

Guide to planning small/community events

September 2011

Street parties and fêtes are a traditional part of British life; they are a great way for us to get to know our neighbours and build strong communities.

The top tip for arranging an event is to start early! Try to make plans a couple of months in advance, and get in touch with the relevant Council departments as early as possible – they'll be able to help.

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1. What this guidance applies to

This guidance is intended for street parties and fêtes that groups of residents get together to arrange for their neighbours that are:

- For residents/neighbours only
- Publicity only to residents
- No licence normally necessary if music is incidental and no alcohol is sold
Self-organised
- Closure of residential roads only – apply for road closure at least 6 weeks before the event
- Public liability insurance optional – organiser must accept responsibility for possible claims if public liability insurance is not in place

Small, private street parties and fêtes are very simple to organise and generally do not include activities that need a licence, such as selling alcohol or providing certain types of entertainment. These pages cover everything you should consider when organising this type of event.

2. Where do I start?

2.1 I want to have a street party - can I close my road?

You can apply for a road closure if the road is purely residential, i.e. not a main road, a through road or a bus route. You need to submit your application no later than 6 weeks before the party.

Access to the closed part of the street must be maintained at all times for emergency vehicles, but it's OK to place items such as tables and chairs in the road as these can be easily moved.

You need to consult everyone who lives in a house or runs a business which will be affected by the road closure; it is your responsibility to make sure they are aware of the proposals and happy with them.

2.2 Will I need a licence?

You will need a licence if you want to do any of the following:

- Sell alcohol (including giving it away as part of the ticket price or in exchange for a 'donation')
- Serve hot food or drink between 11.00pm and 5.00am
- Provide regulated entertainment (such as live music) to the public or a section of the public
- Provide regulated entertainment (such as live music) with a view to making a profit, even if the 'profit' will be given to charity.

First, check with the owner of the land/building where you want to hold the event; they may already have a licence you can use.

If you need to get your own licence, you will need to apply for a [Temporary Event Notice \(TEN\)](#) from our licensing team. You must apply for the notice no later than ten working days before the event.

2.3 Do we need a permit or register to serve food?

No – as a private party, you don't need special permission unless you're serving it after 11pm. Since it's a community event, why not ask everyone to contribute something to eat or drink? That way, there'll be a good selection of nibbles and you won't be burdened with the task of feeding your entire street.

- When cooking hot food make sure you separate raw foods from cooked foods/ salads. Have separate areas and separate utensils.
- Check all foods are cooked through thoroughly with a clean fork ensuring all juices run clear. Serve as soon as possible and no longer than two hours.
- Keep your cold foods refrigerated below 8°C until put out for service.
- Have hand washing facilities available – soap and clean water is best. Alcohol gels can be used if your hands are not covered in grease or food.
- Anti bacterial kitchen spray available with kitchen cloths to disinfect your surfaces and equipment.
- Wear a clean apron when handling food.

3. Safety at Events – do a risk assessment

No matter what size your event is, a risk assessment is a worthwhile exercise – and in many cases, it's a legal requirement.

A risk assessment is simply a careful examination of what at your event could cause harm to people, so you can weigh up whether you need to take steps to lower the risk.

If your event is in a regular venue (such as a community hall or nightclub), it's possible that the management will have their own risk assessment, but you may still want to complete your own because the hazards may be different for your particular event.

Risk assessments are not difficult to do – you just need to be aware of these terms:

Hazard This is anything that has the potential to cause harm (e.g. electricity, obstacles, crowds, food).

Risk This is the chance that someone could be harmed by the hazards you identify. The risk can be *low*, *medium* or *high*.

Now follow these five simple steps and record all of your findings in writing:

3.1 Step 1 – Spot the hazards

Plan your event on paper, then think about the hazards relating to the individual activities and any equipment that will be used. If you can, it helps to walk around the venue as you do this. It's a good idea to get another person to do the same thing – they may spot things that you have missed. Think about:

- Slipping, tripping or falling hazards (e.g. loose carpets, unsecured cables)
- Moving parts of machinery (e.g. fairground rides)
- Any vehicles driving onto site
- Electrical safety (e.g. use of any portable electrical appliances)
- Manual handling activities (e.g. members of staff or volunteers moving heavy items)
- Poor lighting, heating or ventilation
- Hazards created by specific activities (e.g. fire risk from cooking demonstrations)
- Storing and serving food (e.g. chilled items being left out of the fridge for too long)
- Any other hazards that you may find

3.2 Step 2 – Decide who might be harmed and how

For each hazard identified, list all those who may be affected and how they may be harmed. Don't list individuals by name, just list groups of people. For example:

- Employees / contractors / volunteers
- Vendors, exhibitors and performers
- Members of the public
- Disabled people

- Children and older people

3.3 Step 3 – Work out the risks and decide whether to take extra precautions

For each hazard, write down the precautions that are already in place to minimise the risk of someone being harmed. For example, if there are cables running across the floor, are they already secured so people won't trip over them?

Taking into account any existing precautions, decide whether the risk for each hazard is high, medium or low. For example:

High: An unsecured bouncy castle being used by young children in adverse weather conditions

Medium: A display of animals in a roped off area

Low: A band performing on a raised stage

For each risk, consider whether it can be eliminated completely. If it cannot, then decide what must be done to reduce it to an acceptable level. Consider whether you can do any of the following:

- Remove the hazard all together, e.g. by prohibiting vehicles from driving on site during the event
- Prevent access to the hazard, e.g. using barriers to prevent people getting close to a tall stack of speakers
- Use personal protective equipment, e.g. giving members of staff earplugs if they will be exposed to loud music
- Find a substitute for that activity/machine etc., e.g. hiring a different bouncy castle – one which can be safely secured to the ground
- Take any other steps to reduce the risk level of the hazard, e.g. using stewards to manage audience numbers and prevent overcrowding.

3.4 Step 4 – Record your findings

Make sure you record all your findings from steps 1-3. For small, low risk events, this can be done on a very simple template, see below:

Risk assessment for:

.....
Company name

.....
Company address

.....
.....
.....
.....

Assessment undertaken by

.....
Position in company

.....
Signed

.....
Date

.....
Assessment review date

.....

Hazards List the things that could cause an accident (ladders, chemicals)	People at risk from hazards (staff, contractors, guests, the public)	Controls/ safety measures (electrical inspections, training)	Further action needed State what you need to do and how urgent (give a target date)	Work done (Sign and date)

3.5 Step 5 – Review and revise

It's likely that the risk factors will change and new hazards will present themselves during the planning stage, so you should treat your risk assessment as a work in progress and regularly review it, making amendments where necessary.

4. Fire Risk Assessments

A fire risk assessment is a legal requirement – the person responsible for the event must make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks. The Fire Brigade recommend that you keep your fire risk assessment separate from your general risk assessment, but you can use the same template so long as you go into sufficient detail.

More information about fire risk assessments can be downloaded from [Avon Fire and Rescue's website](#) including specialised guides for the type of venue where your event will be taking place. Alternatively, you can telephone them on 0117 926 2061 or text them on 07781 482627.

More advice on fire risk assessments can be found in the Health and Safety Executive's *Event Safety Guide*. For smaller events, the [Chief Fire Officers Association](#) has some simple checklists for food concessions and/or market stalls.

5. Clean-up

You are responsible for cleaning up afterwards, especially if you're holding a street party. It's your street, your party, so keep your local area clean and tidy. Let people know in advance what time the event will finish and have a section set aside for bin bags and recycling.

Encourage people to take their own waste home and recycle as much as possible through our collection services. As an alternative to this, you could arrange for a member of the organising team to take separated bags to one of our Recycling Centres.