Checklist

Safety at Commencement and Other Special Events

This checklist is designed to help higher education and K-12 institutions improve safety at events held on and off campus such as commencement exercises, reunions, sports competitions, and cultural events. Since some items may not pertain to, or be appropriate for, every campus or school, institutions should adapt the checklist to meet their specific needs. In addition, because institutions typically have less control over and access to off-campus facilities, they may indicate that a particular item is “Not Applicable” for events that are held off campus.
### A. Event Location

1. Designate the event site and determine whether construction, such as bleachers, is necessary
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

2. For buildings and areas on campus not being used for the event, limit public access through the use of locks, physical barriers, and “no trespassing” signs
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

3. Cordon off vehicle and foot traffic with cones and ropes to reduce hazards
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

4. Use yellow tape and “caution” signs to warn guests of known hazards such as potholes, speed bumps, and construction areas
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

5. Prepare for snow and ice removal, if applicable, based on institution location and season
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

6. Inspect the event site and surrounding areas for defects, debris, and other hazards several days before, immediately prior to, and repeatedly during the event, including:
   - Pedestrian walkways
     - Yes
     - No
     - Not Applicable
   - Stairwells and handrails
     - Yes
     - No
     - Not Applicable
   - Permanent and temporary seating
     - Yes
     - No
     - Not Applicable
   - Podiums, platforms, and risers
     - Yes
     - No
     - Not Applicable
   - Parking lots and driveways
     - Yes
     - No
     - Not Applicable

7. Confirm that quantity and placement of the following are sufficient for allowing unrestricted pedestrian flow for the anticipated number of guests:
   - Seating
     - Yes
     - No
     - Not Applicable
   - Walkways
     - Yes
     - No
     - Not Applicable
   - Food and beverage stations
     - Yes
     - No
     - Not Applicable
   - Trash receptacles
     - Yes
     - No
     - Not Applicable
   - Exits
     - Yes
     - No
     - Not Applicable
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Actions Needed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Ensure that pedestrian and traffic routes are clearly marked and properly lit</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Check for appropriate quantity and proper positioning of directional and cautionary signs</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Check that event lighting is adequate</td>
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<td>▪ Repair or replace defective bulbs</td>
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<td>▪ Arrange for temporary lights if necessary</td>
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<td>▪ If lights will be dimmed during the event, use appropriate foot lighting and have ushers carry flashlights</td>
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<td>B. Further Steps for Indoor Events</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Repair any defects in carpets and other flooring</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Check visibility of level change indications and improve them with reflective tape, paint, or “step up/step down” signs</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Prepare for inclement weather with sufficient numbers of nonslip mats and “wet floor” signs</td>
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<td>C. Further Steps for Outdoor Events</td>
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<td>1.</td>
<td>Check any new construction for weight-bearing capacity and structural integrity</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Inspect construction areas for nails, sawdust, or other debris</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Even if they are provided by contractors, check all bleachers, chairs, and temporary structures such as stages and platforms for weight-bearing capacity and structural integrity</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Plan and map the pedestrian traffic flow, emphasizing guest safety over preserving lawns or landscaping</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Post signs requiring the use of designated crosswalks</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Use campus security or police to direct pedestrian and vehicle traffic</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Plan for inclement weather, such as using tents or moving the event inside</td>
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### D. Event Staffing

1. Determine the number of paid and volunteer workers needed to staff the event

   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

2. For particularly large events, such as some athletic competitions, ensure that event staff includes individuals with experience or training in crowd control

   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

3. Make contingency plans to replace workers who fail to show up

   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

4. Ensure that event workers are trained in:
   - Responding to emergencies
     - Yes
     - No
     - Not Applicable
   - Handling less serious incidents or accidents
     - Yes
     - No
     - Not Applicable
   - Showing sensitivity to the needs of elderly or disabled guests
     - Yes
     - No
     - Not Applicable
   - Dealing with intoxicated guests
     - Yes
     - No
     - Not Applicable

5. Divide workers into functional teams and designate team leaders with responsibility for each team's monitoring and removal of hazards, spills, or debris during the event

   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

6. Establish a protocol for reporting problems to team leader or another employee

   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

7. Designate an institution employee to document any problems and worker responses to them

   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

8. Outfit event workers in brightly colored or otherwise distinctive uniforms

   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

9. For large events, either designate specific colors for different functions or indicate functions on the back of uniforms, such as “Security,” “Parking Attendant” or “Medical Staff”

   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

10. Require a certain number of event workers to be certified in basic first aid and CPR in accordance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration or other applicable guidelines

    - Yes
    - No
    - Not Applicable

11. Hold a post-event session with event staff to review what went well, what didn't, and how to improve future events

    - Yes
    - No
    - Not Applicable
E. Security and Emergency Response

1. Confirm that a sufficient number of security guards (institution employees or contractors) will be present
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

2. Establish and distribute to workers a list of individuals with emergency decision-making authority for the event
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

3. Determine whether the institution’s general crisis or emergency response plan will apply to the event
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

4. Obtain or create a detailed evacuation plan that identifies situations that may trigger evacuation and individuals who make evacuation decisions
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

5. Determine whether paramedics or other emergency response personnel will be present or on-call
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

6. Coordinate with local authorities, such as police and fire officials
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

7. For a particularly large or important event, stage a dress rehearsal that includes an unannounced emergency situation, such as a guest’s health crisis
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

F. Risk Transfer

1. Confirm that the institution has executed written contracts with applicable event sites, vendors, and workers
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

2. Ensure that contracts specify the parties’ respective obligations and rights
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

3. Check for indemnification language favorable to the institution
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

4. Require vendors to name the institution as an additional insured on their liability insurance policies, and obtain certificates of insurance
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

5. Have legal counsel review and approve contracts
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

G. Guest Communication and Access

1. Establish a “Frequently Asked Questions” or special page on the institution’s website for the event that includes:
   - Directions to and maps of the event site, whether on or off campus
     - Yes
     - No
     - Not Applicable
   - Large, easy-to-read diagrams showing the location of parking, restrooms, security personnel, first aid stations, water fountains, and food/beverage stations
     - Yes
     - No
     - Not Applicable
Actions Needed

- A cautionary statement if extensive walking or standing is likely
- Any limitations on physical accessibility, such as for an event held in a historical building that is not required to comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act
- Recommended clothing and footwear
- Information about typical weather and temperatures for the event date
- Lists of items that are recommended or specifically prohibited, such as pets, cameras, and portable seats
- Availability of child care
- Information about alternative venues, schedules, and activities in case of inclement weather
- Estimated driving or walking distance between campus and the site, if applicable
- Whether shuttle transportation is available to and from campus, if applicable
- Links to websites for local lodging, restaurants, and attractions
- Send guests who register in advance a “Welcome” email with further details about the event

H. Disabled Guests

1. Ensure the event’s compliance with federal, state, and local laws governing accessibility
2. Inspect the site for general ease of access by guests using wheelchairs, walkers, canes, or crutches
3. Use the event’s website to explain accommodations for disabled guests, such as mobility assistance devices or translators, and the procedure to request them in advance
4. Prepare for last-minute requests for accommodations, such as by reserving extra accessible seating
5. Make sure vehicle loading and unloading zones are close to event entrances
6. Ensure the site has an adequate number of elevators, that buttons and controls are accessible to those in wheelchairs, and that instructions are available in Braille
### I. Elderly Guests

1. **Inspect the site accompanied by several people over age 65, asking them to point out hazards**

   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

2. **For reunions and other functions at which many elderly guests are anticipated, schedule multiple activities so guests can avoid rushing between them**

   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

3. **Provide special on-campus transportation, such as shuttles or golf carts**

   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

4. **Make rental wheelchairs and walkers available**

   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

5. **Designate workers or students to escort guests around campus and offer assistance entering and exiting buildings and vehicles**

   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Applicable

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