

## Public health in crowded places

### Speed read

- Public health is concerned with the big picture of how society is organised to maximise health and well-being.
- Incorporate public health considerations into planning and maintain up-to-date knowledge on health issues that may affect attendees, staff and surrounding communities.
- Consult health services in event planning or managing crowded spaces

### Key points

#### Incident, emergency and risk management:

Public health management sits under risk management and incident and emergency processes and forms part of an overall event plan.

#### Surveillance and monitoring of public health risks and needs in crowded places

will inform how and what health risks you monitor for. Monitor to identify the root causes of and mitigate the risks associated with health issues. Assess contributing factors such as demographics, weather and event duration.

#### Health promotion is part of communication planning.

Promote self-care, personal responsibility and 'looking after your friends'. This will have a flow-on effect to the overall crowd behaviour at a site. Provide updated health advice and guidance for visitors on topics such as vaccinations, food and water safety, and emergency contact numbers.

**Legislation, regulations, codes and guidelines in each state and territory work with 'domains' of public health.** These domains describe the origin of a health risk and the measures required to prevent it and can be used as a master checklist for public health management in a crowded place. The diagram to the right outlines the management cycle for crowded spaces. Go through each step of the cycle for each domain and consult public health officials where relevant.



Figure 1. Considerations in public health

## Key public health domains include:

- free, safe and adequate water supply, including drinking water security
- food safety and defence
- sanitation requirements and waste management
- water safety
- pest control
- infectious disease prevention and investigation
- safe storage of any drugs on-site
- hand and respiratory hygiene
- standards for activities involving skin penetration, such as tattooing and body piercing
- building safety (including water bodies)
- animal control
- noise and other nuisance issues
- public health emergency management and planning.

## Take action

- Identify relevant health domains, demographics and contextual factors that shape public health planning. See the full list of health domain descriptions and considerations in Chapter 7: Public health (page 58)
- Check public health legislation and regulations in the relevant state and territory. Some public health responsibilities are local council-based, and some are public health unit-based.
- Where relevant, organise a public health audit prior to the commencement of an event, and set up ongoing public health surveillance.

## More information

- [Safe and Healthy Crowded Places further resources](#) has 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 (AIDR, 2024)
- [World Health Organisation Managing health risks during mass gatherings](#) provides detailed information on public health areas
- [Health and Disaster Management](#) (AIDR 2019)