



Association of Show and Agricultural Organisations

[www.asao.co.uk](http://www.asao.co.uk)

# Agricultural Show Safety – Managing Health and Safety Risks

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# **Agricultural Show Safety – Managing Health and Safety Risks**

## **Forward**

The Association of Show and Agricultural Organisations (ASAO), formed in 1923, continues to work to give a co-ordinated approach to all aspects of the various situations and operations of the show world. This is achieved through relationships as a stakeholder and prime mover with various agencies and organisations to obtain a level playing field for organisers as well as suggesting a template for within which enforcing authorities may operate across the country and industry.

In view of the ever-changing requirements that face everyone, the ASAO, in consultation with other agencies, have updated the guidance which follows.

In particular the ASAO would like to express it's thanks to Tim Gardner and Christine Knipe of the ASAO who have assisted the ASAO Secretary in the various stages of this publication's review.

As a web-based publication this will be updated as and when required.

Paul Hooper  
Secretary, ASAO  
October 2012

## 1. Introduction

This guidance provides advice for organisers of agricultural shows. It is relevant to large national or technical shows (including livestock and machinery-based events), county and regional shows, and smaller, traditional local agricultural shows which are held on dedicated show grounds, farmland or other greenfield sites. The guidance has been developed by the Association of Show and Agricultural Organisations [ASAO]. <http://www.asao.co.uk/>

The guidance should be read in conjunction with the current HSE publication 'The event safety guide: A guide to health, safety and welfare at music and similar events' which is available to purchase or download from the HSE website at [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk). A 'further reading' section is located at the end of this document.

## 2. Background

Agricultural shows are held throughout the year bringing together farmers, show staff, competitors, trade exhibitors and members of the public. Although the number of accidents occurring at shows is relatively low, there have been occasions where serious accidents (including fatalities) have been reported. Following this, guidance should help show organisers to comply with their legal duties under health and safety law and ensure that risks to workers and the visitors are properly controlled.

## 3. Managing a Show – Advice for Organisers

Managing health and safety at agricultural shows is no different to managing any other aspect of a show – you need an effective health and safety management system in place to ensure that you, your staff, volunteers, contractors, exhibitors and visitors are properly protected. For show organisers, there are five key elements to this management process:

Have a policy for health and safety – set your policy and making sure everyone knows and understands it;

Organise your resources – create a positive health and safety culture, train and consult with your staff and volunteers;

Plan and implement controls – have systems in place for identifying hazards and assessing and controlling risks;

Measure your performance – have systems for monitoring whether your controls are effective;

Learn from experience – have systems in place for reviewing what actually happens and using any lessons learned as the basis for improvements.

This guidance aims to help show organisers identify hazards, assess the risks and implement effective control measures. It also covers some aspects of the management process described above.

See 'Further Reading' for information on safety policy and risk assessment.  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/write.htm>

#### 4. Legal matters

The legal duties placed on show organisers by health and safety law involves more than simply addressing the risks to their own employees and volunteers. As well as a legal obligation to protect show visitors, organisers must also do what is reasonable to ensure that risks to other persons are properly controlled. People at risk may include a wide range of trade personnel and others who may be involved in the show environment at various times including:

- Contractors
- Exhibitors
- Delivery drivers/hauliers
- Catering staff
- Service and utility providers
- Marquee erectors
- Stewards and officials.

Show organisers have a key role to play in the process of controlling risks. By setting the standards expected [e.g. by co-ordinating or carrying out risk assessment, by devising show rules and other requirements], promoting and monitoring adherence to those standards and taking action to address matters of concern, the organiser is in a unique position to co-ordinate a safely-run event.

Other participants, for example contractors and exhibitors, also have legal responsibilities to protect themselves, their employees and volunteers and others present at the show including the public and the staff of other undertakings. Show rules and terms and conditions for participating in the show must be adhered to. These may include prohibitions and restrictions on the movement of vehicles or animals, the management of the risk of electrical accidents or the standard of protection expected for staff working at height. Show organisers should ensure that these responsibilities are clearly communicated and agreed before the show commences.

Members of staff and volunteers of all the organisations involved in the show have a legal duty to follow instructions and ensure they consider the safety of themselves and others. This should be explained during induction training and it should be expected this message is passed from contractors, etc, to their staff.

Show organisers should make it clear that exhibitors, contractors or others seen endangering themselves or others will be dealt with according to show rules. These should be sufficiently robust as to act as a deterrent.

For more information on the use of contractor see the HSE publication 'Use of contractors – a joint responsibility'. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg368.pdf>

## 5. Risk Assessment

No two shows are identical. Greenfield and fixed sites, country fairs and trade shows all create different risks for employees, volunteers and members of the public on site. Show organisers must identify the activities under their control, ensure that an effective risk assessment is undertaken and monitor that control measures are adhered to.

Show organisers should also remember that their site may present different risks dependant on the weather, their main ring attraction or other events happening in the area at the same time. Risk assessments should be reviewed every year and amended where necessary.

Show organisers should devise suitable rules or terms and conditions of operating for participants in the show. Exhibitors and contractors also have a duty to assess significant risks – show organisers need to be satisfied that participants have undertaken suitable risk assessments and are also monitoring that control measures are in place.

## 6. Where to Start

Identifying the hazards and assessing risks is a legal requirement. Unless you know what hazards exist on your site or in the activities being carried out, together with the scale of the risk they present, you cannot know whether any controls are needed or if existing controls are adequate. You need to assess risks to those who may be affected by your work activities as well as your own staff and co-ordinate action with other businesses or employers on site.

**Remember:** a hazard is anything with the potential to cause harm and risk is the chance of harm actually being done, together with an indication of the severity.

Risk assessment is nothing more than taking a careful look at what can cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or can do more to prevent harm. You need to focus your efforts on identifying significant hazards and risks. Trivial matters can be ignored. Once you have decided on the level of risk you will need to put into place appropriate preventative and/or protective measures.

There are many sources of help and guidance to assist you when carrying out your assessment. For example, the HSE website has useful information about risk assessment and other topic specific guidance. Organisations such as UKLPG or MUTA (Performance Textiles Association) also identify how to manage the risks found at events similar to shows. Show organisers and their staff may also have valuable knowledge of what actually goes on, so involving the staff in the assessment process may be beneficial. This knowledge is essential to help produce a meaningful assessment. Producing a risk assessment is not an end in itself – the important thing is to recognise the hazards and risks and then to put adequate and suitable measures in place to deal with them. You must also check that the content of your risk assessment is communicated to those with responsibilities or who are working in the area being assessed. This may be done by briefings or training sessions.

## **7. How to do a Risk Assessment**

When carrying out your risk assessment, follow this simple 5 step process:

### Step 1 – Look for the hazards

The first step is to spot the hazards. This involves a combination of:

- looking around the site to see how and where jobs will be done or activities will take place
- watching how people including visitors behave in certain circumstances
- learning from experiences – records of past incidents, accidents and other problems
- asking staff what they think – they are often aware of problems you may not be
- using suppliers instructions and other information provided by exhibitors and contractors
- using HSE or other relevant guidance.

The aim is to spot significant hazards which could result in serious harm or affect people working on or visiting the show. Trivial issues or those which occur in everyday life can be ignored but remember what appears trivial in one environment may not be to different people in another. For example, visitors to a show will be concentrating on the things they have come to see with a reasonable assumption that the site has no inherent hazards and may not notice the approach of vehicles such as litter collection vehicles, tractors or all terrain vehicles [ATVs] working on the site during the show. Staff and exhibitors who have knowledge of your event or similar events are likely to have useful information about hazards, and how to deal with them.

### Step 2 – Decide who might be harmed and how

Identify groups of people who might be at risk. Include employees, particularly new staff, volunteers, casuals or part-time staff, contractors, visitors and members of the public especially children or disabled visitors. Ask yourself who might be harmed and in what way.

### Step 3 – Evaluate risks and actions needed to reduce or control them

Assess how well the risks from each significant hazard are controlled. The controls you already have in place may be adequate or there may be scope to improve things. Take into account any new or updated guidance. You should always consider implementing control measures following the well-established “hierarchy” of control measures described below:

- if possible avoid a risk altogether, eg, remove the hazard completely or do the work in a different way
- combat risks at source, eg, replace dangerous steps or stairs rather than display a sign advising users to take care
- give priority to those measures which protect the largest number of people
- provide information, instruction and training
- as a last resort, personal protective equipment should be used after other control measures have been considered.

#### Step 4 – Record your findings

After you have identified the hazards, assessed the risks and decide on appropriate control measures you need to record your findings. This will also help you to plan any improvements or other actions required. If you have five or more employees the law says you must record the significant findings of your assessment. However all shows should record their risk assessments.

Make sure that your plan:

- is realistic and achievable
- contains precautions that are likely to be effective
- tackles the most important problems first
- is presented in an easily read format to make it accessible to those who need to refer to the document.

#### Step 5 – Review your assessment

Risk assessments will need to be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. There may be new events at the show, new equipment, temporary structures or other changes which introduce new hazards or risks. These will need to be assessed to ensure that you have adequate controls in place. Few things stay the same forever, so it will be necessary to periodically review your assessments to ensure that they are still adequate and suitable.

At the conclusion of the show you should review your health and safety performance and any lessons learned that might contribute towards improvements at future events.

For more information on how to carry out a risk assessment see the HSE leaflet “Five steps to risk assessment” available to download from <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf>

See ‘Further Reading’ for risk assessment templates.

### **8. A Guide to Hazards and Risks at Agricultural Shows**

Show organisers are responsible for assessing the hazards and risks at their shows over which they have control. They are also responsible for the management of participating contractors and exhibitors, including ensuring they have taken action to assess the risk of their own activities. Show organisers should ensure the activities of contractors and exhibitors are co-ordinated, particularly during busy periods such as building and breaking down. The following section highlights common risks which may be seen at agricultural shows.

Guidance of this type cannot provide an exhaustive list of all the hazards which will be relevant to all events. However, the following are suggested as the main areas you may need to address and should help you to undertake a risk assessment relevant to your venue or event, or judge the suitability of risk assessments undertaken by others.

Show organisers should ask their contractors and exhibitors about the arrangements they are making to address the risks such as working at height or the organisation of lifting operations. In some instances it will be appropriate to require a written method statement from contractors to check that they have planned their work safely. When a show organiser

contracts with a contractor they should make reasonable enquiries to ensure the contractor has adequate insurance and is competent to carry out the work they are being engaged to do.

Show organisers retain the responsibility to co ordinate and monitor safe working arrangements.

After the work has commenced on site, organisers can observe the activity taking place as part of their monitoring arrangements to ensure safe practices are being followed. Exhibitors should keep copies of their relevant method statements and risk assessments and those of their contractors on site in case the show organisers require the information. If a contractor or exhibitor is not working in accordance with their method statement/risk assessment and their method of work does not appear safe they should be challenged.

## **9. Work at Height**

Much of the work done in preparation for and at the end of an event involves working off the ground or working at height. The people doing this work are neither exempt from gravity nor from a legal duty to take reasonable precautions to prevent falls. Those at risk may be undertaking work such as:

- erecting or dismantling temporary stands, marquees or other structures
- providing signage, lighting or utilities
- cleaning, maintaining or decorating permanent buildings
- loading or unloading display equipment, machinery or structures.

The primary consideration is to ensure that the work is properly planned so it can be done safely to reduce the risk of falls which might cause injury. If the work must be done at height it will be necessary to provide a safe place of work, eg, from a scaffold, mobile access platform or similar. A secured ladder or step ladder may be acceptable for carrying out certain short-duration tasks. Work on roofs and other areas or structures with a fragile surface or open edge where someone may fall should be avoided unless there are measures in place to prevent falls.

There are a number of options to protect staff from falling from height. These may include:

- Use of scaffolding with edge protection, eg, guardrails, which protect all those working in the area
- The erection of nets to provide protection in case of a fall
- The use of harnesses to protect individuals. You must consider the need for an emergency rescue plan in case of a fall, strict supervision of the use of harnesses and whether the work is suitable [and high enough] for the use of harnesses.

Fragile roofs or surfaces, eg, skylights are particularly hazardous as there is a risk of falling through them.

Anyone who is working at height should be competent to do so.

Guidance on appropriate precautions for work at height can be found on the HSE website. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/falls/>



## 10. Lifting Operations

Show preparation often involves a considerable amount of heavy lifting – a potentially hazardous activity, eg, loading and unloading lorries, lifting exhibits into place, erecting structures, etc. All lifting operations must be properly planned and supervised by a competent person. Lifting equipment must be used safely and where necessary, lifting equipment needs to be thoroughly examined by a competent person.

Where the lifting plant is owned by contractors or exhibitors, the show organisers should ensure that the site is arranged to avoid risks from the movement of the equipment and the loads. Information about the safe co-ordination of lifting operations must be communicated to all those concerned, including contractors/exhibitors and show staff.

If the lifting contractor is engaged by the organiser then they will have duties to check that the work can be carried out safely, the plant and lifting tackle is suitable and inspected as necessary. The main risks are people being struck by the lifting equipment or by the load, failure of the lifting equipment, contact with overhead power lines and vehicle or machinery overturns.

Organisers should ensure that

- all lifting operations on the showground are carried out without a load being lifted over people
- people are excluded from areas where they are at risk from contact with a load or lifting equipment
- those people operating lifting equipment are trained and competent to work with the type equipment they are operating.

In some circumstances during the build-up and breakdown of structures, etc, the area around lifting operations and any other areas where there may be a risk of objects falling should be designated a head protection zone where the wearing of hard hats is mandatory.

Consideration must be made of the risks arising during bad weather; strong winds can be very dangerous during loading/unloading operations, and during the construction of temporary buildings and other structures.

The selection of the correct lifting equipment is crucial as failure to use the correct equipment can have fatal consequences.

For guidance on lifting see the HSE website.

Simple guide to the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg290.pdf>

## 11. Workplace Transport

Shows often involve a considerable amount of vehicle activity. This may include vehicles such as tractors, fork lift trucks, telescopic handlers, ATVs (quad bikes), cars, vans and other commercial vehicles.

### Before and after the show

Activities may include:

- arrival and departure of vehicles
- travel within the showground
- loading, unloading and securing loads
- transporting loads within the showground.

Risks associated with these activities may include:

- being struck by a moving vehicle
- falls from a vehicle, eg, while getting in or out, or during loading/unloading
- struck by an object or load falling from a vehicle
- vehicle overturns, eg, on sloping ground
- contact with overhead power lines.

Deciding on appropriate control measures you may need to consider the following points:

- imposing speed restrictions
- restrictions on areas and times vehicle movements are allowed (vehicle curfew).

Delivery drivers may be unfamiliar with the site. Consider the need for signage, route marking and other information. Make sure all visiting drivers report their arrival and receive instructions before proceeding.

Provide contractors with appropriate health and safety information in advance of their arrival on site, so that the work can be done safely, eg, the location of OHPLs.

If using fork lift trucks, quad bikes or telescopic handlers, make sure that operators are properly trained and competent.

Reversing vehicles are a major source of accidents. Wherever possible, the best way of preventing reversing accidents is to operate a one-way system with drive through loading/unloading areas. If a one-way system cannot be operated, a system of work should be designed incorporating the use of competent banksmen.

Temporary show grounds (eg, farmland) often have 'unprepared' routes such as unsurfaced roads or open ground. These routes should comply with the same basic safety standards applying to 'prepared' routes. These routes should be suitable for their purpose, have firm and even surfaces, be properly drained. Slopes that are too steep should be avoided. Consider the use of temporary roadways to prevent vehicles getting into difficulties on soft ground.

## During the Show

Visitors attending a show are unlikely to watch out for vehicles moving amongst them. Their concentration will be on their next intended location and therefore the risk to visitors from moving vehicles is very high. The best situation is to have no moving vehicles where members of the public are present.

Visitor car parks need to be supervised and organised by trained and competent staff who are fully conversant with the planned method of directing cars into position and managing vehicles exiting from the show. Where pedestrian and vehicle routes cross, well marked and signposted crossing points should be provided. The most effective way of protecting pedestrians is to provide separate routes away from vehicles. Visitors leaving parking areas should not have to cross potentially dangerous areas.

If essential traffic movement occurs during the show opening hours it should be kept to a minimum. Only essential vehicles should be allowed to move at these times. Movement of non-essential vehicles should be challenged. Many of the courtesy vehicles seen at shows conveying senior organiser staff, etc, do not truly merit the 'essential' tag. One exception might be where the vehicle is necessary for security, eg, with VIPs. With essential vehicles, it may be appropriate to restrict movement to certain times of the day or particular planned routes to reduce the risk of injuring pedestrians. Essential vehicles may include refuse collection, medical vehicles in an emergency or sanitary contractors.

Do not forget to consider the need for access by emergency vehicles.

Where it is absolutely necessary to move a vehicle during the show, particular attention should be paid to any vehicles which have limited visibility such as lorries, vans or trailers which need to reverse or manoeuvre. Manoeuvres involving vehicles with poor visibility [eg, refuse vehicles] should be avoided unless there is segregation from the public. In exceptional circumstances a number of stewards in high visibility clothing can form a walking escort around a moving vehicle creating mobile segregation and controlling the speed. This operation should be authorised by a nominated show manager.

No vehicle should be driven on the showground during the show unless the driver is properly trained. In particular, all-terrain vehicles [ATVs] should only be driven by trained, competent people who are wearing a suitable protective helmet.

Where drivers are seen driving at inappropriate speeds or contrary to established site rules, action should be taken in order to prevent a recurrence.

At the end of a show, movement of vehicles in the showground should be prevented as far as possible until the public are clear of the area and an authorised member of the management team lifts a vehicle curfew. Most exhibitors want to get their vehicles on site as quickly as possible to break down their stands and leave the site. Those parked behind stalls should be reminded of the need to obey the vehicle curfew. This is often a period of frantic activity and it is paramount that vehicle access and other movement is controlled whilst visitor crowds leave the site.

When the show is over there may well be many pedestrians remaining on site and all drivers should be reminded of site speed restrictions and other safety controls. One-way traffic flows are useful to ensure safety at departure times.

Organisers of shows held during the late-autumn and winter have to consider the additional risk that early morning and evening darkness may bring, particularly on a poorly lit site. Additional lighting, including temporary lighting units and high visibility clothing, should be considered.

For more information on workplace transport, see:

Workplace Transport Safety <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg199.pdf>

## **12. Electrical Safety – Overhead Power Lines [OHPLs]**

Accidents regularly occur when vehicles, structures or construction materials contact or get too close to OHPLs. Many showgrounds, particularly those on temporary sites, are crossed by OHPLs. Organisers must identify their location, avoid operations beneath them which could lead to danger and ensure all potentially at risk exhibitors, contractors, etc, have adequate information to allow them to work safely. Common examples of work near OHPLs that put people at risk include erecting metal flag poles, parking high machinery, stacking materials under the lines, or demonstrating high reaching equipment including tipping bodies, materials handlers and sprayers.

The key aspects of reducing the risk from OHPLs start with identifying where they cross the event site. Remember people often mistake OHPLs for telephone cables and assume they are harmless.

- Identify OHPLs on any site maps you may provide as pre-set-up information to contractors and exhibitors particularly the operators of cranes, loaders, harvesters, etc
- Ensure the site layout avoids high risk work under or near OHPLs, including the erection of marquees and stand structures, siting of demonstration areas and the routing of larger vehicles
- Where it is necessary for vehicles to pass under or close to OHPLs, consider providing goalpost style approaches and suitable warning signs
- On permanent sites consider arranging for OHPLs to be buried wherever possible and then take suitable precautions for the future (eg, protect buried cables from damage and keep a note of their location)
- If in doubt about clearance distances consult the regional electricity provider.

Further guidance is available at:

Working safely near overhead power lines <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ais8.pdf>

## **13. Electrical Safety – Other Matters**

All electrical installations including those installed temporarily for the duration of the show must be installed and maintained so as to prevent danger. This involves selecting cabling, fittings, protective devices, etc, that are appropriate to that environment. All supply wiring [other than portable devices on stands] should be installed by a competent electrician or checked by a competent electrician before connection. In most cases it will be appropriate to protect all exhibitor connection points with a 30mA residual current device. These are also highly recommended for portable 240volt tools and equipment such as pressure washers used to clean livestock pens.

PVC cabling which is installed and removed a number of times must be checked before each use to ensure it is still serviceable. Using battery powered portable tools or those operating at reduced voltage, eg, 110volts, can help reduce the risks to workers carrying out installation works, etc, and are much safer to use in damp or unfavourable conditions. Battery powered tools also reduce the need for trailing cables which may create a tripping hazard.

Exhibitors who bring their own electrical equipment should be asked to confirm that the equipment is suitably maintained to ensure it is safe. Organisers should then carry out suitable checks, eg, by sample inspection, to ensure equipment is in good condition. When unsafe equipment is found it should be removed from service.

One of the hazards created by electrical equipment at shows is that of extension cables presenting a tripping hazard. Power points should be sited to reduce the use of extension leads but where they are unavoidable, cables should be routed to avoid trailing across the ground [eg, by burying or running in a conduit or 'cable tidy']. Remember: when people come to a show they will be looking at the exhibits, not concentrating on the surface of the walkway or tent they are in.

Buried services [underground power supply and distribution cabling] present risks to anyone penetrating or breaking the ground, eg, to erect flagpoles, dig holes or drive in securing stakes for marquees, etc. Precautions involve keeping accurate site plans, permits to work for any work activities involving penetrating the ground and using cable location devices.

For information on electrical safety see

Electrical safety and you <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg231.pdf>

#### **14. Liquefied Petroleum Gas [LPG]**

LPG is commonly used for cooking and heating at shows. Properly installed and maintained appliances should present little risk. LPG cylinders should be stored upright in a secure area, away from sources of ignition, whether they are full or nominally empty. The number of LPG cylinders stored at each stall should be restricted to the supply needed for one day to minimise both the risk of fire and transport accidents. Hoses must be in good condition and flame failure devices should be fitted where required. Those using LPG cylinders must be aware of what actions they should take in the event of a gas leak or a fire.

Much useful advice is to be found in the HSE Information Sheet [Chemical Sheet No 5] 'Small scale use of LPG in cylinders' <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/chis5.pdf>

Guidance from UKLPG includes:

Safe Use of Propane and Butane Cylinders, Appliances and Equipment

<http://www.uklpg.org/uploads/DOC4F0D692796907.pdf>

See also 'Further Reading'.

## **15. Machinery**

Machinery which is on site for static display should not be moved during the show unless there are comprehensive arrangements to ensure that visitors are kept out of the area in which the machine is moving.

Where the event involves machinery demonstrations the risk will be greater and the steps required to protect visitors will be different. Firstly it is necessary to establish the risks with the particular types of machinery being demonstrated. If there is a risk of material being ejected the restriction of visitor access will be greater. Wherever vehicles are moving there is a risk of colliding with pedestrians, particularly if the vehicle is reversing. Where the driver is concentrating on demonstrating his vehicle to the best of his ability the risk is magnified because he will not be concentrating on bystanders. A passenger should only be carried on tractors or machinery if they are seated in a purpose designed seat or working position.

The control measures to protect visitors will depend on the nature of the event but are likely to include a combination of physical barriers, steward control and restricted zones. It should be the rule at all events that the driver of a machine or other vehicle stops their vehicle if they, or the area steward, judge that visitors or colleagues are inside the restricted zone. Organisers may wish to denote some technical events or certain areas 'adults only'.

Further guidance on working events is available on:

Health & safety guidelines for agricultural machinery working demonstrations

[http://www.hse.gov.uk/foi/internalops/sectors/ag\\_food/1\\_01\\_04.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/foi/internalops/sectors/ag_food/1_01_04.pdf)

## **16. Livestock Handling**

When livestock are taken to a show they are away from their normal farm environment and are exposed to different premises, sights and sounds which can make them potentially less predictable. The handler's skills are paramount in putting them at ease and ensuring they are under control. Consequently livestock should only be moved and shown by competent people who are capable of restraining them. There is no legal upper or lower limit for cattle handling as individuals' capabilities vary widely, but children under 13 years old should not normally be allowed to handle cattle without close adult supervision. The exhibitor should be responsible for ensuring that whoever is handling their animal is competent and has the physical ability to control the animal if required.

Injury caused when handling cattle does not just affect the young and inexperienced. As handlers become older they can become less agile. Exhibitors should consider the risks carefully when selecting their animal handlers.

Even with competent handlers it is reasonably practicable to reduce risks to the public when livestock are being moved. In the case of cattle or horses the show should be structured in such a way as to allow total physical segregation between visitors and animals whilst they are being moved. Experience shows that the times of greatest risk are when the animals are being loaded and unloaded from road transport vehicles and while they are being moved en masse between standings and the show ring. At such times the relevant area, such as the part of the standings occupied by one or more breeds, should be closed to public access and that access should be under the close control of the stewards.

It will not normally be necessary to segregate the public when individual animals are being moved to wash stations or milking facilities but this will depend on individual locations.

Your emergency plan should details what action will be taken in the event of an animal or multi-animal escape or in the case of an animal fatality.

## **17. Livestock Accommodation**

Livestock accommodation will vary greatly between a greenfield site and a permanent showground. The essential requirement is to provide accommodation that will securely restrain the animals with due regard to animal welfare such that visitors can see them, exhibitors can tend and prepare them for show and neither will be at risk. Show organisers should set their own standards with regard to the siting and amount of bedding and fodder allowed in the area particularly considering fire risks and the necessary walkway dimensions. Contaminated bedding should be kept off walkways.

Where the accommodation consists of pens or crates the design should take into account the frequency with which the exhibitors will need to enter the pen for preparing animals for show and allow safe opening and closing. Penning systems which involve having to manually handle heavy hurdles, fit long securing pins or otherwise risk trapping are less suitable than other more easily opened designs. Pen gates which cannot be easily closed also make it more likely that they will be left unfastened with a risk of stock escaping.

There may be specific requirements for different breeds, eg, horned cattle or where breeds are prone to become overheated and therefore less predictable in their behaviour. Moving cattle between tents and the show ring must also be considered.

Where the public, particularly children, are allowed or encouraged to be in contact with animals, provision must be made for hand washing. This subject is discussed in more depth in the section entitled 'Health Risks'.

Useful advice is contained below.

Animal gatherings order - Biosecurity guidance for operators and users in England and Wales  
[http://animalhealth.defra.gov.uk/about/publications/managing-disease/AG14\\_0810.pdf](http://animalhealth.defra.gov.uk/about/publications/managing-disease/AG14_0810.pdf)

### Management of marquees

Most agricultural shows use tents or marquees [temporary demountable fabric structures] to provide or supplement accommodation for exhibitors. Such accommodation should be carefully sited and chosen. Those responsible for a particular tent should comply with show rules and have a safe method of construction and dismantling the structure. Additionally there should be contingency plans in place in case of inclement weather including gales and excessive rainfall, snow loading, etc.

For more information on this subject follow the link below:

'Safe Use and Operation of Temporary Demountable Fabric Structures'  
<http://www.performancetextiles.org.uk/Literature/mutamarg.pdf>

## 18. Show Ring Fencing

Ring fencing should serve two purposes: containing exhibited livestock and keeping visitors, especially children and dogs, out of the show ring. It will often be impracticable to fence rings to securely contain cattle or horses which are determined to escape without creating an unsightly fence which prevents visitors from seeing the animals. However on permanent show grounds it will be possible to establish structurally sound fences which would contain most animals. It is well known that the greatest possible colour contrast between barrier and background gives the greatest visibility to humans but this question should also be considered from equine and bovine points of view and veterinary advice is required. If an escaped animal cannot see a barrier it is extremely likely to attempt to blunder through it with a heavy impact upon animal, barrier and bystanders.

The design of the fence should not pose additional hazards to people, eg, sharp edges, and should deter visitors from climbing over or under them, sitting or standing on them by using diamond section top bars, netting or mesh or vertical staves. The fence should also be designed to avoid injury to animals and, in the case of horses, riders.

Where temporary rings are constructed they must serve the purpose of segregating animals and visitors. A single rope between stakes will not restrict access by either adults or children and is not suitable.

## 19. Health Risks

You cannot ignore the risks to visitors of contracting zoonoses from show animals or from the faeces of animals that have previously grazed on the showground or camping area. The risk of contracting a zoonoses such as *E coli O157* or cryptosporidium is low but can cause severe illness particularly in children and the elderly. It should be assumed that all farm livestock could be carrying zoonoses such as *E coli O157* and reasonably practicable precautions should be adopted.

The current HPA advice on the removal of farm animals from any camping area to protect people from infection is at least 3 weeks prior to the event. However the Animal Gatherings Order requires a break of 28 days to safeguard animal health. You should therefore ensure that you remove farm animals from the showground and any camping areas for 28 days prior to the show. Remove visible droppings and when mowing the grass remove the clippings from the area.

For many visitors being able to get close to livestock is an integral part of their visit to an agricultural show. If you allow or encourage visitors to have access to livestock in an animal contact area you must take a number of precautions to prevent visitors contracting a variety of zoonoses including *E coli O157* and cryptosporidium from contact with animals and their faeces.

- Decide if members of the public are to be allowed to touch or stroke the livestock in a particular area and designate that area as an animal contact area.
- You can alternatively prevent visitors from contacting livestock by the use of double fencing.



- Organisers should do as much as possible to ensure members of the public do not come into contact with faeces or faecal contamination, eg, on gates, handrails etc.
- Avoid run off from manure or manure storage contaminating walkways.
- Where a manure heap is necessary this should be positioned away from public contact.
- Organisers should provide sufficient washing facilities including hot and cold or warm running water, soap and paper towels.
- If it is **impossible** to provide washing facilities with hot and cold or warm water, you can provide cold water facilities ONLY if you are operating in warm weather. You must justify this by risk assessment. See the Visitor Attraction code of practice for more detail [Further Reading].
- **Cleansing wipes or anti-Bacterial gels are not an acceptable substitute for proper hand washing facilities.** You must check what type of washing facilities are provided in hired-in units. Do not forget to make arrangements for dealing with waste water.
- Washing facilities should be positioned near to animal contact areas and eating areas. You may decide to position all the catering facilities adjacent to each other to manage the issue of public hygiene more easily.
- Signs advising members of the public to wash their hands after touching livestock and indicating the position of washing facilities should be placed at the exit to livestock contact areas and entrance to eating areas.
- The location and design of washing facilities, should be such as to encourage use by visitors, for example providing lower height sinks if you expect significant numbers of children and positioning them adjacent to the exit from animal contact areas and/or the entrance to eating areas.

The HSE publication Agricultural Information Sheet AIS 23 has been withdrawn following the publication of an industry Code of Practice. This can be viewed or downloaded for free from the Farming and Countryside Education [FACE] website.

<http://www.face-online.org.uk/resources/preventing-or-controlling-ill-health-from-animal-contact-at-visitor-attractions-industry-code-of-practice>

Some livestock exhibitors use chemicals to prepare their animals for showing. Whilst detergents and lacquers are relatively harmless some chemicals are commonly mis-used. Organisers should ensure that no chemicals such as sheep dips applied by hand sprayer are used during the show where bystanders, other exhibitors or judges are put at risk. Show rules should set out what you expect in relation to treatments used before the show with due regard for the safety of those handling the animals, eg, for veterinary inspection or judging as well as disease control.

## 20. Event Management

The following issues are discussed in detail in the current HSE Events Safety Guide [the purple book]. Although this focuses on larger events, the principles of managing the risks remain the same and you should take note of the advice given.

The current Event Safety Guide 'A guide to health, safety and welfare at music and similar events' can be purchased from HSE Books or downloaded for free from the HSE website at [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk).

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg195.htm>

### **Please note:**

The guidance was published in 1999 and has not been revised. For the latest advice on health and safety at events visit [Event safety web pages](#). Some activities mentioned in HSG195 fall outside HSE's areas of responsibility, and so do not appear on the new web pages. These activities include the provision of toilets and medical care for the audience and child protection issues.

### Crowd Safety

As high profile tragedies have showed the consequences of failing to manage crowd flow and other movements can lead to multiple fatalities. On an agricultural showground the areas where this will have the greatest safety implications are those where there is restricted space for access such as grandstands and popular exhibits or where a current celebrity is due to appear. Predicting crowd dynamics and adapting your venue to reduce risks will include considering entrance and exit size, direction of flow, crowd control barriers, slopes and stairways, signing and the likely behaviour of the crowd, eg, when a particular attraction starts. Your crowd control systems will need to take account of contingency measures such as bomb threats, adverse weather, structural failure, animal escape and fire. You should have in place an emergency plan and ensure all staff are briefed on their role in putting the plan into effect. This should be agreed in advance with the emergency services with roles and responsibilities clearly defined.

More information is available below:

Managing crowds safely (leaflet)

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg142.htm>

Managing crowds safely: A guide for organisers at events and venues (publication)

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg154.htm>

### Lost children or vulnerable adults

The organiser should ensure that there are procedures in place for lost children or lost vulnerable adults. Work with your security provider and/or stewards to ensure that everyone knows what to do in the event of someone becoming lost.

## Violence

Agricultural shows will often involve handling large amounts of cash, eg, from gate receipts. Organisers need to ensure they have appropriate security and training for those handling money to reduce risks in the event of attempted theft. This may involve seeking police advice, engaging specialist contractors, organising secure collection, storage areas, etc.

Security patrols out-of-show opening times may also be at risk. Measures to reduce those risks may include avoiding lone patrols or systems to check lone workers wellbeing.

## Off-site traffic management planning

Off-site traffic management proposals need to be planned to ensure safe and convenient site access and to minimise off site traffic disruption. Your plans should be agreed with the Police and the local highway authority.

You will need to consider the provision of, and obtain approval for, traffic signs and highway road closures. Also consider traffic marshalling, consulting with people living in the area over route changes, local parking restrictions and high visibility clothing for marshalls and stewards working in this area.

## Vehicle parking

Parking areas should be well sign-posted, designed to be filled in an organised and efficient manner and have a surface capable of withstanding the expected volume of traffic in a variety of weather conditions.

Those directing the vehicles should understand what is required of them, be adequately trained and be provided with appropriate high visibility clothing.

## First Aid

Medical cover at events can be organised in different ways, taking into account the nature of the event, the number of visitors expected and other factors, including the distance of the event from emergency hospital care, provision of higher risk activities, eg, motor sports, etc. A useful section of the current HSE Event Safety Guide provides a method of estimating how much first aid and medical cover should be provided.

Remember to include employees, volunteers and other event staff in your plans for first aid provision

## Emergency planning

You are advised to write an emergency plan for your show. This will set out how you will deal with foreseeable emergency issues that might arise, eg, animal activists arriving on site, a major fire or a bomb threat, etc.

Specific plans must be implemented for the entry and exit of emergency vehicles. These routes should be notified in advance to the emergency services and should be signposted. You should ensure that you consider what actions need to be taken in the event of a fire, either in a permanent or temporary structure or in areas of vegetation.

Again much useful information on this subject is available in the publication 'The Events Safety Guide'.

## **21. Putting your Risk Assessment into Practice**

Once you have decided what needs to be done to protect people before, during and after the event, you need to make sure that everyone involved in the show – particularly exhibitors and contractors – understands what you expect of them. One key part of this is the show rules but other elements include the information provided to drivers at the gate, show signage and advice given at the organiser's office. As well as informing others, effective application and monitoring of the practices you have decided are necessary and will require competent staff and stewards.

## **22. Show Rules**

Show rules play a critical part in communicating the expectations of organisers to exhibitors and contractors. Rule books that are turgid or in the wrong language are just as ineffective as those which are too brief. Organisers will have to decide what level of detail to include in the rules covering health and safety issues but in general they will be most effective if they address the main risk areas with practical standards and examples rather than listing legislation or giving bland descriptions of duties to do all that is 'reasonably practicable'.

## **23. Role of Stewards**

A show organiser typically relies heavily on the competence and quality of the stewards who contribute to the event. There is a fine line between exhibitors, contractors or members of the public perceiving a steward as officious or an effective measure to promote the smooth running and safety of the show. In some circumstances stewards with limited training do not have the necessary ability to ensure the organiser's intentions are met and at the same time handle potential conflict or aggression. Students, scouts or guides or simply volunteers may need careful supervision and back-up to properly control public access to certain areas of exhibitor activity.

Carry out briefings every year for your stewards; make sure that they fully understand their roles and responsibilities. It is good practice to have job descriptions for your Chief Stewards and Stewards so that any conflict in roles can be identified.

Contingency plans should be in place for emergencies and there should be a tested means of communication between stewards and their supervisors.

## **24. After the Event – Reviewing your Performance**

After the show the organiser should draw together the opinions and experience of staff, stewards, contractors and exhibitors to review health and safety performance. Consider how thoroughly the risks had been identified and whether control measures were effective. Investigate and consider the lessons learnt from near misses. Determine whether your system for communicating with contractors and exhibitors worked and what, if anything, you may need to do differently. Appraise the findings of your monitoring work to identify if, how and why people fell short of your expectations and decide your priorities for the next event.

Agricultural shows provide much enjoyment to large proportions of the general public, the agricultural community and a wide variety of other participants. The risk of being injured or becoming ill as a result of attending an agricultural show is low, but with conscientious attention to managing the risks which are present, the risks will remain low and attendance on the day will be a positive experience for all involved.

### **Further Reading**

Codes of practice related to the use of LPG in mobile catering can be found at:

<http://www.uklpg.org/shop/codes-of-practice/use-of-lpg-cylinders-the-use-of-lpg-in-mobile-catering-vehicles-and-similar-commercial-vehicles-may-2000/>

Both these codes of practice are purchasable items.

The Events Safety Guide - A guide to health, safety and welfare at music and similar events

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg195.htm>

MUTA Code of Practice

<http://www.performancetextiles.org.uk/Marquees-and-temporary-structures.aspx#11>

Visitor Attractions Industry Code of Practice

<http://www.face-online.org.uk/resources/preventing-or-controlling-ill-health-from-animal-contact-at-visitor-attractions-industry-code-of-practice>

Safety Policy statements and Risk Assessment templates

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/manage.htm>

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/risk-assessment-and-policy-template.doc>