

October 2023

Providing a health service for an event

If you are organising an event, it is your responsibility to create a safe environment for everyone who attends. People who attend or work at your event should be able to receive an appropriate level of treatment and support if they are injured or have health problems, or if there is an emergency.

Who should read this guidance?

If you are organising an event, you are likely to be a 'person conducting a business or undertaking' (PCBU).

This guidance is for any PCBU that organises events. It will help you to make sure you have suitable medical, ambulance, or first aid services at your event.

This guidance might also be useful for:

- PCBUs that own or manage venues where events are held
- PCBUs that provide event health services
- health and safety professionals that provide health and safety advice to PCBUs involved with event management.

PCBU duties

PCBUs have duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA). In this guide, 'you' refers to a PCBU.

You can find more information about PCBUs on the WorkSafe website: [Who or what is a PCBU?](#)

PCBUs have a primary duty of care, which means they must ensure the health and safety of their workers, so far as is reasonably practicable. This includes any other workers that are influenced by their business.

PCBUs must also look after people that could be put at risk by their work, so far as is reasonably practicable.

This includes customers, visitors, and the public.

You can read more about this duty on the WorkSafe website: [What is the primary duty of care?](#)

Most events are workplaces. PCBUs must:

- make sure there are enough workers trained to administer first aid in the workplace, or
- make sure their workers have access to an adequate number of other people who are trained to administer first aid.

The duty to provide first aid does not extend to people who are not workers (for example, attendees at an event).

However, an event organiser must make sure their event is without risks to the health and safety of visitors, so far as is reasonably practicable.

You should think about whether it would be reasonably practicable to provide an event health service to minimise the risk of serious harm at your event.

You can find more information about the duty to provide first aid in the workplace on the WorkSafe website: [First aid at work](#)

You cannot transfer your duties to another PCBU. Even if you have hired a service provider to help you identify and manage risks, you are still responsible for the health and safety of people at your event.

You can read more about overlapping PCBU duties on the WorkSafe website: [Overlapping duties – quick guide](#)

Health services at events

Events can be complex environments with many risks that can interact with each other, and many people that could be affected by a risk. However, even with the most effective controls in place, people can still be injured or become unwell.

You must take reasonably practicable steps to eliminate risks to health and safety. If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate a risk, you must minimise the risk so far as is reasonably practicable.

You can read more about managing risks at events on the WorkSafe website: [Managing risks at events – quick guide](#)

Having an effective health service at your event can help to:

- minimise the risk of more serious injury by providing treatment at the event site
- minimise the risk of more serious harm by transferring people to hospital quickly
- coordinate with local emergency services if there is an incident
- reduce the demand on local emergency services.

What is an event health service?

An event health service refers to the medical assistance or support that is provided to attendees, workers, or other people at an event.

The aim of an event health service is to manage injuries and health problems at the event site as far as it is safe and appropriate. Where it is not safe or appropriate, a person who needs treatment should be transferred by emergency medical services for further treatment quickly and safely.

Anything that is involved with providing medical treatment or care at an event forms part of an event health service. This could include:

- workers trained to deliver first aid and basic life support
- specialist professionals, such as paramedics, nurses, and doctors, trained to give advanced treatment, life support, and mental health support
- equipment used to treat people, such as first aid kits and automated external defibrillators (AEDs)
- vehicles used to reach people who need treatment on the event site, transfer people for treatment off site, or transfer people across the event site to meet emergency services.

Planning a health service for your event

You should make sure that your event health service you offer meets the needs of your event. To plan a health service for your event, you will need to decide:

- the type of event health service your event needs
- who will provide the event health service
- how you will monitor the service to make sure it is effective.

Your event health service should be able to:

- manage expected injuries and health problems that could happen from event activities (for example, injuries from falls)
- manage unexpected health problems that might happen (for example, heart attacks or strokes)
- lead or coordinate an emergency response if there is a major incident (for example, an amusement ride failure or crowd crush).

Remember

Having an event health service in place at your event does not replace the need to eliminate or minimise risks.

You must manage risks so that the health and safety of workers and other people is not put at risk by the work you do.

Decide the type of event health service

The type of event health service you provide will depend on many factors and will be specific to your event.

You should use the risk assessment for your event to inform the plan for your event health service. You can read more about managing risks at your event on the WorkSafe website: [Managing risks at events – quick guide](#)

The risk assessment for your event can help you understand:

- the types of injuries or health problems that might happen at your event
- how severe the injuries or health problems might be and how likely they are to happen
- other event factors that could lead to an injury or health problem (for example, alcohol, drugs, or violence).

If you are not experienced in planning event health services, you should consult a provider of event health services, or a health and safety expert.

They can help you make sure that your event health service meets the need for your event.

Table 1 below outlines some of the areas that you will need to think about as part of your planning. This is not a complete list because every event is different, but you could use these areas as a starting point.

PLANNING AREA	THINGS TO CONSIDER
<p>Event details</p> <p>Gathering key details about your event can inform your planning for an event health service.</p> <p>It can also help you to communicate effectively with other PCBUs that might be involved with your event, or involved in planning your event health service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When and where will the event be held? - What area, route, or venues does the event cover? - How many attendees or spectators will be at the event? - How long will the installation and breakdown phases be? How many people will be on site for these phases? - Who will be the main contact during each phase of the event? Where can their contact details be found? - What types of injuries or medical problems have happened at previous similar events?
<p>Event location and layout</p> <p>You will need to understand the location and layout of the event site as part of the planning process for your event health service.</p> <p>You should think about how obstacles at your event could affect an emergency response (for example, rough terrain, locked gates, or one-way systems).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How will event health service workers get around the site? - What vehicles could event health service workers use to get around the event site quickly? - How quickly could event health service workers get to a person who needs treatment? - How quickly could attendees reach a first aid station to raise the alarm if there is an emergency? - How will people be reached outside the main event area (for example, in car parks or entry and exit queues)? - Are there areas of the site that are difficult to access on foot or in an emergency response vehicle? - What impact will weather conditions have on getting around the site (for example, mud or flooding)? - How will someone be reached if they need treatment in the middle of a crowd?
<p>Crowd profile</p> <p>Understanding how attendees might behave can help you to plan the type of health service you need.</p> <p>Factors like age, alcohol use, and mobility can affect the risk of injury or health problems that could happen at your event.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Will attendees be in one place, or will they move around the event site? - What types of age groups will attend? What health problems might be more likely in these groups? - How will mental health emergencies be managed? - Are there any cultural or religious considerations that could affect how event health services are provided? - Will alcohol or drugs at the event? - What measures will be in place to help people who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs? - Are there any security concerns (for example, threats or violent behaviour)?
<p>Activities</p> <p>You will need to consider the range of activities that will take place at the event as part of your event health service planning. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - activities that attendees might take part in - activities that workers might be involved with in the installation and breakdown phases, as well as during the event. <p>Keep in mind that the risk of injury from any activity may change over time (for example, in different weather conditions, or where people are intoxicated).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What types of injuries could workers have that need treatment? - What types of injuries could attendees have from event activities? - Are there specific activities or attractions that could need more event health service attention? - Is the risk for certain injuries more likely at certain times (for example, falls from height during installation and breakdown phases)? - How many attendees will be involved in event activities? How many will be spectating?

PLANNING AREA	THINGS TO CONSIDER
<p>Treatment facilities</p> <p>Having suitable treatment facilities on site is essential for providing treatment and care.</p> <p>Treatment facilities might include a main treatment facility and a network of first aid posts (for example, first aid tents, rooms, or ambulances).</p> <p>You should make sure that people can find and use a treatment facility quickly from wherever they are on the site.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where will the main treatment facility be placed? How far away is the route that an emergency vehicle will use? - How many first aid posts will be needed to provide good coverage across the event site? - How close is the nearest treatment facility to high-risk event activities? - Are there any permanent rooms suitable to be used as treatment facilities? - Is there enough space to provide treatment without obstruction (for example, if a person is lying down)? - How will treatment facilities be cleaned? - Are all treatment facilities accessible (for example, for people using a wheelchair)? - How will treatment facilities be signposted (Figure 1)?
<p>Equipment and supplies</p> <p>Having suitable equipment and supplies on hand is essential for providing an effective health service.</p> <p>You should make sure that treatment facilities have suitable equipment, and that event health service workers can access the supplies they need.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What equipment and supplies will be needed in the main treatment facility and in each first aid post? - Who will be responsible for monitoring stock levels in treatment facilities? - Who will be responsible for maintaining and testing equipment to make sure it is in good working order? - How will new supplies be ordered and transported around the site? - How many automated external defibrillators (AEDs) will be needed? - Where should AEDs be placed around the site so they can be accessed quickly?
<p>Operations</p> <p>Effective procedures, clear roles, and emergency plans can help make sure that your event health service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - runs smoothly - responds to incidents quickly - is prepared to deal with emergencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who will be responsible for coordinating and managing the event health service? - What process will be in place to dispose of clinical waste? - How will the event health service be connected to welfare services (for example, information services and meeting points)? - How will event health service workers record and report incidents, injuries, and treatments? - Have local emergency services been made aware of the event? - What process will be followed if there is a major incident or emergency? - Who will make decisions if there is a major incident or emergency? How will they be contacted?
<p>Event health service staff</p> <p>It is important that you carefully plan the staffing levels, skills, resources that you need for your event.</p> <p>Event health service workers should be able to reach and treat (or transfer) a person who needs care quickly, and at any point of the event site.</p> <p>You will need to understand the risks of your event, its operations, and the skills of event health service workers to determine an appropriate staffing level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What skills will event health service workers need to treat the injuries and health problems that could happen? - How will event health service workers familiarise themselves with the event site? - What event health service workers will be needed during the installation and breakdown phases? - What staff level adjustments will be needed for times where there will be more attendees or more workers? - Who is responsible for planning and allocating worker shifts? - Do local emergency services have the capacity to provide support if there is a major incident? - Will there be enough free event health service workers to attend to multiple injuries or emergencies at the same time? - How will event health service workers be identified by attendees or other workers who need help (Figure 1)?
<p>Staff welfare</p> <p>Staff welfare is an important consideration for any event, and this includes event health service workers.</p> <p>Providing support for the wellbeing of workers can help ensure they can perform their duties effectively and work in a way that is healthy and safe.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where will workers take breaks and rest during their shifts? - What accommodation will be available for workers who need to sleep on site? - How will tasks be shared between workers to make sure that workload is manageable? - How will worker fatigue be managed? - What measures will be in place to protect event health service workers from violence or aggressive behaviour?

PLANNING AREA	THINGS TO CONSIDER
<p>Communication</p> <p>You will need to make sure that you have measures in place to support effective communication across your event health service.</p> <p>Good communication helps to make sure that everyone involved in your event health service can understand what is happening and what actions are being taken.</p> <p>Clear communication also helps to prevent misunderstandings and can reduce the risk of errors or delays in treatment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How will mobile first responders communicate with each other and with coordinators? - How will workers at first aid posts communicate with the main treatment facility? - What communication equipment will be needed (for example, cell phones, radios, or satellite phones)? - What channels will be used to share information with attendees and workers (for example, announcements, signs, or social media)? - How will communication be maintained during power outages or other technical difficulties? - How will language barriers be managed?
<p>Transfer</p> <p>Some people may need specialist treatment, or treatment beyond what can be provided on site. Fast and effective patient transfer can make a critical difference in an emergency.</p> <p>Your event site should have clear access routes that allow emergency responders and vehicles to enter, move through, and exit the area without being held up by obstructions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where is the nearest hospital? Is the nearest hospital the same at all points of the event site or route? - Who will be responsible for contacting local emergency services for help? - Which roads or paths will be kept clear for emergency vehicles? How are these routes signposted? - Where could a helicopter land safely in an emergency? How far away is the landing site?

TABLE 1: Examples of things to consider when planning an event health service



FIGURE 1: A first aid post and uniformed event health service worker

Decide who will provide the event health service

Your event health service should be staffed by qualified and capable workers who can treat the injuries and health problems that might happen. The qualifications that your event health service workers should have depends on the type of service your event needs.

First aid qualifications

If you or your workers provide first aid at your event, you will need to make sure that first aid training:

- is suitable for the type of event
- is up to date, with valid certification
- has been provided by a reputable training provider.

Not all first aid qualifications provide training that is suitable to deliver first aid at events. Qualifications in advanced first aid, mental health first aid, resuscitation, and life support may be needed for larger events or events with higher risks. If you are not sure if a qualification is suitable for an event, consult a reputable provider of event health services, or a health and safety expert.

WorkSafe recommends that workers are trained in first aid by an organisation that is accredited by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA).

You should not rely on attendees to help with providing event health services, even if you know they have suitable qualifications.

If your event needs a higher level of service than your workers can provide, you should hire an event health service provider.

Your event health service could be made up of a variety of healthcare and non-healthcare roles, including:

- first aiders and first responders
- emergency medical technicians and paramedics
- nurses
- doctors
- coordinators and managers.

Choosing an event health service provider

If you decide to hire an event health service provider, you are responsible for making sure that they can provide a suitable event health service. Consider asking for recommendations from other event organisers or ask potential contractors for references.

You should make sure that the event health service you hire:

- can provide an appropriate number of qualified workers
- can carry out a risk assessment to decide what level of clinical service should be provided
- follow relevant guidelines and standards
- has up to date licenses, registrations, and certificates
- has appropriate insurance
- can provide suitable equipment, vehicles, and supplies
- is experienced providing health services at similar events.

Monitoring your event health service

Once your event health service is up and running, you should make sure it continues to meet the needs of your event. Regular monitoring will help you to identify areas that can be improved and act quickly if changes need to be made.

To monitor your event health service, you could:

- make sure that the event health service workers and supplies provided are in line with the service agreed before the event
- observe your event health service in action and look for areas where improvements could be made
- define and agree suitable performance measures (for example, response time or attendee satisfaction)
- gather feedback from attendees and workers (for example, using surveys or comment cards)
- check in regularly with event health service staff.

After the event

When your event has finished, you should continue to monitor how well your event health service performed. This information can help you to plan event health services in future events that you might organise.

After the event, you could:

- review incident reports to identify patterns or trends
- review data and feedback to check that the event health service provided was suitable for the event
- arrange a debriefing session with event health service workers and other relevant workers to talk about what went well and what could be improved
- review records to understand how supplies and equipment were used throughout the event.

Involve other PCBUs and their workers that were involved in the event when you monitor your event health service. They may have noticed near misses or seen potential risks that could be managed more effectively in future.

Example scenario

Eighty Days Events Management is planning a food festival to raise money for charity. The festival will have various stalls selling different types of food from around the world. It will be held in a large, open park and will host around 3,000 people at the busiest time.

Hannah is part of the planning team. She has been asked to make sure that there is a suitable event health service for the event. She considers the following factors.

- There is a local GP clinic within walking distance, and this will be open during the event. However, the closest hospital is about an hour's drive.
- The event is family friendly, so many children and elderly people are likely to attend. This could mean there is a higher risk of choking on food, slips and falls, and unexpected health problems like heart attacks.
- Catering contractors will be taking health and safety precautions and might have their own first aid kits. But they could get a more serious injury, like a burn, scald, or cut.

Hannah contacts Willow for advice. Willow owns AID Medical Services, which provides event health services across the region. They decide to meet at the park where the food festival will be held to have a look around together. Willow points out that:

- the park is flat and easy to walk on, but the space is open and has no gates or fences. Children could get lost if they are not supervised or could walk onto the nearby road
- people could be spread out over a large area, so the event might need mobile event health service workers that are easy to identify
- there is an AED in the nearby GP surgery, but there isn't one closer to the event site.

After reviewing Hannah's risk assessment, looking around the event site, and discussing the details of the event with Hannah, Willow carries out her own risk assessment. This helps her to decide the type of event health service Hannah's event will need. In her risk assessment, Willow considers several factors, including:

- what she knows about this event (such as the number of attendees, the event location, and information about the people likely to attend)
- her experience in providing event health services for similar events (including things that worked well and things that could have been improved)
- how local health services could be affected by the event (for example, the local GP surgery), and how they will be contacted
- guidelines and standards that help event health service providers assess risks.

Willow provides Hannah with a recommendation for the event health service. Willow recommends that Hannah's event will need at least:

- four first responders
- an ambulance to transport a patient if needed
- an ambulance crew (a registered paramedic and an emergency medical technician)
- supplies and equipment (including portable AEDs and signs), and
- a manager to coordinate the event health service.

More information

WorkSafe guidance

[Managing risks at events – quick guide](#)

[Identifying, assessing and managing work risks](#)

[What events need to be notified?](#)

Websites

[worksafe.govt.nz](https://www.worksafe.govt.nz)