

## **Risk Assessment -Meetings/Services/Events etc.**

**(These notes are only for use when arranging meetings/services etc. Where a large event is intended and/or the public is invited then further information from the Diocesan MU office 01452 528621 Tues and Fri 10am-3pm should be used)**

### **Introduction**

The principles of risk management require that you should anticipate the risks involved in any proposed event and the potential for harm, and then try to prevent them or minimise them using a structured approach – risk assessment. The recording of risk assessments enables an event organiser, to demonstrate that the risks associated with the activities have been evaluated and that appropriate 'protective and preventative measures' have been put in place.

Risk assessments can be useful in the defence of any personal injury claims or enforcement action that may follow accidents. They may also be required by your insurance company before agreeing cover for the event.

A risk assessment should be carried out for **all meetings and services**. The following guidance should aid you in carrying out your assessments.

### **Identifying the Hazards**

All hazards should be identified including those relating to individual activities and any equipment. A hazard is something with the potential to cause harm. Only note hazards which could result in significant harm. The following should be taken into account:

- o Any slipping, tripping or falling hazards.
- o Hazards relating to fire risks or fire evacuation procedures.
- o Electrical safety e.g. use of any portable electrical appliances.
- o Manual handling activities e.g. lifting tables etc. High noise levels – machinery, public address / music systems.
- o Inadequate lighting, heating or ventilation.

This list is by no means exhaustive and care should be taken to identify any other hazards associated with the activities at the event.

### **Identifying those at Risk**

For each hazard identified, list all those who may be affected. Do not list individuals by name, just list groups of people.

## Issues to consider

The following are examples of issues to consider when identifying the hazards and risk associated with your event:

- o Potential major incidents – what could be the worst case scenario?
- o Is there an event safety plan? Are responsibilities clearly allocated among the organisers?
- o Consider the types of attendees such as children, elderly people and the disabled – are there particular arrangements that need to be made e.g. for ramps?
- o How many people are expected to attend the event? What is the site capacity?
- o What provision needs to be made for the emergency services? What will be the procedure for summoning assistance? How will they get into and out of the site?
- o Provision of first aid facilities – toilets; washing facilities.

## How do you assess the risk?

Having identified the hazards and the people that may be affected by them, you need to assess the **extent** of the risks.

Consider the actual **harm/severity** that could result from the activity /task. Could it be:-

1. Trivial injury
2. Minor injuries that may require first aid on site
3. Major injuries that may require hospital treatment

Then determine the **probability** of the hazard being realised. Is it:-

1. Unlikely
2. Possible
3. Likely

## Action

**Low risk** – No action necessary, but it may still be desirable to implement controls where this can be done easily. (\*In the case where the consequence is a **major injury** but the probability is **unlikely** – it may nevertheless be desirable to implement additional controls).

Examples of low risk activities could be:-

- o Traditional ‘market’ stalls – tombola, raffle, retail goods.
- o Discussion groups/talks/services (candles/banners may increase risks)

**Medium Risk** – Reduce / remove risk if possible; consider not conducting risk activity; implement appropriate controls.

Examples of **High Risk** activities could be:-

- o Certain annual outings – crossing busy roads
- o Hot soup lunches
- o Use of unprotected candles by children or elderly people

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

- o Removal of the hazard – is it necessary to keep the hazardous activity
- o Find a substitute for that activity or modify it – to something that is less hazardous
- o Preventing access to the hazard e.g. by limiting number of people in kitchen

### **Record the Risk assessment Findings**

A risk assessment form should be used to record all significant hazards, the nature and extent of the risks, and the action required to control them. This should be kept for future reference.

### **Review and Revise**

If the nature of the risks change during the planning of the event, the risk assessment will need to be reviewed and updated.

### **Information**

Where the risk assessment has identified significant risks, you must provide information to all those affected regarding the nature of the risk and the control measures to be implemented. For the public/members on the day this can be achieved by including information or warnings on programmes or tickets and/or in the form of restriction or prohibition notices displayed at appropriate points. However, this does not negate your liability to risk.

### **Finally**

Risk assessment is only a tool to help you adopt a structured approach to the safety of your event/meeting. It will not guarantee that nothing untoward will happen on the day, but careful attention to the process should go a long way to ensuring that the potential risks are identified before they occur allowing adequate time for preventative measures to be taken.