

Checklist: to complete when holding an event

Legal information for community organisations

This checklist highlights some of the major considerations for community organisations when holding an event.



Note

- This checklist is not a complete list of all issues that your organisation should consider.
- The laws that may apply to your event are different in each state and territory.
- Your organisation may need to get specific legal advice about its event plans and potential liability.



More information

For more information about the legal issues involved in holding an event in your state or territory, visit [our events webpage](#)



Caution – government restrictions (eg. COVID-19)

The ability of organisations to hold events may be subject to any government restrictions in force in your state or territory at all relevant times.

You need to make sure your organisation complies with these restrictions, which may relate to public safety, climatic or local conditions.

Do you require a permit from [the local council](#) (or local authority) for your event?

Check with your local council (or local authority) to see what council-specific permits you may require before running your event. Other bodies or organisations may also require you to obtain a permit or licence.

Permits or licenses are generally required for the following events and activities:

- holding an event on council or other public land
- setting up a temporary structure or using a venue for a purpose it is not designed for



- serving food to the public
- serving alcohol to the public
- playing live or recorded music
- displaying signs and banners
- using gas cylinders to cook or for other purposes
- using an open flame
- using fireworks, and
- using the footpath or closing a road

- Public or council land**
- Temporary structure**
- Food**
- Alcohol**
- Gaming**
- St John Ambulance**
- Gas cylinders**
- Open flame**
- Fireworks**
- Using footpath or closing road**

This is not an exhaustive list and there may be other permits and licenses required for your event. Each state and territory, as well as each council, may have specific or unique requirements and in the case of a council, its staff should be able to provide you with guidance. For example, some local councils and authorities now encourage sustainable measures when holding events.



Tip

The [Australian Business Licence Information Service website](#) may help you work out what licenses and permits you may need depending on the type of event you plan to hold.

If you are hiring a venue or equipment, have you considered the terms and conditions?

An agreement to hire a venue or equipment is usually a legally enforceable contract, so it's important to read the terms and conditions of the contract carefully and make sure your organisation can comply with these.

In particular your organisation should be aware of the terms and conditions relating to insurance or indemnity (see below), and your organisation's obligations to repair or replace any damage to equipment or property.



Have you conducted risk assessments relevant to your event?

Consider things that could go wrong as a result of running the event and what your organisation can do to avoid these risks, or at least minimise the chance they will happen.

Risk assessment doesn't have to be a formal process (although if you are a large organisation, or your event involves higher risk activities, you may need to document a formal risk management plan).

For events with low-risk activities, assessing risks can simply mean setting aside an hour at a committee meeting to consider any risks that might occur and any steps to be taken.

When thinking about the risks arising from events, focus specifically on those that may arise from the involvement of those both 'internal' (such as its members, staff or volunteers) and 'external' (such as clients, members of the public) to the organisation.

Do you need to notify anyone about your event for safety reasons?

Contact local council or police about:

Traffic management

Noise management

Public transport

Your local council should be able to provide specific advice in relation to safety, security and emergency procedures applicable to your community organisation's proposed event.

Consider whether you need to notify or organise for some of the following groups to be at your event:

- the Police
- the local fire services and other relevant emergency services
- a first aid provider such as St Johns Ambulance
- private security, and
- the local work health and safety authorities

Do you need event insurance?

Public liability insurance

Product liability insurance

Workers compensation insurance

Your organisation has a legal obligation to make sure its event is safe.

Your organisation will owe this obligation to people involved in organising the event: volunteers, employees, independent contractors and anyone who comes to the event (for example, members of the public).

For this reason, it's likely that you will need to take out public liability insurance, particularly if your event is to be held on council or public land. If your organisation already has public liability insurance, it should check that the insurance covers the event that will be held.

Owners of land or venues often will insist that organisations hiring or using the land or venue have public liability insurance of at least \$10 million. Some councils and other organisations will specify that your



insurance be with a specific provider and ask you to list them in your policy as an 'interested party' and will request a copy of the policy before giving permission to hold your event. Your organisation should ensure it complies with these requirements.

Checking others' insurance

If your community organisation is booking amusements or other entertainment for an event, insist on receiving a copy of that entertainer's current public liability policy before the event. Try to ensure that participants at your event (like food vans) have their own public liability insurance.

Additional insurances

There are a range of other insurances that your organisation could be required to get or could consider getting if the following applies to the event:

- selling food or other products to the public – you should consider product liability insurance
- relying on volunteers to help you with the event - personal accident (volunteers) insurance, and
- using employees to help you with the event – workers compensation insurance



More information

For more information about risk management and insurance, see our [webpage on risk and insurance](#).

If your event is to raise money – do you need to consider other legal requirements?

Yes. There are laws that regulate fundraising in most states and the ACT in Australia. If your community organisation is considering holding a fundraising event you will need to comply with the laws that regulate fundraising. There are also laws that regulate raffles, bingo and gaming.



More information

For more information, see our [webpages on fundraising, raffles, minor gaming and trade promotions](#).

Have you considered accessibility and discrimination?

Appropriate arrangements for people with disabilities

Equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation apply in most states. These laws prohibit discrimination against people on the basis of a 'protected attribute' (protected attributes include a person's impairment or disability, age, sex, race, religious beliefs, status as a parent or carer, pregnancy or breastfeeding among many other attributes). Some exceptions to the laws apply.

In general, equal opportunity laws apply to prevent discrimination when providing goods and services to the public. They also apply in other circumstances (for example in employment, sporting activities, and membership of clubs). Your organisation should put reasonable measures in place to ensure that your event (and goods and services) is accessible to all people. Even if your organisation is not covered by these laws, it's best practice to put such measures in place.



Does your event involve food, alcohol, adventure activities, sport or travel?

If your event involves food, alcohol, adventure activities, sport or travel, particular legal obligations may apply.

Performances by live artists or recorded music carry additional issues, such as event licences, which may need to be considered.

- Licence from PPCA to play recorded music
- Licence from APRA AMCOS
- Permission to use photographs, videos and text created or owned by other people
- Release forms



More information

For more information, see [our event fact sheet](#) for your state or territory.

Acknowledgement of country

An Acknowledgement of Country should be given at the start of meetings and events.