

Risk management

(Occupational Health and Safety)

From The CLEAR GUIDE v1, written by Les Robinson for Mission Australia March 2009

www.enablingchange.com.au

Whether you're an informal group of parents, or a community organisation, you have a duty of care to yourselves, your guests, children and people you work with.

Even simple activities can involve hazards, so it's important to become aware of them and take action to reduce them as much as possible.

Common issues for playgroups are:

- sun sense e.g. a "No Hat, No Play" policy
- no hot drinks near children
- barriers near steps
- supervision of children.

There are also physical hazards when carrying out group activities (like tripping or lifting heavy objects), hazardous work practices (like overwork, bullying or sexual harassment), financial risks (like lack of financial controls, liability of members), and administrative risks (like protection of computer records and privacy protection).

You can limit your exposure to hazards by obtaining insurance and/or by changing the way you do things.

Here are two worksheets that help you assess and respond to hazards.

The first sheet helps you assess likely hazards:

Risk assessment worksheet			
Hazard	Is it likely to happen?	Could it be severe?	Priority ranking 1 = higher 5 = lower
Slipping hazard and risk of cutting self on broken glass by falling through plate glass door at the	Yes – almost happened last week when a client slipped and hit the door, but it did not break.	Yes – could have resulted in a very deep Laceration and severe loss of blood.	2

base of the stairs.			
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Source: The Community Services Safety Pack (see link below).

The second sheet helps you identify actions to reduce those hazards.

Consider the following actions you could take (actions higher up the list are better).

1. Eliminate the hazard or risk
2. Change equipment or materials
3. Isolate the hazard
4. Design in safety
5. Change work methods
6. Use personal protective equipment

Risk management worksheet				
Hazard	Solution	Who?	By when?	Date completed and signature
Glass door at bottom of stairs	Replace door – no glass except for face height window, or use safety glass. Install non-slip surface on stairs, improve lighting on stairs.	Manager to arrange	31/4	

Source: The Community Services Safety Pack (see link below).

Useful resources

The Community Services Safety Pack

This provides essential information, tools and advice on risk management and occupational health and safety.

www.nds.org.au/nsw/DSOP/links/Community%20Services%20Safety%20Pack.pdf

What is duty of care? – a simple introduction to health and safety at work, from the Local Community Services Association:

www.lcsa.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=466&Itemid=51

For an easy introduction to risk management, see:

Paul Bullen's risk management resources

www.mapl.com.au/risk/risk0.htm

Go to ourcommunity.com.au and click on the "Insurance" tab for the informative help sheets on insurance and risk management for community groups.

Risk management for public events

An event management checklist, from GIO insurance, is at:

www.ourcommunity.com.au/files/EventManagementGIO.pdf

Most of these issues won't be relevant for your community event, but this is a good memory jogger for those that are.

There is also a Community Business risk checklist on this site.

The Event Starter Guide

The NSW Premiers Department has a detailed guide to legal responsibilities and risk management issues around organising major public events.

www.events.nsw.gov.au/event-starter-guide