

Communications, Good Neighbour and Event Control





Effective communication is crucial if an event is to run smoothly and safely



Thepurpleguide 6.1.

Event Control

To ensure smooth and coordinated operational management of an event and allow for effective communication, events should ideally be coordinated from an Event Control room in which representatives from all key organisations, partner agencies and emergency services are based. This will ensure that key decisions can be made instantly with all partners agreeing actions and understanding their organisations role in implementing measures or adapting as the decision dictates.

The size and type of facility, technological requirements as well as the partners required to form the event control team will depend on the size, scale, format, location and risk of your event.

For small scale or lower risk events It may be suitable for the event to be managed from a gazebo or small marquee within the event site with a small team, eg; the Event Manager, First Aid Coordinator and Steward Supervisor, present to coordinate and manage the event and any incidents by issuing instructions to staff on the ground by way of two-way radio.

Other staff on the radio network may be first aiders, site staff and stewards who will report information to Event Control as the event's eyes and ears on the ground. It is important for communications, decisions and actions to be recorded in real time to allow for an accurate record to be made available to allow for lessons to be learnt and improvements made.

For larger or higher risk events it may be more appropriate to have a larger portacabin, marquee or office to house Event Control. This could be located on-site, out of public view and away from any noise interference, or outwith the event site with CCTV and communications to the site installed to allow it to operate effectively. It is worth considering that any incident on-site could potentially impact the Event Control room which is also based at that location; an off-site location would allow this essential coordinating team to operate regardless of what was happening on-site.

Event Control for large/ higher risk events would normally require representation from a senior staff member of multiple agencies to coordinate and manage the event with a logger employed to record all key communications, actions and decisions.

It is important that all staff allocated to work within the Event Control have an in-depth knowledge of the event's plans, processes and hierarchies and have the delegated authority to make key decisions on behalf of the organisation they represent. If the staff within Event Control do not have the skillset, confidence or authority to make key decisions then the system will fail.

The assessment of the needs of the Event Control room and the Event Control team will vary depending on the size scale format location and risk of the event they are intended to coordinate and manage. Some options available for consideration are listed below:

Representation within Event Control:

Consider which organisations need to be in the room and who within that organisation is empowered to make decisions which impact their operation and the integrity of the event. For example: -

- Event Manager or their representative
- Radio Logger
- Steward Manager
- First Aid Manager
- Scottish Ambulance Service Coordinator
- Police Scotland Duty Sergeant or representative
- Aberdeen City Council representative
- Public Transport Coordinator
- Roadworks Coordination

Technology requirements

Consider what equipment this group need and what systems they will need access to in order to carry out their duties and coordinate the event. For example: -

- Robust radio communication systems
- Airwave radios to communicate with Emergency Services in real time
- Dedicated landlines
- Secured Internet connection
- Dedicated power supply
- Computers
- CCTV System covering the event site

Other requirements

Consider what else the team need to carry out their duties. For example: -

- Large site plans and maps displayed on the walls for quick reference
- Staff present who understand the event plans, procedures, management structures and contingency arrangements
- Contact information for stallholders, entertainers as well as contractors and other key staff
- Copies of the event's plans, procedures and flow charts

The City Events team and Safety Advisory Group can provide advice to event organisers on the needs for their event.

Communications

Pre-event communications; Good Neighbour letters and Business Engagement

This guidance focuses on operational communication considerations as well as the duty of event organisers to notify those impacted by their event. EventScotland has produced useful [guidance](#) on marketing and promoting events.

Aberdeen City Council stipulates that if your event is likely to impact on nearby residents, businesses or regular users of the event space that you contact with them in advance of the event to let them know what is happening; how it will impact them and what measures have been put in place to minimise disruption. If the event is new to the area you will benefit from communicating with the event's neighbours in the early planning stage to ensure sufficient time to respond and develop plans to address any concerns raised.

Notifying those who could be impacted by the event at an early stage in the planning process is courteous and will allow people to plan around your event which in turn will reduce the impact of the event on them. As well as reducing the impact to local residents this communication exercise, if done correctly, can help to change negative attitudes towards the event and ensure that the correct information is shared locally, quelling rumours.

It is common for effective community engagement exercises to reduce the number of objections and complaints received and can even turn objectors in to supporters when the concerns of the local community are taken seriously and addressed.

Good neighbour letters

Good neighbour letters are a great opportunity for event organisers to not only inform locals of the event's impact but also to advertise their event to those who live or work locally.

For large events a Good Neighbour Letter should include:

- A summary of the event
- Key timings
- Anticipated noise
- Traffic Management measures and anticipated impact
- Details of any element which will impact the recipient's day to day routine
- Reassuring information and information on measures being utilised to reduce impact
- Links to further information about the event
- Contact details for further information or to discuss specific concerns

It should be noted that Aberdeen City Council's Environmental Health Officers may also stipulate that a Good Neighbour Letter is required as part of the event's licensing conditions. This is common practice with events which feature amplified music or the use of Public Address Systems as they are likely to result in noise emissions.

Public Notices

As well as the letter to local residents and businesses it is important to notify regular users of the public space who may not live locally so they won't receive the good neighbour letter. This group may pick up on the event via social media or word of mouth, but the method recommended and deemed most effective is to place public notices around the space being used in the weeks leading up to the event. The public notice should detail:

- Name of the event
- Key dates and timings
- Any access restrictions or other information about the impact on regular users of the space
- Links to further information about the event
- Contact details for further information or to discuss concerns

It is important that event organisers seek permission from Aberdeen City Council's City Events Team prior to placing any notices to prevent any charges of fly posting. Organisers are also reminded of their duty to remove the signs after their event. Charges for removal of fly posting or public notices left in place after to the event are £10 per poster removed.

Aberdeen City Council do not allow flyposting and/or illegal advertising in the city and event organisers found

to be advertising without permission will not only be charged but risk permission for current/future event applications being refused as they have breached Aberdeen City Council's Parks & Open Spaces Terms and Conditions.

Public Meeting

For very large events or in unique circumstances a residents or business engagement meeting may be required in order to quell rumours, provide reassurance and allow the community an opportunity to ask questions or provide feedback and to quell any rumours at the event.

Mandatory Conditions:

Event organisers must notify regular users and local residents and/ or business if the proposed event will impact on their day to day business.

Operational Management and Coordination of Site Works

It is important that you communicate with those who will be operating at, or carrying out works to build your event site in order to reduce risk of accident or injury during this key phase of the event. Detailed advice on the need for robust communication to ensure effective coordination of site operations can be found [here](#).

Operational Communications

For events to be effectively managed during the live phase, information needs to be shared between key partners, such as stewards, event staff and first aid staff in real time to allow for appropriate decisions to be made, resources allocated, and management plans implemented as and when required. This requires a management structure and communication plan to be developed for the event.

The most effective method of communication at outdoor events is the use of dedicated two-way radios as they allow for secure communication between staff and partners. Depending on the number of radio users on the network the event may require the use of separate radio channels or coordination of the frequency of various devices to reduce the amount of interference and congestion and to ensure that important messages can be shared quickly.

Ear pieces and "Kilo Codes" (which are coded messages used to disguise true meaning) allow for key messages to be transmitted without members of the public overhearing. This is important to prevent unnecessary crowd management issues due to fear or alarm from the public hearing reports of, for example, a fire or a reported assault at the event. You may benefit from providing stewards, volunteers and staff with key information such as Kilo Codes or handheld briefing sheets which they can refer to when required.

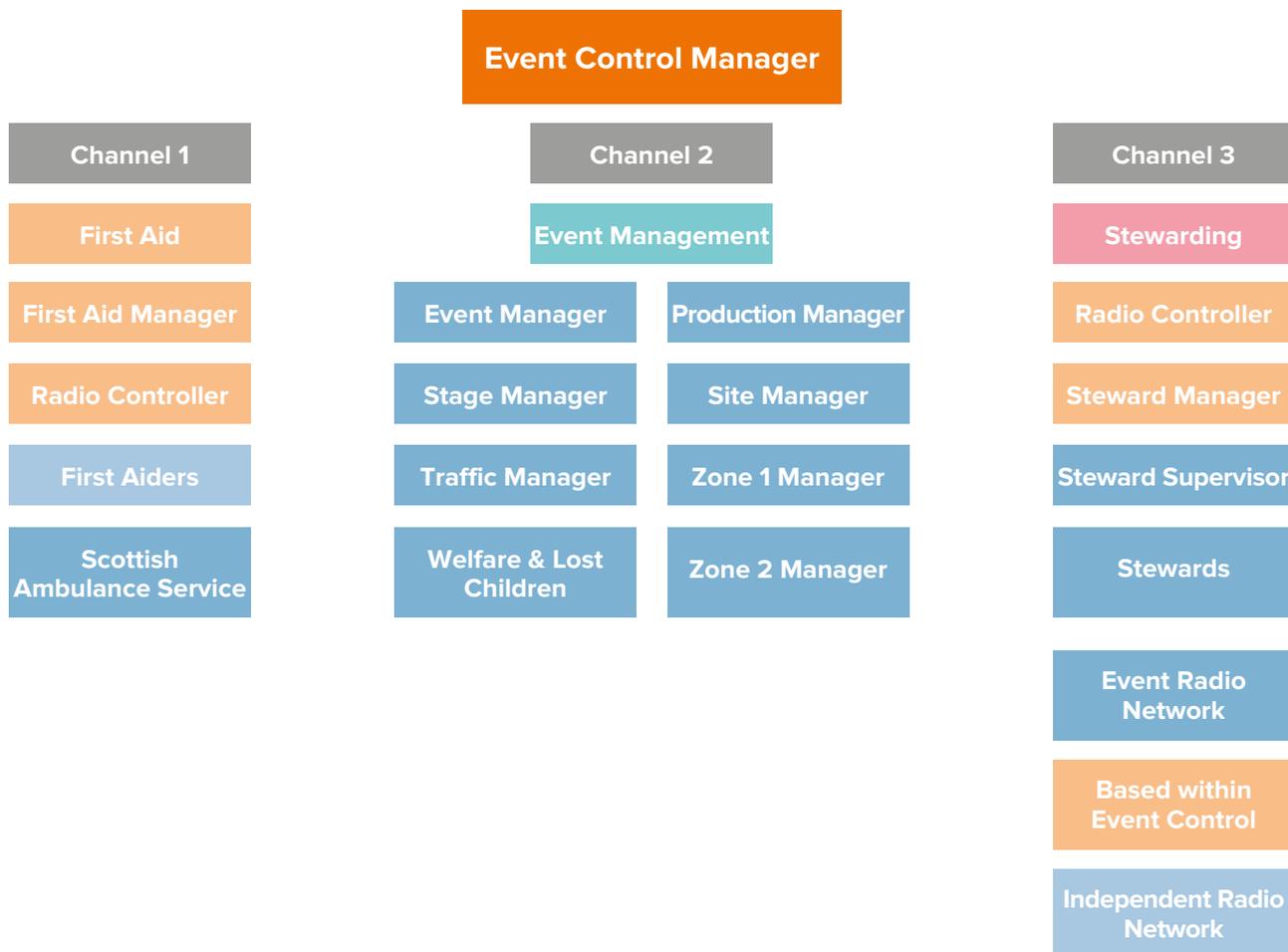
Event organisers should assess which members of staff are required to communicate and collaborate during the event and in the event of incident or emergency and develop a communication plan accordingly.

Organiser should assess the capabilities of the communication systems in place for dealing with emergency situations and the backup communications tools available. This assessment will form part of the event's [Contingency Plan](#). It is recommended that radios are in good condition and tested regularly. To ensure the equipment is in good working order they should be hired from a competent supplier ([see Section 3- General Guidance](#)). When choosing a supplier, organisers should consider out of hours response protocols to ensure any system failures during the event are resolved quickly. Organisers should consider a supply of back up radios for additional requirements or isolated equipment failures.

In the event of total failure of a 2 way radio system event organisation should hold back up contact information

for all key staff, suppliers and contractors.

On the example communication plan below the different colours represent a different radio channel and the different personnel operating on that channel. As you will see this colour coded diagram makes it easier to read and understand.



As well as ensuring effective communication between staff and those involved in the running of the event, it is important for the event organiser to develop methods of communicating with attendees during the event. This will assist in the management of the event but can also improve customer experience and reduce their need to engage with staff during the event. Methods of communicating are varied but include:

- Signage
- Signposting and directional signage (especially in large complex sites)
- Audio playback
- Public address systems and stage announcements, with pre-recorded messages for key communications
- Face to face
- Social Media & App interaction
- Big screens
- Pre-event interaction, advice, information and content
- Post event interaction, feedback and information
- Loud hailers