Chapter 7
Health and Safety in Events Management

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ABSTRACT

Health and safety in events management is essential and needs to be undertaken and understood both at a practitioner level as well as academically. The subject area has created a lot of interest due to the various case studies of events that have received attention due to, in some cases, poor practices leading to substantial media and public awareness. Therefore, its management needs to be seen as a priority and an area that needs to be understood greatly. The aim of health and safety management is to ensure that all the participants and attendees, as well as those affected by an event, are protected from threats to their health and safety.

INTRODUCTION

Health and safety in events management is essential and needs to be undertaken and understood both at a practitioner level as well as academically. The subject area has created a lot of interest due to the various case studies of events that have received attention due to, in some cases, poor practices leading to substantial media and public awareness. Therefore, its management needs to be seen as a priority and an area that needs to be understood greatly.

The aim of Health and safety management is to ensure that all the participants and attendees, as well as those affected by an event, are protected from threats to their health and safety (Gertz, 2012). What also be noted, in particular in the events industry which can be very diverse in its nature from localised events such as a
country fete be held in an afternoon to staging an Olympic event that can be spread over 14 + days that it is very fast and ever changing. This leads to the perceptions that health and safety can change due to the size and magnitude of an event. Also in the past, there has been a tendency to view health and safety issues as ‘red tape; bureaucracy that merely tricks regulatory boxes whilst creating extra work for event practitioners (Bladen, Kennell, Abson and Wilde, 2012). However due to the stringent processes that now regulate the delivery of events of all shapes and sizes the safe implementation of health and safety policies need to be implemented no matter at what level. People who attend, which has already mentioned earlier, is the highest priority for any event team. The risks in this part of the event management’s responsibilities are enormous – both to the event and all the key stakeholders (Bowdin, Allen, O’Toole, Harris and Mcdonnell, 2011). Prevention and mitigation are the first line of defence, which must be followed by proper monitoring and timely response to procedures. Safety hazards are usually easy to see and typically have immediate consequences (Rutherford Silvas, 2013). Health hazards, however are often harder to recognise because the effects of exposure may have delayed consequences (Rossol, 2000). So the results of an incident from not conducting or identifying the appropriate potential health and safety issues can potential have a long term impact of any other events of a similar nature and potential the impact to the wider industry (Bowdin et al, 2011). In the United Kingdom there have been similar examples where health and safety practices have been implicated in such areas as football where at Hillsborough Football disaster which lead to the change in football stadia design and seating where countless fans were 96 crushed to their death and 766 people reported with injuries (The Telegraph, 2009). This clearly led to a marked change in the football stadia was designed thereafter when it became compulsory that all grounds had to spectator seating and fencing was removed so that should situations arise that the access to open areas could be gained avoiding such incidents happening again where mass gathering of individuals are taking place.

Mass gatherings are an increasingly a common feature in events management and they are often bring together organisations that do not normally interact, and the large number of attendees and stakeholders involved represents an enormous amount of planning and a logistic challenge (Bistatrki, Mckeown & Kyratsis, 2019). Such events usually represent significant challenges that can affect health and safety sectors of host towns, regions and countries (Flavouris, Nocera, & Garner, 2004; Meehan, Tomney, Drinnon, Cunningham, Anderson & Baker, 1998). The distinctive features of these events that can affect health and safety planning and the services that maybe need to be involved or even called upon could encompass a large geographical spread, large levels of attendance, event duration as well as the potential security concerns (Delorenzo, 1997). So what is clearly evident from this that no matter what size that health and safety legislation needs to be at the
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