

Parish Fetes, Fairs & Fun days

The key to a successful and safe event is in planning ahead. The date and location of your event may already be in the diary, key people assisting in the organisation of the event might have been identified and bookings made with suppliers, however:

- Has a competent person been identified to deal with Health and Safety?
- Has this person undertaken all appropriate risk assessments?
- Has the provision of first aid been considered?
- Have insurance details and risk assessments been obtained from all participating suppliers?

There are many useful resources available to assist you in complying with your H&S duties, in respect of parish events. The person within the dioceses who is responsible for Health and Safety or your H&S consultant may be able to assist, alternatively the Health and Safety Executive provides excellent user-friendly advice on the risk assessment process. Please visit <http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/index.htm> for more guidance.

If other organisations are participating in your event, or you are employing contractors, such as caterers, you are not absolved of your overall responsibility for the safety of those attending the event. You must check that they hold the appropriate insurance cover and that they have properly risk assessed their activity.

Documentation is hugely helpful in the defence of a liability claim. When defending claims arising from parish fetes we have found that site plans which show the layout of stalls and note where hazards exist, and the actions taken to rectify them, demonstrate that you do have a proper system of inspection.

Large scale events, unusual risks and dangerous activities:

The diocesan insurance cover is wide and extends to cover all the **usual** activities of the diocese and its parishes. While fetes and fairs are considered to be routine activities of parishes, we are increasingly being asked to confirm cover for dangerous activities and large scale events, which insurers would not consider to be usual parish activities. This includes such things as archery, shooting, climbing walls, weekend festivals and events with an attendance in excess of 2,000 people. If you are unsure whether an event or activity is automatically covered, please contact CIS as early in the planning stage as possible.

The diocesan liability policy covers all authorised parish activities regardless of where they are held, so if your parish site lacks the outside space to hold a summer fair, the event will be covered if it is held on land belonging to another party, such as a local school or council playing field.
If evidence of cover is required, please contact our office on 01296 422030.

Catering

Please be aware that your Local Authority sets rules in respect of the sale of home baked goods. If individuals are preparing food at home, including baking, they may be required to register their homes with the Local Authority. If food will be sold at any parish event, even if this is limited to a simple cake stall selling donated cakes, you should contact your Local Authority and confirm that your plans comply with any requirements they might have regarding food preparation. Consideration should also be given to labelling or warning signs which provide details of the ingredients for allergy sufferers, even if the notice simply advises the goods are home baked and therefore may contain ingredients some people may be allergic to.

Bouncy Castles

Bouncy castles and other inflatables are dangerous if not used responsibly. You may have seen reports about a recent prosecution following the death of a child when the inadequately secured inflatable she was playing in was blown into the air and across a field. The diocesan policy covers claims made against the parish arising out of accidents on bouncy castles at parish events. In order to decrease the likelihood of an injury occurring sensible precautions should always be taken such as those outlined at the following website:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/fairgrounds/inflatables.htm>

These points should feature in your risk assessment of the activity. Consideration should also be given to whether the hire company has any similar advice or conditions of use within its terms and conditions.

If the hire company requires you to insure the equipment rest assured that loss or damage to equipment hired under normal contract conditions, such inflatables and their associated generators, is covered up to £10,000 per event.

In the event of an accident:

- Deal with the incident, provide **first aid** as required, and if necessary call an ambulance
- **Record** the accident in the parish accident book, obtain contact details for any witnesses, especially if they are members of the public who don't usually attend the parish.
- Take **photographs** of the area where the accident occurred, this is equally important if there is a hazard to be seen or as evidence that there wasn't an obvious hazard.
- **Report** the accident to relevant parties; is the accident reportable under RIDDOR? Should it be reported to the diocese or insurers?

It is important to record all **accidents**, even the most trivial. Claims can be made for nothing more than bruising and soft tissue injuries, which might seem insignificant at the time. A claimant has three years from the date of injury to make a claim (and three years from the age of 18 if a child is injured) so it is unlikely that every incident, especially those which seem insignificant, will be recalled accurately so long after the event. Equally, 'near misses' and accidents which don't result in any apparent injury should be recorded, as these records will put insurers in the best position if, in due course, someone claims that an accident caused an injury which wasn't obvious at the time.