

## Guidance to event organisers

These guidelines are intended to provide assistance to organisers who are planning to hold a public event.

### Public events

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, has been adopted.

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.

### Safety advisory groups

In the final report of the inquiry into the Hillsborough Stadium Disaster, Lord Justice Taylor recommended that each local authority set up an advisory group (now generally known as safety advisory group).

The purpose of the safety advisory group is to offer guidance to help organisers discharge their responsibilities.

The group will consider plans presented by the organisers on the content and structure of the safety elements of the event.

It is not the role of the group to help in the planning of the event or the writing of the plan.

The members of the group will not accept or adopt any of the responsibilities of the organiser.

You may be invited to attend the safety advisory group meeting to present your plan and to hear the joint views of the various interested statutory agencies and stakeholders.

Although all comments and observations made by the safety advisory group are always advisory, they are made by professionals in the interest of public safety.

Failure to follow advice from the safety advisory group may affect your Public Liability Insurance, licence permissions and leave you exposed to possible litigation.

Each local authority has a safety advisory group that includes representatives from the following organisations:

- local authority (chair)
- police service

- ambulance service
- fire service

In addition the group may include representatives from:

- the organisers
- venue owners
- transport operators
- British Transport Police (if appropriate)
- security and stewards representatives (if appropriate)
- voluntary groups, the military and other service providers