



Planning Your Event: Avoid Legal Issues & Penalties



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Introduction

Ensuring your event complies with all legal requirements is essential to its success. Overlooking any aspect can lead to fines, legal disputes, or even event cancellation. This guide will take you through the critical areas, helping you avoid pitfalls and host a successful event.

By following the advice set out in this guide will help you and your guests relax, safe in the knowledge that every eventuality is covered.



Understanding Requirements for Event Licensing

It's important, when organising any event, to obtain the necessary licenses. Event licensing requirements vary depending on the type of event, venue, and activities organised. No matter whether the event is a corporate conference, charity gala, or public performance, having all the necessary permits means you can avoid potential delays, fines, or outright shutdowns.

Public Entertainment Licence

The public entertainment licence is one of the most common licenses required for events. Generally, this type of licence is required for public access events involving music, dancing, or theatrical performances. This licence is issued by the local council, and you should apply for it well in advance since processing takes some time.

Alcohol Licence

Another important licence is the one for alcohol. You'll need it if your event serves alcohol to the public, or if alcohol is included in the registration price. Depending on your event, your licence could either be a Temporary Events Notice (TEN) suitable for short one-off events, or a full Premises Licence, applicable to large and more regular events. Make certain all alcohol-related permissions are in place; non-compliance can mean large fines.

Performance Rights Licence

If you are having music or any other kind of live or recorded performance at your event, you will need a performance rights licence. This licence ensures appropriate remuneration is received by the recorded artists for the use of their work at the event. Usually, performance rights are licensed by the Performing Rights Society or PRS. Forgetting this can again lead to expensive penalties. Even a radio playing in the background is subject to a PRS licence, so this is something which can be easily overlooked. You can usually apply for a Temporary Event Notice closer to the event itself, while some other licences may need weeks or even months to process. The best advice is to start the application process as soon as is possible to avoid problems later. Be aware that non-compliance could take a serious turn, at worst, closing down your event. Your reputation as an organiser will also suffer as you may struggle to obtain licences for future events.



Follow these legal requirements scrupulously and your event will go smoothly and without a hitch.



Health and Safety Compliance: A Legal Obligation

Health and safety compliance is a statutory requirement. Safety planning ensures the health and well-being of all attendees, staff, and participants and is a basic principle for conducting any event. The law governing health and safety in the UK is extremely strict, and event organisers are legally bound to comply.

Conducting a thorough risk assessment is one of the main components of most health and safety compliance. The identification of possible dangers should be the first step upon arriving at a venue. The assessment should highlight any risks or dangers and ensure safety arrangements are in place to mitigate or reduce the risk. This can range from trip hazards, working with electrical equipment, or large structures.

It is also the responsibility of the organiser to ensure fire precautions are met, which means checking escape routes, fire extinguishers, and ensuring there are enough trained fire wardens on hand to help in an emergency.

You must also consider maximum occupant limits at the venue and ensure that these are observed. Overcrowding may exacerbate an emergency by complicating evacuation. That's why controlling numbers of people admitted, particularly in closed spaces is so important.

Crowd control is not only connected to fire safety but also with the management of the event itself. Effective crowd management is linked to the planning for entry and exit points, clear signs placed in the right position will guide your attendees to safety. The number of trained first-aiders who may be required depends on the size and scope of your event. Depending on the scale of the event and the nature of risks typical to that event, arrangements may range from a simple first-aid kit for smaller events to a fully-fledged medical team for larger gatherings. Delays in treatment in an event can lead to two outcomes: avoidable harms and legal battles.

Following the prescribed health and safety regulations is not only a legal requirement. It must also be seen as part and parcel of sustaining attendee trust and safety. This focus is key to a successful and smooth event without the risk of legal tussles.



GDPR & Data Protection

Laws for Event Managers

Data protection today is at the heart of event management. Organisers must ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and other privacy laws, which have increased standards for handling personal information. Neglecting the law regarding data protection could lead heavy fines, not to mention losing the reputation and trust of the attendees. One of the major steps in data protection is collecting only such data from participants that is required for the event.

Basic information required could include names, contact numbers, and dietary requirements. It's also important to give reasons for collecting any information. Failure to support data collection with justifiable reasons will find event managers dealing with difficult compliance issues, so only ask for what is necessary for your event.

Once the data gets collected, it must be controlled through storage options that will maintain its safety and security. Data protection measures, including encrypted storage, strong access controls, and secure backups should be implemented by event managers.

There are severe consequences for every data breach, which now include sizeable fines under the GDPR. Besides access issues, organisers must review changes in relevance to ever-emerging cybersecurity threats.

Transparency is also important. Attendees should be informed of the data usage, retention period, and potential sharing when the data is collected, for example, during registration. This kind of information should put it in the simplest manner possible (in layman's terms, rather than legal jargon) so that it can guide attendees in giving their informed consent. Furthermore, event organisers should protect the rights of attendees concerning their personal data.

GDPR grants individuals the right to access their data where they can check it, correct it, or request its deletion. The event teams must have procedures for efficiently accommodating such requests and meeting the statutory deadlines.

Following best practices for data protection within GDPR means that an event organiser can rest easy that they are legally safe in both registration and marketing



Accessibility:

Ensuring Compliance with Equality Laws

These impacts manifest in various forms, from excessive waste and energy consumption to the overuse of natural resources. To navigate this landscape responsibly, it is essential to grasp the principles that underpin sustainable event practices. These principles not only guide the reduction of environmental harm but also pave the way for innovative approaches that align with greener targets.

When organising an event, it is essential to ensure the venue and all related services are accessible to everyone, including individuals with disabilities. Under the Equality Act 2010, event organisers have a legal obligation to provide reasonable adjustments that enable all attendees to participate fully, regardless of any physical or communication barriers they may face. Failing to comply with these accessibility requirements can lead to legal action, fines, and significant reputational damage. Accessibility begins with the choice of venue. Organisers must ensure the venue is physically accessible, providing features such as ramps, wide doorways, and accessible toilets. The layout should accommodate those using wheelchairs or mobility aids, ensuring seating arrangements, paths, and entrances are easy to navigate. Event planners must also consider the availability of accessible parking spaces, as well as the proximity of the venue to public transport links that are suitable for individuals with mobility challenges.

In addition to physical accessibility, organisers must also ensure communication barriers are minimised. This may involve providing materials in accessible formats, such as large print or Braille, or offering digital alternatives that can be read by screen readers. For events involving presentations,

live speakers, or audio-visual elements, organisers should consider offering sign language interpreters, real-time captioning, or induction loops for individuals with hearing loss.

Another important aspect of accessibility is making certain event staff are trained and prepared to accommodate attendees with disabilities. Staff should be knowledgeable about the facilities, including how to use any specialised equipment or services, and be able to assist attendees in a respectful and professional manner. Being prepared for common accessibility needs not only demonstrates a commitment to inclusivity but also prevents potential issues. Failure to provide adequate accessibility measures can have significant consequences. Aside from the risk of legal penalties, non-compliance with accessibility laws can damage the reputation of both the event organiser and the host venue. Attendees who experience difficulties due to poor accessibility are less likely to return to future events and may share their negative experiences publicly. By ensuring full compliance with accessibility requirements, event organisers not only fulfil their legal obligations but also create an inclusive environment where all attendees can participate equally.



Contracts & Agreements:

Protecting Your Event from Legal Disputes

Contracts provide the foundation upon which many successful events are built. They serve as a legal framework for the relationships between all parties concerned.

If there are no clearly defined and legally binding agreements to regulate the dealings between parties involved in the planning of events, misunderstandings or disagreements can quickly occur, jeopardising the success of the event and exposing it to protracted legal disputes.

The means of assuring protection and smooth, transparent partnerships with all involved lie in a properly drafted set of contracts.

Possibly the most important theme in all contracts is clarity. A contract sets out the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of each party involved. Whether they are a supplier agreement for catering, a standard hire contract for a venue, or a basic arrangement with a technical support provider, there should be specification of the scope of services, the delivery time frames, and pricing. This will allow more clarity on the responsibilities of each side and will serve as a solid point of reference for either side to verify against in the event of misunderstandings and disagreements that surface during the planning or implementation stages of an event.

The other, equally important element of any contract is clearly defined payment terms. The contract must state clearly what is due and when, what constitutes late payment, and any penalties involved. This means both parties are on the same page with regards to finances, which will help avert any dispute. Also, there must be a clear definition of cancellation terms which should cover all grounds under which either party could cancel the agreement and an outline of penalties or fees in that event. If there are any obstacles or changes that could result in the event being postponed, modified, or called off, clearly state these details in your contract.

Another important element to include are force majeure clauses. As we know, nothing is certain in life, and things could potentially cancel your arrangements for an event: weather, roadblocks, and yes, even pandemics. A suitable and well-constructed force majeure clause saves both event manager and client from the trouble accompanying the cancellation, modification, or postponement of a planned event not in either party's control. A good contract will have a force majeure clause allowing contracts to be halted or abandoned with no penalty due to these unforeseen events.

Fourth, the contract must include a section regarding dispute resolution. The purpose of a dispute resolution clause is to set out the strategies to follow when a conflict arises. This could include mediation, arbitration, or court intervention. This minimises the chances of any potential conflicts escalating as there is already a procedure in place should any disputes arise.



Instil a sense of trust

In conclusion, well-crafted contracts are the glue that holds an event together. A good contract not only serves the purpose of saving both organiser and the vendor from legal embarrassment; but also instils a sense of trust, ensuring you can work together.

By following the advice set out you and your attendees can relax, safe in the knowledge that you have every eventuality covered.



*Contact us today to find out how
St Catz can help plan your next event:*



01865 281194 / 01865 271717
catz.conferences@stcatz.ox.ac.uk
www.catzconferences.com