

## Developing a Heat Management Plan for Events

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For events that held are during the summer when extreme heat may be expected, you will need to consider the potential OH&S issues that may arise and develop a Heat Management Plan, particularly for outdoor events or community festivals. All council organisations have an existing Heat Management plan or policy which can be used as a guideline to develop a plan that is relevant for your FReeZA events.

### 1. Developing a heat management plan

Your organisation's existing Heat Management plan or policy will sometimes dictate what work can be done during periods of extreme heat. These will not always provide guidelines that are suitable for events and may be more directed at other departments. However take into consideration the existing heat policy, and use it to guide you in developing risk management protocols that are relevant for FReeZA events. Document the protocols in your Heat Management Plan, or include the additional details in your Risk Assessment.

You may follow the same format as a Risk Assessment.

- Step 1: Identify the potential issue or hazard
- Step 2: Provide details of related risks, such as what could go wrong and who will be affected
- Step 3: Rate the risks on likelihood (certain – rare) and consequence (minor – major)
- Step 4: Detail the controls you intend to put into place to reduce the risk
- Step 5: Re-assess the risk level taking into account the controls to work out the risk result
- Step 6: Provide details of management tools and who is responsible for managing risk

Other sources you can consult with include speaking to other staff, first aid and security providers. Find out if your workplace has a maximum outdoor working temperature and if it applies to your volunteers and contractors. Your First Aid provider will be able to give you some tips about managing heat stress and how to prevent it, which you may want to include in your plan.

### 2. Potential heat issues and risk control measures

As with a Risk Assessment, its good practice to document the identified potential issues caused by extreme heat, their risk and the agreed control measures. You can implement several reduction and management techniques to minimize heat stress to your staff and volunteers, contractors, and patrons.

*Assess the weather in the day leading up to event*

If possible, try to make the call to move the event inside the day before, so you can contact all the performers and contractors as well as advertise the move to the public.

### *Providing adequate shade*

Is there natural shade, and how will this change throughout the day? If there is inadequate natural shade then use marquees to provide shade and protection from the elements for your staff, committee and performers. While patrons can choose to leave if it's too hot, you need to provide adequate sun protection for the people who may need to be there all day. Marquees can be used for staff and crew, production workers and equipment, and for event patrons. If you're managing a stage at a festival, ask the festival organisers to order enough marquees for your area.

### *Is there easy access to water and food?*

In a festival or community event setting, consider the location of your stage in relation to food and drink vendors. This may become a potential issue if young people are foregoing getting hydrated in order to catch the bands. One option is to consider setting up a canteen to give young people access to cold and affordable (or free) water and soft drink. You can discuss with the festival organisers to have food vans or other food services located near your area if required.

### *Providing seating*

Standing around in the heat can lead to heat exhaustion, so it's a good idea to provide seating for the committee and patrons. In addition to chairs you could use picnic blankets placed around the stage area, bean bags, stools, camp chairs, etc. Have seating available in the area where your committee and staff will be taking breaks.

### *Encourage sun smart behaviour*

For outdoor events, make provisions for sunscreen to be available. You may provide free sunscreen near your canteen area, information table, or at the entry point. If you know in advance that your event will be happening during extreme heat conditions, let your patrons know before or during the event to dress accordingly (wear a hat, etc), stay cool and hydrated.

### *Risk Reduction and Management of Heat*

The following applies to both indoor and outdoor events.

- Provide bottled water at a low cost and or provide cold tap water for free
- Close outdoor spaces and prevent access
- Provide a chill out space to allow patrons to move around and sit down outside of the main music space.
- Roster additional staff to allow for staff rotation and extra breaks.
- Roster breaks for committee members and rotate those who are in direct heat/sun.
- Where possible locate security inside or out of the sun.
- Provide cold drinks and icy poles for sale to keep patrons cool and increase blood sugars.
- Water spray bottles can be used to refresh and cool down patrons.
- Encourage patrons to remove unnecessary outer layers of clothing (jumpers, cardigans, jackets)
- Use air conditioning in all available spaces.
- Provide additional fans in major spaces to circulate air, particularly on stage.
- Brief staff, volunteers, security and first aid to watch out for patrons who may be suffering from heat exhaustion or dehydration, and what to do or where to direct them

### *Heat Related OH&S*

There are OH&S issues that you will need to take into consideration, such as increased sweat/water hazards including slipping and electrical concerns, and electrical overheating.

### 3. What happens when it's too hot?

#### *Maximum working temperatures*

Although there are no regulations specifying standards for maximum temperatures in the workplace, employers have a duty under the Victorian OH&S Act (2004) to provide a working environment that is safe and without risks to health, as far as practicable. Find out if your workplace policy specifies a maximum outdoor working temperature and if it applies to your volunteers and contractors.

#### *Duty of care for committee members, performers and contractors*

Find out what duty of care you have for committee members, performers and contractors under your organisational policy and ensure that they are not put at risk. If you can't work due to the heat, it's unfair to expect that the performers will stay and continue to perform for the sake of the event.

#### *Have a Plan B ready*

When organising to be involved in a community festival, make sure that you have an MOU or a partnership agreement that outlines that in extreme weather you cannot provide the service agreed to. Find out if there is option to move the stage inside, an adjacent hall or local business. When organising an outdoor event, if possible book a back up venue in case of extreme weather.

#### *Cancelling an event*

Sometimes you just have to cancel the event. Contact your staff, volunteers, performers, contractors and patrons to advise them of the cancellation. If patrons have purchased presale tickets then advise them of the refund process.

### 4. Communicating your Heat Management Plan

Once you have developed a Heat Management Plan (or included it in your Risk Assessment), make sure that staff and committee volunteers understand what will happen if the extreme weather occurs – plan b or cancellation. Brief them on watching out for patrons who may be suffering from heat exhaustion or dehydration, and what to do or where to direct them.

Communicate your plan to security, performers and contractors, particularly if you have a maximum working temperature that has a possibility of coming into effect. If possible, include the information in your partnership agreements.

#### Key Points

- Use your organisation's existing heat policy to guide the development of your Heat Management Plan, or include the additional details to your Risk Assessment
- Document the identified potential issues caused by extreme heat, their risk and the agreed control measures
- Implement heat reduction and management techniques
- Include the information in your partnership agreements
- Brief your staff, volunteers, performers, security, and first aid on what will happen if the extreme heat occurs, on what to look out for and how they can assist patrons

For further information, please contact The Push on (03) 9380 1277 or email [push@thepush.com.au](mailto:push@thepush.com.au)