

Communications and stakeholder engagement for safe and healthy crowded places

Speed read

- Communication includes the flow of information regarding the what, where, who and when, internally and externally.
- A stakeholder management plan is central to effective communication in crowded places.
- Consult communities and stakeholder to understand preferred and most accessible communications channels.

Key points

Integrate inclusive communication and stakeholder engagement across all areas of crowded place and event management plan before, during and after events. After an incident, management should communicate follow-up information to stakeholders after the crowd has left.

Risk assessment, incident and emergency planning and methods of communication and engagement are key inputs into your communication and engagement plan.

Stakeholders include any organisations or individuals interested in a crowded place. This can include first aid providers, emergency services, local council, media and sponsors and local communities affected by the event e.g. through traffic flow, car parks, use of facilities, strain on local services, noise and an increase in trade for local businesses.

Identify and classify stakeholders. Understand their expectations, requirements impact on the crowded place. Plan how you will engage and communicate with them and set tasks and schedules for communication and engagement.

Risk communication to stakeholders, including attendees, should also be considered before and during events. Management should include and participate in communications planning conducted by the emergency services present during the event.

On-site communication systems may consist of radios, screens, maps, mobile phones and devices, SMS broadcasts, apps, signage, announcements over a sound system, visual cues, runners, flags, visual prompts and sound systems.

Depending on the context, different levels of consultation or engagement will be appropriate in the planning processes and response phase e.g. two-way communication or broadcasting information. Stakeholders should be informed, consulted or engaged as partners. Include options for stakeholders (including the public) to ask questions, express concerns and give feedback.

External communication should foster a two-way flow of information. The type and frequency of messages will depend on crowd demographics, location, time and season. Communications before an event can provide information on: weather warnings, health suggestions, such as ‘wear sunscreen’, ‘drink plenty of water’, directions and ‘way finding’. Social media and networks are used for promotion, health and safety information and to contact attendees before, during and after an event.

Internal communication should be scalable and based on known protocols. For events, temporary internal communications measures may be adopted, and should be scalable according to the timeline. Management should agree on communication protocols and terminology e.g. common acronyms used could be provided on a list and made available to staff.

When communicating during the response phase:

- time is critical and clear terminology is vital
- constantly monitor and check communication systems, be prepared to use different systems as needed
- provide location information to guide responders on where they need to go in an emergency
- verify all information
- ensure consistent advice and information is provided to the public – ‘one source, one message’

Take action

- Check out the processes for developing a Communication and Stakeholder Engagement plan on pages 18 and 19 of [Safe and Healthy Crowded Places](#) (AIDR 2018)
- Create pre-planned messages for the response phase using [Guideline 1: Warning message construction – Choosing your words](#) (AIDR, 2021)
- Use the [Safe and Healthy Crowded Places Checklists](#)
- Read the Quick Guide: Key Principles and Enablers for Safe and Healthy Crowded Places

More information

- [Safe and Healthy Crowded Places further resources](#) has more information on managing hostile acts, guidelines and regulations for event managers, crowd psychology and crowd science, sexual assault and harassment guidelines and media coverage of incidents
- [Public Information and Warnings](#) (AIDR 2021)
- [Community Engagement for Disaster Resilience](#) (AIDR 2020)
- [Emergency Planning](#) (AIDR 2020)
- Refer to [Chapter 8 of the handbook](#) for in-depth guidance on working with first Aid, ambulance and medical services