

Guidance to event organisers (July 2015)

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.

Organisers' responsibilities

The organisation of a public event is a considerable responsibility. Organisers have civil, common and criminal law responsibilities for which they may have to answer to the courts. Organisers may be liable for the consequences when things go wrong, particularly if there are defects in the planning or control of the event. This is more likely to happen if other interested parties are not consulted or if their advice is ignored.

One of the main responsibilities of the organiser is to have concern for the safety of the public attending the event, as well as those, who may, in any way be affected by it. This

includes avoiding damage to property, fear or alarm to the public, disruption to the local community and ensuring that the human rights of persons are not infringed. Ensuring public safety at a public event is not the primary role of the police. The police are responsible for preventing breaches of the law, taking action against persons who break the law and maintaining the peace.

The organisers' responsibility for maintaining public safety can best be accomplished if there is no crime or disorder at the event. Equally, the police role of preventing lawlessness and disorder can best be accomplished when public safety is assured. Since these roles are clearly interdependent, it is in the interest of all stakeholders and strategic partners to co-operate to deliver a safe, lawful and crime free event.

The principles of partnership with event organisers are already applied at Sporting Events and Stadia. These events are the subjects of written agreement, Statement of Intent, between the club and the police. Although Statements of Intent are not legally binding contracts, they provide a constructive focus for the police and the clubs, to ensure that all the important issues are addressed. The parties sign the document, which can also be known as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to record their agreement and, though there is no compulsion to do so, it then becomes a matter of accepted professional good practice.

Organisers of other public events may be asked to sign similar Statements of Intent which reflect an understanding of roles, responsibilities and agreement on how they will be met.

In all cases, accurate, early predictions of the type and number of participants are needed in order that the arrangements can be scaled accordingly. Early advice and regular contact thereafter with the emergency services and other partners usually through a safety advisory group (SAG) will enable the organiser to make informed, appropriate and agreed arrangements in relation to traffic management, medical cover, stewarding arrangements and contingency plans.

The organiser should notify the local authority, fire, police and ambulance service or safety advisory group about the event and earnestly consider any recommendations made by these services during the planning of the event. Regular meetings should be arranged as necessary by the organiser or by the safety advisory group.

The organiser (or his/her designated deputy) should be contactable throughout the event and available to liaise with the police, planning partners or safety advisory group when necessary.

When organisers are planning a demonstration or march they should be aware of all the above guidelines but in addition should be aware of the provisions of the Public Order Act 1986. Failure to give the police written advance notice (six clear days) of the date, time and venue/route of the procession; variation of such details from those previously notified; or failure to comply with changes, conditions or prohibitions imposed by the police on processions or assemblies may constitute criminal offences.

The use of certain locations for assembly or dispersal requires permission from the relevant authority and this must be obtained well in advance by the organiser from the authority. A

copy of this permission must then be sent, by the organisers, to the police as soon as possible.

Whilst sporting events have many features which can be predicted on the basis of past experience and familiar, purpose-built venues, this is not the case for many other public events. Marches, in particular, present a moving venue, which is far more unpredictable. Therefore, it is very important that planning for such events starts as early as possible.

Under the Licensing Act 2003 some events may require a licence or a Temporary Event Notice (TEN) which is obtained from the local authority. The licence or notices are issued under strict guidelines and in some circumstances can have conditions applied.

Organising a protest march or static demonstration

Organisers of public processions are required by law to notify police at least 6 days before the event occurs, of the date, time, proposed route and the name and address of an organiser.

Completion of the form 732A (to be found in the 'additional relevant material' section on the home page) satisfies the legal requirement to notify police of a public procession under sections 11(1) and 11(3) of the Public Order Act 1986.

Six days is the minimum period of notice. Organisers should try to give as much notice as possible.

If you wish to organise a protest march then please return the completed form 732A to the police station which is local to the location of the protest march. This is available to download from the 'additional relevant material' section on the home page in a PDF format.

Notification can also be made by sending your completed forms to Greater Manchester Police Force Events Unit (details found in the useful contacts section of the website).

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If there is an intention to use the road for any march then authority must be sought from the persons who own the roads for use other than vehicular traffic. The bulk of these are governed by the relevant local authority.

Please identify in which Local Authority the roads lie. Contact them and seek advice over the issue of a Temporary Traffic Order (TTO).

Static Demonstration

There is no legal requirement to notify police that you wish to hold a static protest. However, it is very important that you do let the police know if you wish to do this and provide the following details:

- Organiser name, phone number and address
- Anticipated numbers of participants
- Event location
- Reason for event
- Start time
- Finish time
- Any advance publicity you are aware of
- Details of any stewards
- Details of banners/signs and their content
- Details of any arranged speakers and whether they will be using a Public Address system/loud speaker.

The benefits of notifying us are significant:

- Many organisations find such liaison, and the professional advice we are able to offer, of significant benefit, in holding a successful event
- You can ensure that your event or protest does not clash with another group aspiring to use the same venue
- We will facilitate your protest where possible and advise you on the best way to manage it
- We can make you aware of any information we have in relation to counter-protest.

This is particularly important if planning a protest in the area around University / Manchester City Centre which see a large amount of such events.

Please inform us by either, informing the police station local to the location of your static protest/march or contact Greater Manchester Police Force Events Unit (details found in the [useful contacts](#) section of the website).

Processions

In the case of processions, the route will be the subject of discussion. Before the procession starts the organiser will be served with a written copy of the route to be followed. However it must be clearly understood that as the police have a duty to prevent breaches of the peace, they may on occasions have to direct a procession by another route. This can happen before the march starts or while it is in progress.

Generally processions should keep to the left or nearside of the roadway unless otherwise directed by the police. One vehicle may be allowed to head the procession and one to follow at the rear, but vehicles in the body of the procession can cause danger and are not normally allowed.

While a march will not normally be allowed to stop en route, in appropriate circumstances arrangements can be made for small deputations to leave the march and hand in letters or petitions at particular premises whilst the march is progressing. Advance notice should be given of any such intention.

Traffic management

The Traffic Management Act of 2004 places the responsibility for traffic management matters for events on, or affecting, the highway on the local authority for the area in which the event takes place.

Event organisers should liaise with the relevant highway authority(ies) to discuss the traffic management implications for any planned event. Temporary road closures, traffic restrictions and alternative routes all require careful consideration. Depending on the scale of the event, this initial consultation may include representatives of the emergency services and take place through a safety advisory group. The Traffic Management Plan should not include the use of police resources to control/direct traffic. Police resources will only be used to deal with spontaneous traffic incidents which may occur during the duration of an event. Once the incident has been resolved the officers will resume their normal duties.

Further information can be found in our 'Events on a Highway guidance document.'

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

Stewards

It is vital that the organisers keep control throughout the entire event. This is normally achieved by using stewards who act as agents of the organisers to ensure that the participants adhere to what has been agreed. They must carry out decisions made by the organisers as the event proceeds, through a clearly defined chain of command. Their roles will also include the implementation of the event contingency plans, a set of plans and actions to cope with any likely occurrence, emergency or not, which may happen as a result of the event taking place (these plans must be compiled by an event organiser).

Number of stewards

There must be sufficient stewards to communicate the organisers' intentions and directions to all participants in the event.

A risk assessment will help to establish the number of stewards necessary to manage the crowd safely.

When preparing a risk assessment, it may be necessary to carry out a comprehensive survey to assess the various parts of the site and consider the size and profile of the crowd.

Assessing the number of stewards based on the risk assessment rather than on a precise mathematical formula will allow a full account to be taken of all relevant circumstances, including previous experience, managing the crowd and locating stewards at key points.

Examples of some of the matters to be considered for a risk assessment include:

- Previous experience of specific behaviour associated with the performers
- Uneven ground, presence of obstacles etc within or around the site affecting flow rates
- Length of perimeter fencing
- Type of stage barrier and any secondary barriers
- Provision of seating

Adequate stewards at public events should be provided by the organiser without the use of police officers.

Stewards must be briefed so that they are fully conversant with the organisers' intentions and directions, and a copy of the briefing should be recorded by the event organiser. In addition, they should be conversant with any contingency plans for the event and in particular their roles in such plans.

To enable effective organisation of stewards, a Chief Steward should be appointed (preferably someone who is a member of the organising committee and who has ideally achieved an accredited qualification in event marshalling) to deal with all matters relating to stewards, including their briefing. The chief steward may, depending on the size and nature of the event, liaise with the police officer in charge both before and during its progress.

The overall stewarding of the event should be divided into sections with supervisors being responsible for each group of stewards. Supervisors should be responsible for between 6 to 10 stewards as a guide.

Under current legislation there is no upper or lower age limits for stewarding. Though they need to be mobile and physically able to move freely around all aspects of the Event/Site they are stewarding; they need to have effective communication skills to communicate with a wide range of individuals and have the mental resilience to cope with conflict; they will need the ability to understand and carry out instructions and have an orderly and organised thought process and be able to work methodically and carry out tasks in sequence.

The selection of stewards is extremely important. They need the ability to be firm, but in a tactful, friendly and good-humoured way. Effective stewards develop sufficient rapport with the participants for whom they are responsible to enable them to identify and defuse potentially difficult situations and promote an atmosphere of goodwill. Stewards must be easily identified so that participants and others know that they are acting in an official capacity.

Experience has shown that items such as lapel badges are insufficient for this purpose. A distinctive garment should be worn. Ideally this should be a coloured tabard, with a clearly identifiable number on it and comply with Health and Safety legislation. The organiser must maintain accurate staff records.

To retain control, the organisers must be able to communicate with the stewards during the event. This may be achieved by portable telephone or radio links between the organisers, the chief steward and the supervisors of the stewards. Communication must be a two-way process. Stewards need to report developments back to the organisers during the event, so a formal organisers' control centre needs to be established. Organisers should be aware that they cannot rely on mobile telephone communications as/if when an incident occurs then networks may become jammed preventing communication.

Stewards must immediately inform the police of any matter that requires police attention such as anything that may lead to a criminal offence or breach of the peace or an immediate risk to public safety. Stewards must monitor the crowd and not watch the event.

It must be stressed that stewards are agents of the organisers. They are NOT police officers and therefore:

Although they should take all reasonable steps to prevent disorder or breaches of the peace, they must NOT exceed the powers of the ordinary private person.

They must NOT carry or have near them any weapon; carrying a weapon in public is prohibited by law, unless there is lawful authority or reasonable excuse. Appointment as a steward carries no such authority and gives no 'reasonable excuse' in law. The possession of a weapon as a deterrent is also prohibited.

Security Industry Authority (SIA)

Historically, premises have employed 'door staff' to assist with the running of Licensed Premises and to act as security officers.

In 2001 the Security Industry Act 2001 (SIA) was introduced which requires persons who work within the security industry to have undergone training to become SIA registered.

Certain licensed events will require the addition of SIA trained staff to carry out security work which includes door supervision, searching and patrols.

Generally police and local authorities work on a ratio of at least 1 SIA trained security person to every 75 participants (1:75). This ratio is for specific work carried out by persons who hold an SIA qualification (ie working in and around licensed premises).

This SIA ratio requirement is separate and unique, and although they will be working alongside stewards at an event, they have a specific role. Currently there are no ratio requirements for stewards. The number of stewards required will depend on the structure, geographic and demographics of each event/venue.

Ensuring, through the work of stewards, that the event takes place according to the agreed plan will go a long way towards fulfilling the organisers' responsibility for public safety officers, and any safety manager with specific public safety duties. It is just as important that a safety officer, together with stewards, are properly selected, briefed, identified and equipped for their role. Once nominated these individuals can liaise and inform the safety advisory group on behalf of the organiser.

Additional guidance for organisers

Vehicles or animals should not be used in processions. The use of motor vehicles often increases the risk of injury to participants and animals can often become overawed by large crowds and panic.

Individuals should be discouraged from leaving a procession to distribute leaflets. This should be done independently of the event.

When it is intended to present a petition either, during, or at the completion of a protest march, prior notice must be given to the police because special arrangements may have to be made.

If banners are to be used, it is essential that they be designed in such a way as to reduce the risk of danger when they are used in high winds and cannot be adapted for use as weapons.

The use of public address systems should be controlled to ensure that the local community is not disturbed.

Organisers should ensure that children under the age of 16 are accompanied by a responsible adult and that they are kept away from any edge of a procession which is near to moving traffic.

Organisers must consider making provisions for first aid and should discuss their arrangements with the Ambulance Service.

In the event of a major emergency or criminal activity the police will implement its predetermined coordination role with the other emergency services. This must be reflected in the organisers' plans for the event.

Similarly, where there is serious concern for public safety at an event the police Ground Commander will assume a lead role in co-ordinating the response of the emergency services and the onsite support services. In either case, any such assumption of command by the police will be recorded, as will the reasons for the action taken and to which organisers' representative the decision was communicated. A subsequent return of authority to event organisers will similarly be documented. The manner of notification will be such that there must be no doubt to all parties who have a responsibility for the event or an involvement in the management of the event, that a handover has taken place.

Debriefing

When an event has ended the organisers should arrange for stewards and safety officers to be debriefed so that all information useful to the organisers and the police may be gathered. The organisers should liaise with the police after the event so that significant information may be exchanged and discussed. In this way all parties involved may develop their systems of planning and event management in the light of experience. Experience and good practice has shown that these debriefs should be in the form of a 'hot' debrief straight after the event, followed by a formal debrief some weeks later, which allows time for all organisations involved to gather their own debriefs.

Cost recovery

The appointed Police and Crime Commissioner has the discretion to authorise cost recovery on behalf of Greater Manchester Police in accordance with the guidelines contained within force policy. Police Commanders will pre-determine where, how and at what level such charges will be made. The negotiations regarding such charges will go through the Police Commander or the police event planner and a formal agreement will be drawn up for signature by the organiser.

At the earliest opportunity in the planning process, event organisers will be given a written estimate of the likely level of the police cost recovery.

The police reserve the right, where it is deemed necessary, to require payment of all or a proportion of the police costs prior to an event. In circumstances where payment has been required, payment should be made at least 7 clear working days prior to the event and should the agreed sum not be received by the due date the police reserve the right not to attend and the relevant safety authority would be informed accordingly.

Where a failure by event organisers to meet their predetermined obligations, set out in the 'statement of intent', necessitates the deployment of any police resources, a further charge may be levied. The charge will be limited to recovery, from the organiser, of policing costs arising from dealing with the failure.

Greater Manchester Police will prepare a written invoice to facilitate recovery of the police costs and forward it to the event organiser stipulating the date payment should be made.

I certify that pages 1 – 10 inclusive have been issued to:

Name	
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In relation to the proposed event:

Event	
Date of Event	
Signed (GMP)	
Print name & Rank	
Signed (Organiser)	
Print name & Date	