

RISK CHECKLIST – CHURCHES

CHURCH SPONSORED PUBLIC EVENTS

Church communities often host or participate in events for the wider public, an example being **Community Carols** at Christmas. Another example is a **Car Boot Sale** where vendors who pay the church a fee for the space they occupy where proceeds of sales generally belong to the sellers. Sometimes churches provide food and other refreshments, either donated or for a charge.

Public Events may be held on church owned land or more typically at a local council facility. If held on facilities owned by a Council or other legal entity they normally have their own risk management criteria that must be complied with.

Prior to commencing any event, a church should undertake a risk assessment to identify what might go wrong at the event and then consider how the likelihood or consequences of the identified risks might be reduced.

The emphasis of this risk checklist is events held on church property but many of the risk issues are relevant regardless of the actual location of the event.

Planning & Preparation

Has funding been obtained to enable the event to proceed?

Has an event co-ordinator / manager been appointed?

Has the event been discussed with local government representatives? If necessary, have local authority approvals been obtained for the event?

Have neighbours been advised of the event?

Has a risk assessment been undertaken of the proposed event (including all planned activities)?

Has an emergency management plan been prepared and rehearsed? Have emergency services been informed of the event – police, fire brigade, ambulance? Is there provision for emergency vehicle access to the venue?

Is there an alternate venue available in the event of inclement weather? Has the “trigger” been agreed to choose to use the alternate venue? Has a communication plan been agreed in relation to using the alternate venue?

Is the capacity of the venue sufficient for expected attendance numbers? Are there plans in place for larger than expected attendance?

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Will there be any “working at heights” requirements for venue set-up or clean-up? Have all staff, contractors and volunteers who will be working at heights received appropriate training? Has equipment to be used (e.g. ladders, cherry pickers) been certified as suitable for the tasks to be undertaken?

Has the venue (including car parking) been checked for slip, trip or fall hazards prior to the event? Are subsequent checks carried out during the event? Has the team been trained in how to lift heavier items needed in the set-up and clear-up processes?

Have WHS / OHS standards been established for the event? How have they been communicated? Have staff / volunteers been trained in WHS standards?

Have stallholders or vendors been provided with an “induction pack” that sets out the relationship between the church and the vendor? It should include details of relevant risks and related control measures as well as insurance requirements.

If there are any open water hazards at the venue (ponds, pools, dams etc.), what access control measures are planned?

Has insurance coverage been confirmed with Baptist Insurance Services (BIS)? Note that if the event includes private individuals or organisations who are selling product in their own right (e.g. the church “sells” them space to set up their stall or car) then the stallholders are not covered by BIS insurance.

Infrastructure & Facilities

Have you catered for persons with disabilities?

Have you arranged adequate numbers of trained first aid practitioners for expected numbers of attendees? Do you have adequate numbers of first aid kits on hand?

Does the venue have adequate toilet and hand washing facilities for the expected numbers? Are people allocated to maintain cleanliness of facilities during the event?

Has an adequate supply of drinking water been arranged?

Is there adequate seating for attendees?

Have all electrical equipment and leads been tagged and tested? Is all equipment installed by qualified staff? Are residual current devices (RDU) or safety switches used with all electrical equipment?

Do all gas cylinders have current certification?

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If temporary structures are required to be erected, e.g. stage and tents, are sufficient qualified personnel on hand for the construction? Have they been informed of WHS standards for the event?

If generators are in use, has access been restricted to authorised personnel?

If there are areas to which access is restricted, have appropriate signage and barriers been put in place? Is the access restriction enforced by security staff?

Have adequate communications systems been established: Public Address to inform attendees; portable communications for organisers and officials?

Is there provision for safe storage of belongings of officials, performers etc.?

Has the use of flammable materials been minimised? What fire protection / prevention strategies are in place (extinguishers, wardens, training)?

Is lighting adequate to allow safe movement by attendees?

Has an incident recording and reporting system been established? Have all officials been trained in its use?

Food

If food is being provided by the church, refer to risk issues on “Risk Checklist Churches – Church Cafes”.

If food is being provided by a third party, have they;

- Completed risk assessments for their catering business
- Registered their business with a local council
- Obtained insurance for their business, including public liability coverage.

Entertainment (including Performers)

Where entertainment is provided to the public, have risk assessments been completed for each activity?

Do performers have copyright permission for any songs they will be presenting?

If the event includes a fireworks display, have you obtained a copy of the required permits?

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Contractors

Where contractors are engaged to provide services to the event (e.g. equipment, rides, food, professional staff, etc.) have the following been undertaken:

- Contractor pre-event visits, completion of risk assessments and of Job Safety Analyses
- Provision of copies of qualifications and certifications
- Provision of insurance coverage details (including public liability and professional indemnity)
- Completion of service agreement or contract outlining service expectations

Has a project manager or co-ordinator been appointed to oversee contractor performance?

Security and Traffic Movement

Have staff and volunteers been assigned to security roles? Have they been briefed on their roles and responsibilities?

Will cash be handled during the event? What transport and handling arrangements are in place? Have you undertaken a risk assessment of the cash handling process?

Are pedestrian entrances and exits to the venue clearly indicated? Do they allow adequate access and egress for anticipated numbers of attendees?

Are walkways clearly marked? Have staff and volunteers been assigned responsibility for keeping walkways clear?

What arrangements have been made for parking at the venue? Refer to separate publication entitled Risk Information Churches – Car Parks.

Is there adequate separation of pedestrian traffic from vehicles?

Is signage adequate to direct attendees to events and facilities (e.g. entrances, exits, first aid, extinguishers and amenities)?

Staffing including Volunteers

Have all staff and volunteers who will have contact with children completed Working With Children checks? Have they been advised of and agreed to the churches policy in relation to child protection?

What arrangements have been made to care for VIPs care (including security)?

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Has the event risk analysis identified people at risk and put in place appropriate risk mitigation strategies?

Refer to separate Risk Information Churches – Volunteer Workers for advice relating to the risks associated with utilising volunteer workers.

Clean-Up

Have facilities been provided for the disposal of refuse; have arrangements been made for refuse collection during the event?

Has planning been completed for the process of cleaning the venue and restoring it to its pre-event state?