



# Devon & Cornwall Police

Building safer communities together

## GUIDANCE TO EVENT ORGANISERS

These guidelines are intended to provide assistance to organisers who are planning to hold a public event. They are not exhaustive and may be given to an organiser at an early stage in the planning process.

### PUBLIC EVENTS

The guidelines explain the responsibilities of both the organisers and the police at public events and suggest that these can be met through a partnership approach to event planning and management. Guidelines are also provided for the use of stewards and safety officers.

Whilst the freedom to hold events, to march and to demonstrate is important, so too is the freedom of people to go about their normal daily business with a minimum of disruption. Accordingly, every effort must be made to ensure that a balance is struck between the rights and freedoms of those taking part in an event and those living and working close by.

In general the public perception is that the police are the lead agency for approving all public events, including those which take place on the public highway. In reality the Police have no authority to either approve or ban such events and, in fact, Police powers to regulate traffic for planned events are extremely limited. Furthermore, the Police have no general duty to preserve public safety at any public event, except where there are imminent or likely threats to life.

Legal opinion suggests that the responsibility for public safety rests with the organisers of an event, the owners of the land on which it takes place and the Local Authority if the event takes place on a road. However, other persons or agencies who undertake actions regarding public safety at an event may assume a duty of care and, therefore, also become responsible.

In the past the Police service has taken the lead and undertaken actions to facilitate public events, acting for what they believed to be the public good. However, with the emerging spectre of civil litigation, a more focused approach, confining Police action to those issues which are part of our core responsibilities and where there is legal authority, is becoming necessary.

This guide is aimed at standardising the Police approach to all organised events staged in a public place and on all public highways. It creates an environment where, through consultation and partnership, public events will continue to take

place. A greater awareness of the individual responsibility of the organisers and those of the other agencies involved should emerge, which will ensure a more focused approach by all concerned resulting in a better planned, safer and more resilient event.

## **ORGANISERS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

The organisation of a public event is a considerable responsibility. In addition to attracting moral and social responsibilities, organisers have civil, common and criminal law responsibilities for which they may have to answer to the courts. Organisers may be liable for the consequences when things go wrong, particularly if there are defects in the planning or control of the event. This is more likely to happen if other interested parties are not consulted or if their advice is ignored.

One of the main responsibilities of the organiser is to have concern for the safety of the public attending the event, as well as those, who may, in any way be affected by it. This includes avoiding damage to property, fear or alarm to the public, disruption to the local community and ensuring that the human rights of persons are not infringed. Ensuring public safety at a public event is not the primary role of the Police. The Police are responsible for preventing breaches of the law and taking action against persons who break the law and maintaining the peace.

The organisers' responsibility for maintaining public safety can best be accomplished if there is no crime or disorder at the event. Equally, the police role of preventing lawlessness and disorder can best be accomplished when public safety is assured. Since these roles are clearly interdependent, it is in the interest of both organisers and Police to co-operate in regulating the event. The Police firmly believe that this partnership approach is the most effective way forward for all the parties involved.

The principles of partnership with event organisers are applied at Sporting Events and Stadia. These events are the subjects of written agreement (Statement of Intent) between the club and the Police. Although Statements of Intent are not legally binding contracts, they provide a constructive focus for the Police and the clubs, to ensure that all the important issues are addressed. The parties sign the document to record their agreement and, though there is no compulsion to do so, it then becomes a matter of accepted professional good practice. Organisers of other public events are asked to sign similar Statements of Intent which reflect an understanding of roles, responsibilities and agreement on how they will be met.

In all cases, accurate, early predictions of the type and number of participants are needed in order that the arrangements can be scaled accordingly. Early advice and regular contact thereafter with the emergency services and other authorities will enable the organiser to make informed, appropriate and agreed arrangements in relation to traffic management, medical cover, stewarding arrangements and contingency plans.

## **EVENTS**

The organiser should notify the Local Authority, Fire, Police and Ambulance service about the event and earnestly consider any recommendations made by these

services during the planning of the event. Regular meetings should be arranged as necessary by the Organiser.

The organiser (or his/her designated deputy) should be contactable throughout the event and available to liaise with the police when necessary.

When organisers are planning a demonstration or march they should be aware of all the above guidelines but in addition should be aware of the provisions of the Public Order Act 1986. Failure to give the police written advance notice (6 clear days) of the date, time and venue/route of the procession; variation of such details from those previously notified; or failure to comply with changes, conditions or prohibitions imposed by the police on processions or assemblies may constitute criminal offences.

The use of certain locations for assembly or dispersal requires permission from the relevant authority and this must be obtained well in advance by the organiser from the authority. A copy of this permission must then be sent, by the organisers, to the police as soon as possible.

Whilst sporting events have many features which can be predicted on the basis of past experience and familiar, purpose-built venues, this is not the case for many other public events. Marches, in particular, present a moving venue, which is far more unpredictable. Therefore, it is very important that planning for such events starts as early as possible.

Under the Licensing Act 2003 some events may require a licence or a Temporary Event Notice (TEN) which is obtained from the Local Authority. The Licence or Notice are issued under strict guidelines and have certain time restraints.

## **TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT**

The Traffic Management Act of 2004 places the responsibility for traffic management matters for events on or affecting the highway on the local authority for the area in which the event takes place.

Event Organisers should liaise with the relevant highway authority (ies) to discuss the traffic management implications for any planned event. Temporary road closures, traffic restrictions and alternative routes all require careful consideration. Depending on the scale of the event, this initial consultation may include representatives of the emergency services and take place through a Safety Advisory Group. The Traffic Management Plan should not include the use of police resources in order to control/direct traffic. Police resources will only be used to deal with spontaneous traffic incidents which may occur during the duration of an event. Once the incident has been resolved the officers will resume their normal duties.

A temporary road closure application must be made in the following circumstances:

- If there is any likelihood of crowds spilling onto the Highway.
- If it is necessary to prevent traffic flow for however short duration to facilitate the event ie a parade.

- If the volume of persons taking part/attending an event on the highway means that road safety will be compromised.
- If it is necessary to control traffic flow by managing the routes available for use i.e. carnivals.

Event Organisers must also provide:

- Details of the roads to be closed together with the length and the duration of the closure.
- A detailed proposed diversion route.
- A schedule of signing giving details of the location of diversion signs and road closure signing, together with a drawing/map showing these positions. This will take the form of scale drawings showing –
- The overall location and the environs of the event and specific event location
- Details of any road junctions identified as critical to the traffic management plan.
- The proposed number of stewards for the event and their positions.
- Details of the methods to be used to close roads ie barrier type, signing etc. All signs that are placed on the highway must comply with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 or be specially authorised. ‘Felt tip on a piece of plywood’ is not acceptable. Roads should be closed using the appropriate red and white barrier.
- Management of pedestrian activity, in the case of events such as carnivals, marathons etc.

All the above measures must be provided in order that consideration of any proposed road closure can take place. Organisers are advised to contact the relevant Highway Authority who will issue an application pack for a temporary road closure.

Event Organisers should consider:

- The implications for other road users such as the emergency services, bus companies, taxis, tourist coaches etc and the suitability of any proposed diversion route for use by such vehicles.
- Provision for vehicle removal from any road which is subject to a closure and which could cause obstruction for the event.
- Liaison with premises such as churches mosques, register offices etc to ensure that access requirements are discussed and any issues resolved.

## **STEWARDS**

An agreed plan for a public event, however good it may be, is of no value if there is no means of ensuring that the event takes place according to the plan. It is vital that the organisers keep control throughout the entire event. This is normally achieved by using stewards who act as agents of the organisers to ensure that the participants adhere to what has been agreed. They must carry out decisions made by the organisers as the event proceeds, through a clearly defined chain of command. Their roles will also include the implementation of the event contingency plans, a set of plans and actions to cope with any likely occurrence, emergency or not, which

may happen as a result of the event taking place (these plans must be compiled by an event organiser).

## **NUMBER OF STEWARDS**

There must be sufficient stewards to communicate the organisers' intentions and directions to all participants in the event.

The risk assessment will help you to establish the number of stewards necessary to manage the crowd safely. When preparing your risk assessment for crowd management, carry out a comprehensive survey to assess the various parts of the site and consider the size and profile of the crowd.

Assessing the number of stewards on the risk assessment rather than on a precise mathematical formula will allow a full account to be taken of all relevant circumstances, including previous experience. To manage the crowd, locate stewards at key points. These include barriers, pit areas, gangways, entrances and exits and the mixer desk and delay towers.

Examples of some of the matters to be considered for the risk assessment include:

- Previous experience of specific behaviour associated with the performers
- Uneven ground, presence of obstacles etc within or around the site affecting flow rates
- Length of perimeter fencing
- Type of stage barrier and any secondary barriers
- Provision of seating

Adequate stewards at public events should be provided by the organiser without the use of police officers. The utilisation of police officers to act as stewards will normally be discouraged by the police. However if, in exceptional circumstances, authority is given to do so, the rate of charge will be on a full cost recovery basis.

## **BRIEFING OF STEWARDS**

Stewards must be briefed so that they are fully conversant with the organisers' intentions and directions, and a copy of the briefing should be recorded by the Event Organiser. In addition, they are to be conversant with any contingency plans for the event and in particular their roles in such plans.

To enable effective organisation of stewards, a Chief Steward should be appointed (preferably someone who is a member of the organising committee and who has ideally achieved an accredited qualification in event marshalling) to deal with all matters relating to stewards, including their briefing. The chief steward may, depending on the size and nature of the event, liaise with the police officer in charge both before and during its progress.

The overall stewarding of the event should be divided into sections with supervisors being responsible for each group of stewards. Supervisors should be responsible for between 6 to 10 stewards as a guide.

## **FITNESS OF STEWARDS/COMMUNICATIONS**

Under current legislation there is no upper or lower age limits for stewarding. Though they need to be mobile and physically able to move freely around all aspects of the Event/Site they are stewarding; they need to have effective communication skills to communicate with a wide range of individuals and have the mental resilience to cope with conflict; they will need the ability to understand and carry out instructions and have an orderly and organised thought process and be able to work methodically and carry out tasks in sequence.

The selection of stewards is extremely important. They need the ability to be firm, but in a tactful, friendly and good-humoured way. Effective stewards develop sufficient rapport with the participants for whom they are responsible to enable them to identify and defuse potentially difficult situations and promote an atmosphere of goodwill. Stewards must be easily identified so that participants and others know that they are acting in an official capacity.

Experience has shown that items such as lapel badges are insufficient for this purpose. A distinctive garment should be worn. Ideally this should be a coloured tabard, with a clearly identifiable number on it and comply with Health and Safety legislation. The organiser must maintain accurate staff records, which include this number.

To retain control, the organisers must be able to communicate with the stewards during the event. This may be achieved by portable telephone or radio links between the organisers, the chief steward and the supervisors of the stewards. Communication must be a two-way process. Stewards need to report developments back to the organisers during the event, so a formal organisers' control centre needs to be established. Organisers should be aware that they cannot rely on mobile telephone communications as/if when an incident occurs then networks may become jammed preventing communication.

## **COMMUNICATION WITH THE POLICE**

Stewards must immediately inform the police of any matter that requires police attention.

Stewards should be helpful, conscientious and disciplined people who are alert to anything which may need the attention of the police. They must report to the police anything they believe may lead to a criminal offence or breach of the peace and must then act on the directions of the police. If the directions of the organisers and those of the police appear to conflict, stewards must understand that if they ignore the instructions of the police they may be committing an offence of obstructing the police in the execution of their duty. The police will intervene if the stewards fail to take action as requested or if participants ignore the stewards' requests. Stewards must monitor the crowd and not watch the event.

It must be stressed that stewards are agents of the organisers. They are NOT police officers and therefore:

Although they should take all reasonable steps to prevent disorder or breaches of the peace, they must NOT exceed the powers of the ordinary private person.

The must NOT carry or have near them any weapon; carrying a weapon in public is prohibited by law, unless there is lawful authority or reasonable excuse. Appointment as a steward carries no such authority and gives no 'reasonable excuse' in law. The possession of a weapon as a deterrent is also prohibited.

## **SECURITY INDUSTRY AUTHORITY (SIA)**

Historically, premises have employed 'door staff' to assist with the running of Licensed Premises and to act as security officers.

In 2001 the Security Industry Act 2001 was introduced which requires persons who work within the security industry to have undergone training to become SIA registered.

Certain licensed events will require the addition of SIA trained staff to carry out security work which includes door supervision, searching and patrols.

Within Devon and Cornwall, the Police and Local Authorities work on a ratio of at least 1 SIA trained security person to every 75 participants (1:75). This ratio is for specific work carried out by persons who hold an SIA qualification (ie working in and around licensed premises).

This SIA ratio requirement is separate and unique, and although they will be working alongside stewards at an event, they have a specific role. Currently there are no ratio requirements for stewards. The number of stewards required will depend on the structure, geographic and demographics of each event/venue.

Details of this requirement can be obtained from the Local Licensing Authority.

## **SAFETY OFFICERS**

Ensuring, through the work of stewards, that the event takes place according to the agreed plan will go a long way towards fulfilling the organisers' responsibility for public safety officers and a safety manager with specific public safety duties. It is just as important that they, together with stewards, are properly selected, briefed, identified and equipped for their role.

## **ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE FOR ORGANISERS**

It is the responsibility of the police to ensure that the event contingency plans dovetail into the pre-existing contingency plans of the other emergency services together with any event specific plans that may have been created by them.

Whenever practicable organisers should encourage people attending an event to use public transport for the journey to a pre-arrange assembly and dispersal point. They should provide information as to times and availability of transport.

Vehicles or animals should not be used in processions. The use of motor vehicles often increases the risk of injury to participants and animals can often become overawed by large crowds and panic.

Individuals should be discouraged from leaving a procession to distribute leaflets. This should be done independently of the event.

When it is intended to present a petition either, during, or at the completion of a protest march, prior notice must be given to the police because special arrangements usually have to be made.

If banners are to be used, it is essential that they be designed in such a way as to reduce the risk of danger when they are used in high winds.

The use of public address systems should be controlled to ensure that the local community is not disturbed.

Organisers should ensure that children under the age of 16 are accompanied by a responsible adult and that they are kept away from any edge of a procession which is near to moving traffic.

Organisers must consider making provisions for first aid and should discuss their arrangements with the Ambulance Service.

It has proved useful during extended events for regular liaison meetings to be held between the police, organiser, security head and a representative from the fire brigade, ambulance service and any other statutory agencies involved in the planning and operation of the event. This would normally be chaired by the Local Authority (where a Safety Advisory Group (SAG) exists) or the Event Organiser who should act as the co-ordinator.

In the event of a major emergency or criminal activity the Police will implement its predetermined co-ordination role with the other emergency services. This must be reflected in the organisers' plans for the event.

Similarly, where there is serious concern for public safety at an event the police Ground Commander will assume a lead role in co-ordinating the response of the emergency services and the onsite support services. In either case, any such assumption of command by the police will be recorded, as will the reasons for the action taken and to which organisers' representative the decision was communicated. A subsequent return of authority to event organisers will similarly be documented. The manner of notification will be such that there must be no doubt to all parties who have a responsibility for the event or an involvement in the management of the event, that a handover has taken place.

## **DEBRIEFING**

When an event has ended the organisers should arrange for stewards and safety officers to be debriefed so that all information useful to the organisers and the police may be gathered. The organisers should liaise with the police after the event so that such information may be exchanged and discussed. In this way all parties involved

may develop their systems of planning and event management in the light of experience. Experience and good practice has shown that these debriefs should be in the form of a 'hot' debrief straight after the event, followed by a formal debrief some weeks later, which allows time for all organisations involved to gather their own debriefs.

## **COST RECOVERY**

Police Commanders have the discretion to authorise cost recovery on behalf of Devon and Cornwall Police in accordance with the guidelines contained within force policy. Commanders will pre-determine where, how and at what level such charges will be made. The negotiations regarding such charges will be carried out by the police event planner and a formal agreement will be drawn up for signature by the organiser.

At the earliest opportunity in the planning process, event organisers will be given a written estimate of the likely level of the police cost recovery.

The police reserve the right, where it is deemed necessary, to require payment of all or a proportion of the police costs prior to an event. In circumstances where payment has been required, payment should be made at least 7 clear working days prior to the event and should the agreed sum not be received by the due date the police reserve the right not to attend and the relevant safety authority would be informed accordingly.

Where a failure by event organisers to meet their predetermined obligations, set out in the 'statement of intent', necessitates the deployment of any police resources, a further charge may be levied. The charge will be limited to recovery, from the organiser, of policing costs arising from dealing with the failure.

The Devon & Cornwall Police will prepare a written invoice to facilitate recovery of the police costs and forward it to the event organiser stipulating the date payment should be made.

## **READING MATERIAL**

Background information and best practice for event planning can be found in the following HSE publications. Event planners should be conversant with the contents.

- The Event Safety Guide (Purple Guide)
- Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (Green Guide)
- Safety Guidance for Carnivals etc (Brown Guide)

These publications are available from public libraries and booksellers and give a guide to further reading material.

Further guidance is issued by the Secretary of state for Transport under Section 18 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 (Titled "Network Management Duty Guidance") and ACPO (Association of Chief Officers) - Guidance on Public Safety Policy

**I confirm that I have received a copy of the Guidance for Organisers of Public Events in relation to:**

**Event:**

**Date of Event:**

**Signed (on behalf of Devon and Cornwall Police):**

**Name and rank:**

**Date:**

**Signed (Event Organiser):**

**Name and organisation:**

**Date:**

*Once signed this form should be returned by the issuing officer to:*

*Enter details*