To assist vendors in the application process and make sure they know what merchandise is acceptable, consider holding “help programs” before the street fair begins. Vendors planning to sell alcohol need a valid liquor license.

Any samples or giveaways must be safe and appropriate for all ages. Stipulate that any “freebies” be approved by your organization before they are distributed. The same goes for

any interactive activities or games that a vendor would like to arrange.

Dangerous items such as knives should be kept out of reach of children. All merchandise and/or displays need to be contained within the vendor space; spill outs onto walkways are not permitted because it creates a tripping hazard.

The vendor should be present in their booth at all times for safety (theft prevention etc.). Vendors should not be allowed to sell, sublet, lease or lend their booth space to third parties for insurance reasons. Communicate all rules in a straightforward manner to vendors before the event and make sure they are enforced.

## Food Safety

Proper food handling and preparation is essential. Any vendor selling food needs to have a health permit. They also need to comply with health laws and regulations to ensure that all prepared food is safe to eat. If the food is perishable, proper measures need to be taken to safely store it prior to consumption. A list of ingredients used should be available for patrons with food allergies or special dietary requirements. Require food vendors to provide a summary of the health and safety methods they are using to ensure they are adequate.

## Entertainment

Entertainment at a street fair can be fun, but it also presents its own set of risks. Any entertainment should be safe and audience-appropriate. If live bands are performing, have professionals install the stage to make sure it is safely assembled. An experienced crew should set up, tear down and operate the band's equipment. Close off areas with equipment to spectators to prevent accidents.

Parades are also common at street fairs. If items like candy or small toys are given out during the parade, they should not be thrown into the crowd because they could easily injure someone. Designate walkers to distribute them instead. If horses or other animals are part of the parade, ensure they are handled by qualified people. All vehicles should be in good working condition and all floats should be equipped with a fire extinguisher.

Depending on the scale of your street fair, you may have midway rides for patrons to enjoy. Rent rides from a reputable company and have them set up by the same company or another experienced professional. When renting rides you should always sign a third party contract. Have a risk manager and lawyer look over the contracts before signing. The rental company should have valid insurance; get a copy of their certificate of insurance for your records. You may be required to have an operating license, permit and certification. Check all rules and regulations before the event to make sure everything is in order.

## Security

Have ample security procedures in place. If the expected crowd is large and the area is difficult to patrol, consider hiring a security service. Enter into a contract with the security service and check to make sure the service is reputable and licensed. Be sure to create a protocol for situations such as rowdy or violent patrons or vendors. Include definitions of rowdy and violent and include a removal procedure. Also include guidelines for crowd control in emergency situations.

- The *Private Security and Investigative Services Act* in Ontario 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.

Theft prevention is necessary in open-air events with large crowds like street fairs. Make sure vendors are aware of theft risks and encourage them to take precautions such as keeping money in a safe or locked cash box. If the street fair lasts more than one day, consider overnight security.

When dealing with such a large number of third parties, it is imperative that you confirm each party has the proper insurance. Ask for proof of valid insurance from each vendor and service hired. You should stipulate that the following be present in any contract or insurance policy by a vendor or service:

- A minimum amount of general liability coverage (you should discuss an acceptable amount with your risk managers).
- Your organization should be listed as an additional insured.

All vendors should also sign a waiver stating that they agree with all the rules and regulations of the street fair. The waiver should include a media release if you intend to publicize the event.

## Safety Measures

Safety equipment (fire extinguishers, etc.) should be in good working order and easily accessible not only to street fair employees and volunteers but to patrons. If a vendor has a generator, barbeque or anything of the sort that presents an increased fire risk, that booth must have a fire extinguisher in it or within a foot of it (i.e. incredibly accessible). A detailed map should be placed around the entirety of the fair with locations of exits, first aid stations, fire extinguishers, emergency telephones, etc. EMS stations should be set up for emergencies and contingency plans should be in place in the event of poor weather, fires etc.

Food and drinks should be sold in non-breakable containers. Glass plates and cups are not acceptable. Garbage receptacles and recycling bins should be dispersed around the area to encourage proper disposal and to keep the

ground free of debris. Make sure someone is responsible for emptying the receptacles.

Rollerblades, skateboards, bikes, etc. should not be permitted in the fair area because they can be dangerous to pedestrians. Consider creating a policy for pets. Discuss with your risk management team if you want to allow vendors and attendees to have pets at the fair as long as certain requirements are met (all dogs are on leashes etc.) or if pets should not be allowed.

There are many temporary structures at a street fair such as vendor booths and food stands. It is important that these structures are as stable as possible. Before the fair opens, have a qualified risk manager inspect each structure to ensure it is safe. They should check that the structures are firmly secured. All extension cords running along the ground should be taped down and well-marked so no one trips.

Coordinate road closures with the municipality. Make sure the proper roads are closed and that barricades are firmly in place to stop traffic from entering the fair. Road closure notices should go up well in advance so that motorists can plan alternate routes. Consider having local authorities monitor the barricades to ensure no drivers are getting past the road blocks.

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