Crowd safety management

Guidance for the safe management of crowds and how to avoid overcrowding

Crowd Safety Management

1. Pre-Show Planning for Crowd Safety

Preliminary negotiations with the venue

The maximum occupancy figures are the maximum total number of persons permitted to occupy an individual area at any one time. The maximum capacity for each area shouldn't exceed 1.5 m^2 per person (based on the gross area occupied by the activity) including gangways, stands, features, refreshment and seating areas. NOT INCLUDING unused void areas or storage areas. The occupancy figure may be reduced to provide additional visitor comfort.

If the anticipated daily attendance appears to exceed the overall capacity on any one day the suitability of the areas and dates should be reconsidered, taking into account any significant features which may lead to crowding in particular areas and other concurrent activities. Arrangements must be tailored to the specific conditions prevailing at the time taking account of subsequent changes i.e. an empty are that is originally identified for queuing being subsequently occupied.

Specific arrangements may include:

- Amendments to the layout plan to incorporate space for additional seating areas, wider aisles, empty areas for queues and viewing areas for feature activities.
- Pre-sold ticket sales only, with a limit on ticket sales for each day.
- Early opening time to avoid queuing in public circulation areas.
- Separate ticketing arrangements for feature areas and consideration of the general seating arrangements.
- Considerations may apply to particular shows, e.g., where a large number of wheelchairs, prams and/or small children are anticipated.

Planning stage

The anticipated visitor numbers must be explored with consideration for:

- Total visitor numbers and daily breakdown?
- Mix of visitors - male/female, children, babies, senior citizens etc., special groups, people with disabilities etc?
- Profile of ticket sales and 'turn around' i.e. how long will they stay and when do most of them arrive?
- Percentage of walk up compared to pre booked numbers.
- Catering and toilet facilities being adequate for the mix of visitors.
- Public transport and location of visitor car parks.
- Visitor management plans for general circulation areas.
- Visitor management within the show - areas of interest where queues or crowds may form.
- Location of catalogue points and ticket sales kiosks.
- Opening times.
- Where queues may form prior to the open time and availability of refreshments and toilet facilities

2. Crowd Management During Tenancy

Pre-Show Period

If the daily number of visitors is likely to exceed the maximum capacity figure, the following course of action can be implemented:

- Daily monitoring of pre-sold tickets.
- Prepare additional signage i.e. roadway and pedestrian signage.
- Include information on the venue and show website.

During the Show

The number of visitors in the hall must be monitored. This can be achieved by a combination of counting systems, visual observation and CCTV. Visitor management arrangements must be constantly reviewed, increasing manning levels as appropriate.

- Queuing areas should be identified for different groups (i.e. Advance ticket holders, tickets purchased on the day, people seeking to purchase tickets).
- Additional kiosks can be utilised to speed up the ticketing operation.
- Signage must be considered to facilitate the queuing process and keep visitors informed of the arrangements.
- Careful control of total occupancy must be maintained.

Waiting visitors must be informed if it becomes necessary to suspend entry into to the hall, information leaflets can be distributed. It's a good idea to use a separate room for handling visitor complaints and ticket refunds. Any complaints of a Health and Safety nature in connection with overcrowding within the hall must be recorded.

3. Capacity on Show Days and Hall Suspension

If the number of visitors in the show reaches 85% of hall capacity, arrangements must be made to suspend the entry of visitors into the hall.

- Operational staff should be put on standby to ensure that they are briefed and in the correct position.
- When the hall is closed security and stewarding staff must hold visitors away from the actual turnstiles/ticket points.
- Suitable areas must be available to safely manage any queues that build up outside or on the approach to the show. Once suspension is in place the external area can become the higher risk area?
- Arrangements must be made for ticket sales to be suspended as early as possible to avoid actual closure.
- Should the number of visitors still arriving for the show be too great for them to gain access within a reasonable time leaflets explaining the situation must be distributed to all vehicles entering car parks.
- The local Police will be advised of the situation and that there may be a need to close entry to car parks.
- Pedestrian and traffic signage must be positioned at strategic points to inform visitors of the situation.

If the flow of visitors arriving at the entrance is considered to be too great, entry to car parks and entry from public transport services must be suspended. It's important to make sure arrangements are communicated to all relevant areas. Exiting must continue until the situation improves.

Once the suspension is in force it's best for it to remain for a minimum period of 30 minutes, to allow a full assessment of the situation to be made without immediate pressure to re-open. During this period assessments can be made with regard to the conditions inside the hall using CCTV and any other available method. Re-opening must be prohibited until it is safe to do so.

When re-opening visitor entry into the show the operation must begin gradually under close control, allowing small groups of visitors to enter as others leave. Priority must be given to pre-booked ticket holders and visitors who have already purchased a ticket on the day. Ticket sales must be restarted and normal access resumed into the car parks. Visitors should be "pulsed" in for the rest of the period while the hall is close to full capacity.

When necessary visitors must be allowed to leave the car parks without payment. If possible advise local radio stations, media etc. about the situation. It's advisable to ensure all details are logged to enable post event scrutiny.

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