

June 22, 2023

Planning for Festivals, Parades, and Market Vendor Season

Now that it's official summer, it's also the peak season for festivals, parades, and farmers markets. There are some important things to consider before planning begins so you can ensure your events and markets are safe for everyone.

Plan Ahead

A key factor to your successful summer events is having a well-developed plan well in advance. It's important to focus on the structure of the leadership team, vendor policies, event security, and insurance needs for the specific event.

Your plans should entail how to handle emergencies, including medical incidents, evacuation protocols, and procedures on how to contact the appropriate authorities.

Staff and Volunteer Training

You will need to ensure that all staff involved in your event are professionally trained to understand their assigned duties and responsibilities prior to the event. Have written policies and procedures in place; these will provide your event with structure for this event and future events. Be sure to have daily staff meetings before the start of your event, which will ensure all are on the same page. It will also provide opportunities for continuous training to ensure your event is successful.

You will also want to ensure your staff and vendors work alongside with law enforcement regarding security and follow safety protocols, procedures, and training to better understand when to contact security.

Speaking of staff, when selecting staff and volunteers, it is important that they can perform their assigned duties and they are thoroughly trained and supervised. For any individual handling money or working with minors, seniors, or those with disabilities, they should be screened with the appropriate criminal records checks and vulnerable sector checks. Your local police agency can provide vetting of your volunteers (depending on the event and scope of the volunteer's task).

If the individual is operating a vehicle or equipment, they should provide a driver's abstract, carry the appropriate licence class, and ensure they can safely operate the equipment or vehicle.

Finally, it is recommended that all volunteers enter into a volunteer agreement, much like an employment contract. This type of agreement should be drafted by a lawyer and contain information such as the responsibilities and limitations of the volunteer, as well as specific information regarding workers compensation, other benefits, honorariums, and any other essential information given the tasks they are to perform.

Pre-Site Inspection and Safety Planning

Having the proper checklist in place for before and during event site inspections will ensure your staff can identify and rectify any potential hazards. Don't forget to inspect all open areas to the public, as well as spaces reserved for your staff and vendors. Inspect pathways, seating areas, grandstands, parking spaces, sidewalks, and stairways to ensure they are free from obstructions and impediments. Key areas of site inspections should include the potential risk of tripping hazards, electrical, and fire hazards.

Properly document all potential hazards found and act promptly to eliminate or reduce them and post warning signs in clear view or closing off these areas until these hazards are repaired.

In the case of an incident, respond appropriately to assist the affected staff or attendees. Report all incidents to the appropriate staff and maintain proper reporting of the incident, including taking photographs as needed to document the event.

Please contact RMA Risk Advisors for checklists and incident report forms at risk@RMAinsurance.com.

Crowd Management

Management of the crowd is important, especially for events that have capacity limit and large public gathering of live events, such as music, parades, rodeo, etc. Risk management of crowds includes posting clear signage, barricades for flow of traffic, and sharing rules for all participants to access and easily understand. Ensure there is clear communication and cooperation with your local law enforcement to monitor and intervene when needed. Having a plan in place with steps to undertake to deescalate or disperse any unruly crowd will help your staff for such incidents.

Parking Management & Signage

You will want your event to provide adequate parking space for all attendees, including attendees that require handicap designated stalls. This includes having proper readable signage to direct flow of foot traffic and vehicle traffic of where to enter and exit. You will also need designated parking lanes for emergency vehicles in the event they are called upon, along with an emergency exit plan for vehicles. Place signage to direct the attendees to garbage bins, recycling bins, washroom facilities, and main information area. For instances where roadways are used for parking, be sure to follow all Alberta highway traffic safety regulations.

Food / Liquor Vendors Licensed, Insurance

Follow up and obtain from your vendors they are properly licensed with [Alberta Health Services \(AHS\)](#) regarding food handling safe practices, and [Alberta Gaming, Liquor, & Cannabis \(AGLC\)](#) for their liquor serving operations. Also, to get a copy of a Certificate of Insurance (COI) from your vendors with an endorsement naming your organization and the municipality that the event is taking place in as additional insureds. Vendors can also obtain specific event insurance through IRC Instant Risk Coverage. Please contact your RMA Member Service Representative for more information on the IRC Special Event insurance.

It is important to have fire extinguishers where vendors are using open flame or propane within the operations. Always maintain a source of water nearby to assist in putting out fires. Please consult with your local fire chief regarding any active fire ban within your area of event.

Petting Zoos

AHS has strict [requirements for cleanliness at petting zoos](#). It is recommended that the owner of the animals provide proof of liability insurance and proof of insurance for the animals. Children should always be supervised while interacting with animals, and no dangerous, aggressive, or venomous animals are permitted. Animals should only be fed with permission from the owner, using approved food.

Parades

Parades are a wonderful way to bring the community together, but there are many risks that should not be ignored. Carefully planning the parade route is essential. Avoid overpasses and construction areas, making sure to set up blockades to ensure spectators and parade participants are kept safe. Ensure the route does not

obstruct emergency service routes and always check with Alberta Traffic and the municipality to ensure the route is permissible on their roads. Do not allow other traffic to impede the parade route.

You will need to find secure locations for judging platforms, first aid, emergency towing vehicles, ambulances, grandstands, and viewing areas.

It will also be important to consider establishing guidelines on what can be given to spectators regarding prizes or candy. Never throw items from floats; it is safest to have people walking to hand food to onlookers.

Adequate supervision should be available if there are large groups of children participating in the parade. Ensure all operators have experience and are qualified to operate vehicles and equipment in the parade. Operation of any equipment and automobiles under the influence of alcohol and other intoxicating substances is illegal and strictly prohibited.

By law, all automobiles being operated on the road must carry liability insurance and obtain certificates of insurance from all vehicles participating in the parade. Ensure that the operators have the qualifications and experience to operate the equipment and vehicles.

Any animals participating should be calm, supervised, and well trained. Avoid startling animals by keeping them separated from loud noises such as sirens, horns, bands, and loud exhaust. Have sanitation crews promptly clean up after the animals.

Inflatables & Tent Structures

When using any inflatables, tents, and temporary structures, it is critical that you follow all manufacturer's guidelines on the installation. Perform daily routine checks on the structures to confirm that they are properly secured and there is no risk of movement due to severity of weather conditions. Properly mark all ground pegs, spikes, and tie downs to prevent tripping hazards to your attendees. Always monitor to keep up to date on the weather conditions during your event, and ensure the vendors have proper insurance for their structures. Never leave an inflatable amusement device unattended.

Debris Disposal & Washroom Facilities

It is important to have in place enough garbage and recycling bins in relation to the size of your event. As well, ensure you have washroom facilities for all attendees. Designate a person or team to routinely clean up and stock up on supplies regularly during the event. When placing the bins and washroom facilities, place them for ease of access and away from tripping hazards. Maintain the practice of keeping a log of when washroom facilities are cleaned, supplies restocked, and by whom.

Be Prepared for an Emergency Shut Down

In the unlikely event that your event is required to be shut down promptly for safety or security reasons, you must be prepared and ready to act. It is vital that you are prepared in advance for emergencies that require an orderly evacuation or closure of your event, such as sudden unexpected severe weather or a security matter. Review your emergency planning process before the event to ensure all event staff are trained and aware of the protocols and whom to contact.

For more information, please contact risk@RMAinsurance.com or any of the RMA Risk Advisors below.

Mark Sosnowski

Risk Advisor

780.446.6346

mark@RMAinsurance.com

Chris Dyer

Risk Advisor

403.998.8842

chris@RMAinsurance.com

Vay Diep

Risk Advisor

780.446.2353

vay@RMAinsurance.com

Temí Alao

Risk Advisor

587.599.3370

temi@RMAinsurance.com