

Risk management for safe and healthy crowded places

Speed read

- Risk is the likelihood that an incident will happen, and the consequence if one does.
- Risk management plans sit side-by-side with communication and engagement plans and incident and emergency plans, and apply before, during and after an event.
- Risk management is an ongoing process employed by all agencies involved in crowded places.

Key points

Managing risk: Establish a decision-making process; identify opportunities to reduce or manage risk (rather than on responding to emergencies that result from risk); engage with a range of stakeholders; promote partnerships; foster resource sharing and mutual aid arrangements; provide means of reducing risk; use common and accessible language.

Crowd context: The context of risk includes the surrounding economic and political environment, and may be a unique combination of weather, time of year, types of activities, suppliers, location and the history of the event / past experiences. Understand what context and environment your crowd attendees are in and understand their demographics.

Risk assessment: should be conducted systematically, iteratively and collaboratively, drawing on the knowledge and views of stakeholders. Consider:

Risk identification	Risk analysis	Risk evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify risks collectively with the community • Identify triggers that indicate the beginning of a problem • Some risks may be identified on the day • Documentation of problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify real risk and describe it accurately. • Use risk analysis formula: $\text{Risk} = \frac{\text{Likelihood – will it happen?}}{\text{Consequence – how bad is it?}}$ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare identified risks to current plans, controls and objectives, and decide what action is required. • Part of this process is to assess management's capability to deal with risk.

Responsibilities: Assign responsibilities and understand resources needed to mitigate risk e.g.:

- **organisational** – what legislation and interagency agreements exist that need to be considered or updated in relation to the event plan? What are arrangements for approval and sign-off?
- **human** – who is involved and what are their roles and responsibilities? This includes staff and volunteers. What training do they need?
- **contractual** – consider subcontractors, insurance, duty of care, safe work practice.

Risk treatment: The risk treatment process combines prevention, the likelihood of an incident, preparation and minimising the consequence of the risk. It involves reducing the possibility of a risk occurring and reducing the consequences if it does (see figure 1). Remember to document the risk treatment process.

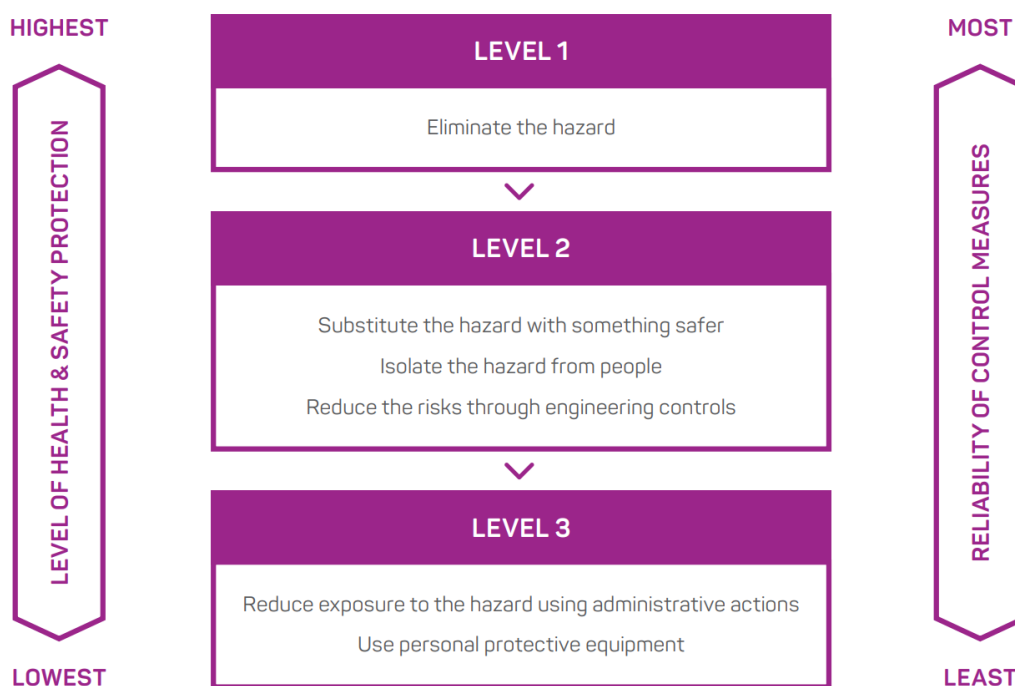


Figure 1. Risk treatment 'hierarchy of control'.

Monitoring, review and evaluation: Unforeseen risks may affect areas far from the original risk source. Establishing monitoring mechanisms is essential to the risk plan. The risk management framework also includes post-event evaluation, to evaluate how risks were handled e.g. looking at processes, meetings, documentation. Evaluating the risk management process is one way that managers can develop their resilience and ability to handle uncertainty and manage unexpected risks.

Take action

- Work out who should be involved in conversations to better understand your crowded spaces context and identify risks
- Use the [Safe and Healthy Crowded Places Checklists](#)
- Read and get to know the list of key terms used in risk management on Page 11 of the [Safe and healthy crowded places handbook](#)
- Read the Quick Guide: Key Principles and Enablers for Safe and Healthy Crowded Places

More information

- [Safe and Healthy Crowded Places](#) (AIDR 2018)
- [ISO 31000 Risk management — Guidelines](#) (ISO 2018)
- Understand [Work Health and Safety legislation](#) in your state or territory (Safe Work Australia 2024)
- [Australia's Strategy for Protecting Crowded Places from Terrorism](#) (2023)