

Summer & Outdoor Events Guidance

When organising an event, it is important to remember that as the event organiser, your organisation holds a legal duty of care under the [Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#) to ensure the safety of staff, volunteers, participants, and the general public.

Even charity events must formally assess and control risks. Starting this process is often the hardest part of planning the health and safety for an event. As such, GCVS has created a helpful safety checklist that includes examples of specific activities common to outdoor summer events.

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Bouncy Castle & Inflatables (High Risk)

Inflatables pose severe risk if not anchored or managed properly. The [Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\) inflatable guidelines](#) require that you follow certain procedures.

When buying or hiring an inflatable for private or public use, make sure it has either a numbered PIPA tag or an ADiPs Declaration of Compliance (DoC). It should also have:

- written documentation from a competent inspection body to show it complies with British Standard BS EN 14960
- instructions on how to operate it safely

If the equipment has no PIPA tag on the [PIPA website](#), or no DoC on the [ADiPs website](#).

Before use

When it's inflated and before you use it, carry out safety checks, which include the following:

Duties to be Completed and Best Practice	Actions to be Taken
When using it outside, all the anchor points must be used.	
All inflatables must have at least 6 anchor points. The operator manual will tell you how many there should be – make sure they are all still in place and have not been removed	
If ground stakes cannot be used because of the surface (e.g. tarmac) then use ballast with suitable fixings to attach the guy ropes (the mass of the ballast should be detailed in the operator manual). The inflatable should be tightly secured to the ground so that the wind cannot get under it and lift it up	
If an inflatable is being used indoors, the operator's manual will tell you what anchorage is needed to maintain the shape of the device and prevent overturn	
No inflatable should be used in winds above 24 mph , which is Force 5 on the Beaufort Scale (small trees in leaf begin to sway)	
Some inflatables may have a lower maximum operating wind speed. Always check the manufacturer's operating manual to confirm maximum wind speed for the safe operation of the inflatable	
Use an anemometer to measure the wind speed at regular intervals. If one of these is not available, the inflatable should not be operated	
There are no holes or rips	
All other equipment is safe, including the blower	
Safe use and supervision	

The operator should follow the instructions, including making sure:

- Users are always supervised
- The number of users does not exceed the limit given in the instructions
- People can get on and off safely, with mats at the entrance
- Anchor points are checked regularly and are still secure
- An anemometer is used to measure wind conditions at regular intervals
- The inflatable is safely deflated if the weather becomes unsuitable

Mechanical Rides (e.g., Carousels, Teacups)

If you are hiring commercial, moving rides, the operator must strictly comply with HSG175 (the HSE code of practice for [Fairgrounds and amusement parks](#)). You must request and verify the following paperwork from the operator at least 14 days before the event:

Duties to be Completed and Best Practice	Actions to be Taken
ADIPS Certification: Every ride must have a current Amusement Device Inspection Procedures Scheme (ADIPS) safety pass. This is the fairground equivalent of an MOT and proves it has been independently tested.	
Independent Operator: The vendor must provide their own trained, competent ride operators and attendants to monitor children as they get on and off.	
Barriers and Exclusion Zones: Mechanical rides must be completely cordoned off with perimeter fencing to prevent spectators or wandering children from getting struck by moving parts	

General Site Safety & Power Infrastructure

Duties to be Completed and Best Practice	Actions to be Taken
Public Liability Insurance: Ensure the ride provider holds their own Public Liability Insurance (typically a minimum of £5 million to £10 million for public attractions). You must notify your own event insurer that rides will be on-site.	
Electrical Safety: All generators, cables, and distribution boards must be protected by Residual Current Devices (RCDs). Cables trailing across the ground must be housed in heavy-duty rubber cable ramps to eliminate trip hazards.	
Safe Layout: Position the attractions completely away from the main sports competitive zones (e.g., away from the path of running races or cycling tracks)	

Food Vendors

Your organisation must vet vendors in advance to ensure they comply with [Food Standards Agency regulations](#). Collect and verify the following from every vendor:

Duties to be Completed and Best Practice	Actions to be Taken
Local Authority Registration: Proof that their food business is registered with a UK local council.	
Food Hygiene Rating: Aim for vendors with a Pass on the national Food Hygiene Scheme.	
HACCP System: You must have a written Food Safety Management System based on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles.	
Allergen Compliance: Vendors must clearly display or provide written allergen advice to customers.	
Dedicated Hand Wash Basin: Depending on the type of food being served and how it is prepared, you may need to ensure a dedicated hand wash basin	
Warm Running Water: The hand basin must have running hot and cold (or appropriately mixed warm) water. Gravity-fed urns with a turn-tap are only acceptable if they provide a continuous flow of warm water. Alcohol gel is not a substitute for soap and water.	
Hand Supplies: The basin must be stocked with liquid antibacterial soap and hygienic paper towels for drying.	
Equipment Sink: You need a completely separate second sink or bowl for washing food and cleaning your utensils	
Waste Disposal: Wastewater from your sinks must be collected in closed containers and emptied into designated foul water drains. It cannot be poured onto the grass or down rain gutters. Waste bins must have lids and be lined.	
Food Temperature Controls: During summer, vendors must have a way to ensure that high-risk foods are stored correctly and cooked correctly	
Physical Setup: Caterers must keep all food and equipment elevated to prevent pest contamination.	

Sports Events & General Site Safety

Duties to be Completed and Best Practice	Actions to be Taken
The Course/Pitch: Walk the route on the morning of the event. Remove all trip hazards, animal waste, or sharp debris. Cordon off the dynamic sports paths from spectator foot traffic.	
Pre-Event Briefings: Competitors must be fully briefed on the inherent risks of the sport, expected standards of behaviour, and the location of first aid stations.	
Fitness Requirements: Organisers should clearly outline any specific fitness, clothing, or footwear requirements for safe participation.	
Welfare Facilities: Competitors must have adequate access to clean toilets, drinking water for hydration, and changing areas.	
Information Gathering: Collect emergency contact details and crucial medical declarations (e.g., severe allergies or heart conditions) from all competitors before they compete	
First Aid Provision: You must scale your medical response using the HSE First Aid Guidance. For a low-risk community charity event, ensure you have a dedicated first aid post, a stocked trauma kit, and visible, qualified first aiders.	
Vehicle Segregation: Completely separate moving supply vehicles (e.g., vendors arriving) from the public. Ban vehicle movement on-site once the public has access to the site.	

Legal & Insurance Paperwork

Duties to be Completed and Best Practice	Actions to be Taken
Risk Assessment: Create a written Event Risk Assessment. Document every major hazard (e.g., structural collapse, heatstroke, food poisoning) and write down the specific control measures you are using to mitigate them.	
Public Liability Insurance (PLI): Verify that your organisation's core policy covers outdoor community events. Ensure your policy—and the individual policies of the food vendors and inflatable operators.	

Fire Safety and your Event

To run an outdoor charity sports event safely and legally in Scotland, you must comply with the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Under this legislation, the event organiser is designated as the "Responsible Person" who carries full legal liability for the fire safety of everyone on-site.

Duties to be Completed and Best Practice	Actions to be Taken
Fire Safety Risk Assessment (FSRA) You must complete a formal, written Fire Safety Risk Assessment before the event. This document must identify:	
Potential ignition sources (e.g., catering equipment, generators, electrical cables, designated smoking areas).	
Potential fuel sources (e.g., dry grass, refuse bins, timber structures, marquee fabrics).	
People at risk, paying extra attention to children, the elderly, and anyone with limited mobility who might require a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP).	
Evacuation Planning & Crowd Control: Open-air events still require a structured, seamless exit strategy.	
Exits & Assembly Points: Map out clear, unobstructed escape routes to a designated "Place of Safety" well away from the sports activities.	
Signage: Install weather-resistant, highly visible directional fire signs and assembly point markers.	
Equipment & Infrastructure Safety: Any temporary structures or machinery must be safely managed:	
Marquees and Tents: Ensure all hired tents comply with British Standards for flame-retardant fabrics (BS 5438 / BS 476). Fabric structures should be sited at least 10 metres away from permanent structures.	
Generators: Position fuel-powered generators away from public areas and combustible materials. Store spare fuel securely in fire-resistant containers and have the location bunded.	
Fire Extinguishers: Place appropriate extinguishers at high-risk points. Such as CO2 or Foam (AFFF) near generators and fuel sources, and wet chemical or foam near catering vans.	
Personnel & Training	
Fire Marshals: Appoint a sufficient number of competent, trained stewards to act as fire marshals. They must know how to raise the alarm, safely guide crowds, and use the firefighting equipment.	
Communication: Equipping marshals with a form of communication device, such as a mobile phone or, better yet, two-way radios, to help in reporting a fire or other incident instantly across an outdoor space.	