

# Managing Festival Angels Safely

Some Health & Safety tips and important things to consider in advance and during the Festival.



Three key factors govern the safety of any group of volunteers

- The environment in which they work,
- The volunteers themselves,
- How the environment and volunteers are managed.

As an organisation Festival Angels has a **Duty of Care** for those who work with us and those we seek to serve. The task is mammoth, the challenges great, but the rewards are divinely immeasurable which is why most take it on and more want to be involved each year.

As long as Festival Angels has been in operation, each year has been different, with differing facilities and conditions, many of which are beyond our control. Volunteers we work with certainly come with differing skills and experience, each having their very own set of needs and characteristics. **Diversity is one of our collective strengths** but brings with it significant management challenges.

For most a significant mark of the Festival Angel volunteer experience is a sense of **Community**. Promoting a culture of respect, care and support does the most to offset all the hardships and personal challenges the festival presents.



## Managing Health & Safety

These notes are here to remind and help you understand the areas of responsibility we consider important in ensuring all Festival Angels have a **positive and fulfilling experience**. Much of it might be considered common sense, but it's amazing how uncommon sense can become, particularly when people are tired or simply having a good time.

Managing health and safety is an integral part of your area of responsibility. You will need to do a Risk Assessment to identify the risks in your area of work, put sensible measures in place to control them, and make sure they stay controlled.

## Planning and Preparation

Planning well before the Festival is the key to ensuring your health and safety arrangements really work. It helps you think through the actions set out in our policy and work out how they will happen in practice. **You'll also sleep better at night knowing you've got plans in place!**

You will need to consider:

- What you want to achieve e.g. how you will ensure that your volunteers and others are kept healthy and safe.
- How you will decide what might cause harm to people and whether you are doing enough or need to do more to prevent that harm.
- Who, apart from yourself, will be responsible for health and safety tasks, what they should do, when and with what results.
- How you will measure and review whether you have achieved what you set out to do.

## Festival Angel Health & Safety Policy

Festival Angels have an overall policy that **all managers are responsible** for implementing in their area of work.

Each Manager has responsibility to:

- **Prevent** accidents and cases of work-related ill health by managing the health and safety risks in the place of work.
- **Provide** clear instructions and information, and adequate training, to ensure volunteers are competent to do their work.
- **Engage** and consult with volunteers on day-to-day health and safety conditions.
- **Maintain** safe and healthy working conditions, provide and maintain plant, equipment and machinery, and ensure safe storage/use of substances.
- **Record** and submit to the Festival Director details of any accidents in their area of responsibility. This should include to whom, where, when and how the accident occurred as well as actions taken by whom, and any further action required.

## Risk Assessment

As part of managing the health and safety you must control the risks in your area of work. To do this you need to think about what might cause harm to people and decide whether you are taking **reasonable steps** to prevent that harm.

This process is known as Risk Assessment.

A Risk Assessment is not about creating huge amounts of paperwork but rather about identifying sensible measures to control the risks in your place of work.

Risk assessment will help you decide whether you have covered all you need to.



## Identify the Hazards

One of the most important aspects of your risk assessment is accurately identifying the potential hazards in your area of work. Before the Festival this will rely on knowledge and memories of previous years and the plans you have for the coming Festival.

Once on site the assessment may need adapting and additional measures put in place.

Walk around your area of work and **think about any hazards** (things that may cause harm). In other words, what is it about the activities, processes or substances used that could injure your volunteers and others or harm their health?

Here are some tips to help you identify the ones that matter:

- **Check manufacturers' instructions** or data sheets for chemicals and equipment as they can be very helpful in explaining the hazards and putting them in their true perspective.
- **Look back at any records** from previous years – these often help to identify the less obvious hazards.
- Remember to think about **long-term hazards to health** (e.g. high levels of noise or exposure to harmful substances).
- There are some hazards with a **recognised risk** of harm, for example working at height, working with hot water. Depending on the area of work, there may be other hazards that are particularly relevant.

## Who might be Harmed?

Then think how volunteers or Festival-goers might be harmed.

For each hazard you need to be clear about who might be harmed – it will help you identify the **best way of controlling the risk**. That doesn't mean listing everyone by name, but rather identifying groups of people (e.g. 'detached teams', 'servers', or 'customers').

Some volunteers may have **particular requirements**, for example new and young volunteers, new or expectant mothers, people with disabilities. Think too about people who might not be in your area of work all the time, such as volunteers 'standing in or helping out' in busy periods.

Take festival-goers into account if they could be harmed by your work activities.

If you share space or facilities with others at the festival **talk to each other** and make sure controls are in place to the benefit of all.

## Evaluate the Risks

Having identified the hazards, you then have to decide **how likely it is that harm will occur** i.e. the level of risk and what to do about it. Risk is a part of everyday life and you are not expected to eliminate all risks. What you must do is **make sure you know about the main risks** and the things you need to do to manage them responsibly. Generally, you need to do everything reasonably practicable to protect people from harm.

Your risk assessment should only **include what you could reasonably be expected to know** – you are not expected to anticipate unforeseeable risks.

Look at what you're already doing and the control measures you already have in place.

### Consider:

*Can I get rid of the hazard altogether?*

*If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is unlikely?*

**Some practical steps** you could take might include:

trying a less risky option,

preventing or restricting access to certain hazards,

organising work to reduce exposure to the hazard,

issuing protective equipment e.g. protective gloves.



Improving health and safety need not cost a lot. Failure to take simple precautions

can be very costly in more ways than one if an accident does happen.

## Record your Findings

Using the provided Festival Angel Risk Assessment **make a record of your significant findings** – the hazards, how people might be harmed by them and **what you have in place to control the risks**.

Any record produced should **be simple and focused** on controls.

The act of writing down hazards and actions will help you **Maintain your safety awareness**.

Where your volunteers move from site to site e.g. detached teams, your risk assessment may have to concentrate more on a broad range of risks that can be anticipated.

**Remember**, the greater the hazard the more robust and reliable the measures to control the risk of an injury occurring need to be.

**Regularly review** your risk assessment during the Festival.

You will need to consider:

- Have there been any significant changes?
- Are there improvements you still need to make?

- Have your volunteers spotted a problem?
- Have you learnt anything from accidents or near misses?
- Make sure your risk assessment stays up to date.

## Learning and Sharing Experience

You are required to record and submit to the Festival Director details of any accident in your area of responsibility. This should include to whom, where, when, and how, the accident occurred. Also include any actions taken by you or others, plus any further action required.

This will help draw attention to how health and safety issues might be improved either during the Festival itself or at future Festivals.

## Training and Sharing Information

Everyone who works with you need to know what is expected of them and how to work safely.

Various means of conveying this information are readily available:

- **Festival Angel Pre-festival Meetings.**
- **Volunteer Briefings via email and Facebook.**
- **Team Briefings.**

However, despite your best efforts, you can be sure that some of your volunteers do not attend meetings and do not receive and/or read briefings sent out or displayed online. Returning volunteers are some of the worst offenders as they assume they already know everything.

Therefore, it is crucial **at the beginning of any working session** that you or your appointed Team Leaders ensure each and every volunteer clearly understands anything that affects the health and safety of themselves or others.

Some volunteers may have **particular training needs**, for example:

New recruits need basic induction training in how to work safely, including arrangements for first aid, fire and evacuation.

People changing roles or taking on extra responsibilities need to know about any new health and safety implications for your particular area of work.

It is also important that new, inexperienced or young volunteers are adequately supervised.

**Effective supervision** can help you monitor the effectiveness of the training that people have received, and whether a volunteer has the necessary capacity and competence to do the job. It can be to everybody's advantage and safety, not least the volunteer, if a volunteer is moved into a role for which they are better suited.

Returning volunteers may need updating by refresher training.

Remember that if you introduce new equipment, technology or changes to previous working practices/systems, your **volunteers will need to know what the changes are** and probably why they are being made.



## First Aid

Each area of work should have some minimum first aid provision available and volunteers need to know where this is to be found. However, these are for very minor first aid needs.

Suitably qualified and trained individuals should only carry out First Aid. The Festival has full and proper First Aid facilities and First Aiders qualified to deal with almost any emergency or eventuality. Should assistance be required contact can be made through any Security personnel. Volunteers need to be made aware of this for themselves and for Festival-goers or fellow volunteers requiring assistance.

## **Emergency Procedures**

Areas of work need a plan for emergencies that can have a wider impact. Dealing with the emergency is much easier if you have already discussed the eventuality with others and have a plan in mind.

**Four particular kinds of emergency** are most relevant to the Leeds Festival.

### **Fire**

No Smoking is permissible within or directly outside any enclosed area.

In the event of fire the first concern will be the quick and ordered evacuation of the area.

To this end, any entrances and exits need to be kept unobstructed at all times. Flammable materials need to be properly managed. Discarded materials, such as empty boxes, need to be properly managed and regularly disposed of in a safe place.

You and the Volunteers need to be aware of any available fire extinguishers, but these should only be used if safe to do so.

Fire services can be summoned through Security personnel.

### **Flood**

There has previously been occasion to close at least part of a Festival Angel working area due to safety concerns resulting from flooding.

### **Power Failure**

This is of particular concern to areas that rely on power to offer a service to Festival-goers.

For safety and security reasons it may be necessary to temporarily close these areas in the event of power failure. Power failure can be reported to the Festival organisers by means of Security personnel.

### **Violence**

Physical or even verbal violence can be a particular risk to volunteers and other Festival-goers.

Security personnel are rarely very far away and should be called upon immediately to deal with any incident that will endanger or particularly upset others. Managers and volunteers may be called upon and should be ready to make a statement should it be required. A record should be kept for the Festival Angel Director. Be aware that volunteers involved in such an incident may need additional support and time to recover.

## **Electrical Safety**

You must ensure an assessment has been made of any electrical hazards, which covers:

- who could be harmed by them,
- how the level of risk has been established,
- the precautions taken to control that risk.

The risk assessment should take into consideration the type of electrical equipment used, the way in which it is used, and the environment that it is used in.

You must make sure that the electrical installation and the electrical equipment is:

- suitable for its intended use and the conditions in which it is operated, only used for its intended purpose,
- Cables, plugs, sockets and fittings must be robust enough and adequately



protected for the working environment.

Careful thought should also be given to preventing **trip hazards** due to poorly placed or secured extension and loose electrical cables.

### **Signage**

A limited amount of signage can help reinforce safety procedure. **Too much is easily overlooked.**

### **Handling Money**

Many thousands of pounds are handled through the work of Festival Angels. This poses both a **Security Risk and a Safety Risk**. Therefore, strict procedures and recording need to be in place and maintained within certain areas of work. Access to money needs to be restricted to lessen the risk of temptation. Thought needs to be given to **how & where money is kept secure** and **how it is transferred off-site** to ensure the safety of all those responsible.

### **Human Factors**

Competence, skills, personality, attitude, and risk perception vary considerably. Individual characteristics influence behaviour in complex ways. Some characteristics (such as personality) are fixed, whereas others (such as skills and attitudes) may be changed or enhanced.

With support, many Festival Angels enjoy **discovering new competencies and skills**. However, not everybody can do everything and therefore tasks need to be allocated **according to ability**. Managers and Team Leaders **need to check with volunteers** that they are comfortable with the tasks they are taking on and, if necessary, re-assign accordingly.

### **Shift Work and Fatigue**

Working (and living) at the Festival can be physically and mentally challenging.

Irregular hours of work and work patterns that include night and early morning shifts can lead to disruption of the internal body clock, sleeping difficulties and fatigue.

If **volunteers are fatigued**, they will be less alert, their reaction time will be slower, they will find it harder to concentrate and they may make poor decisions. This can lead to accidents and injuries.

Managers need to **be aware of signs of fatigue** and, if necessary, increase the number of rest breaks within a shift and/or release a volunteer early to ensure they are properly rested ready for their next shift.

If a volunteer does not present for a shift, proper enquiry should always be made as to why. There could be factors that need **attention for the well-being of the volunteer**.

If any volunteer is seriously fatigued there are resources off-site that the Festival Angel Director can access.



### **You are Not Alone!**

Given the scale of the task there are great advantages to having **Team Leaders/Shift Managers**. This arrangement will require greater and full communication between the managers to ensure agreed procedures are managed both well and consistently.

Whilst you may have undertaken personal responsibility for managing a specific area of work, this is still a shared responsibility and **we all have a responsibility to support one another**. If you are struggling in any way, you need to say so to a fellow manager or the Festival Angel Director.

