

Torchlit Processions and Firework Displays

Health and Safety Considerations



This guidance highlights some of the issues that need to be considered when organising or permitting such events. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list, as of course each event will be different. Every event will need to be suitably risk assessed and any issues addressed to the satisfaction of the enforcing authority and emergency services.

General

1. Has a competent person been appointed as the events "Safety Officer"?
2. Has a definitive date been agreed?
3. Has there been early consultation with all interested parties/agencies? e.g. the Police, Fire and Rescue, County Highways and the District Council.
4. Have the necessary Temporary Road Closures been applied for? (contact engineers@wealden.gov.uk) Are any other Permits, Licences etc required?
5. How is the event to be financed – advanced ticket sales, gate sales at the event?
6. How is the event being promoted?
7. Has an Event Management Plan been prepared, agreed and made available to all interested parties? (*The Event Safety Guide* is a good source of reference available from the HSE – ISBN 0-7176-2453-6)
8. Do the organisers have adequate Public Liability Insurance?
9. Have time lines been established – what is the contingency for time slippage etc?
10. Are there suitable and robust lines of communication with event organisers, staff and interested agencies etc? It is strongly recommended that event staff communicate via UHF/VHF radios. Users of such radios should receive basic training in correct radio procedure. It is not recommended that general communications are made using mobile telephones.

The Procession

1. Has a Safety Officer been appointed? – This is a vitally important role. This Officer must liaise closely with enforcing authorities and emergency services, oversee and facilitate activities to ensure that the Event Management Plan is adhered to and also to resolve/coordinate any problems that arise during the event. He/she should NOT be assigned a specific 'static' role.
2. What are the expected numbers in the procession?
3. Where is the procession expected assemble (consider obstruction, safety issues etc.)?
4. Are naked flame torches being carried?
 - a. Where will they be stored prior to the event?
 - b. How will they be lit?
 - c. How will they be collected/disposed of during the procession etc?
5. Has the route been assessed for safety and have residents/proprietors been

notified in sufficient time? Think about:

- a. Parked cars/skips
 - b. Potential 'pinch-points'
 - c. Scaffolding/building works – in progress OR proposed
 - d. Protection/security of shop fronts, buildings etc.
 - e. Temporary Road Closures/Rolling Road Closures manned and 'policed' by suitably trained and equipped marshals and NOT the local Police Service.
6. Are there sufficient suitably trained and equipped marshals?
(*The Event Safety Guide* is a good source of reference available from the HSE – ISBN 0-7176-2453-6)
7. Are there adequate First Aid provisions? (*The Event Safety Guide* is a good source of reference available from the HSE – ISBN 0-7176-2453-6)
8. Will there be any tableaux/effigies in the procession? – if so:
- a. Is the procession route suitable for these?
 - b. Have the effects adverse weather conditions been considered?
 - c. Are any tableaux structurally safe?

Fire/Firework Display Site

1. Have the correct permissions/licences been acquired for the event site?
2. Does the size of the site and means of escape etc. dictate the number of spectators that can be safely accommodated? if so, how are numbers entering controlled?
3. Adequate car parking facilities etc?
4. Is payment required on entry? If so:
 - a. Are there safe measures for cash handling
 - b. Are there separate entrances for pre-paid and 'pay on the night' spectators
5. If there is to be a firework display:
 - Has a site specific risk assessment been undertaken by the pyrotechnic company and copied to the Local Authority Health and Safety Inspectors for observation prior to the event?
 - Where and how are the fireworks being stored prior to the event?
 - How are the fireworks being detonated e.g. naked flame, electronic, computer etc?
 - Have the correct safety distances been clearly identified and marked?
 - Are there sufficient suitably trained and equipped marshals?
 - Is there adequate fire fighting provision? (contact the Fire Safety Officer 01825 745904 for expert advice)
6. What is the bonfire to be constructed from?
7. What security is in place to prevent premature lighting, general safety from unauthorised access etc?
8. Will there be suitable and sufficient access/egress for emergency services vehicles etc?

9. Is there an adverse weather contingency plan?
10. Is there a suitable evacuation plan – are all staff/organisers/marshals aware etc?
11. Will mobile food vendors be permitted onto the site? If so:
 - Have you requested a copy of their Food Hygiene Registration Certificate and relevant Public Liability Insurance?
 - Will they be using Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), if so, have you requested a copy of their current Gas Safety Inspection report undertaken by a CORGI registered engineer, what fire fighting provision do they have etc?
12. Will you be allowing any other amusements e.g. fairground rides etc? – If so have you requested a copy of their current safety inspection report by a competent person?
13. Is there a requirement for temporary sanitary accommodation?
14. Are there any bodies of water (ponds, lakes, fountains etc) that need securing against unauthorised entry for safety reasons?
15. Will there be sufficient provision for disposal of litter, used flame torches etc?
16. Will there be suitable and sufficient provision for fencing/barriers etc. to 'control' spectators?
17. Are the points of egress clearly marked and visible in the event of an emergency?
18. Can emergency vehicles safely access the fire site without compromising the safety of spectators leaving the site etc?
19. Has provision been made to clear the site of litter, debris, equipment etc. as soon as reasonably practicable after the event (and at who's cost)?

This is not a definitive list of all the safety matters that need to be considered. The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 requires that – the organiser/s, management and persons in control have a legal obligation to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare of themselves, their staff and persons not in their employment.

Wealden District Council encourages community events and is always willing to play an active part in the necessary consultations and approvals process. However, early consultation with all interested parties is absolutely vital in trying to secure the safety of all involved. Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the Wealden District Council, Occupational Health and Safety Unit – 01323 443302 or email foodandsafety@wealden.gov.uk

If you, or somebody you know, would like the information contained in this document in large print, Braille, tape/CD or in another language please contact Wealden District Council on 01323 443322 or info@wealden.gov.uk

