**Communications at an Event**

If there is an emergency or someone needs a hand – make sure that you have a suitable method of communication in place so that the stewards can keep in touch. A manned base is a good idea so that it is clear where people can go if there is a problem. If you have a large or major event think about a PA system, which can be useful particularly if there are any lost children, as well as announcing what is next on the programme.

To effectively manage your event use stewards or marshals and ensure that there is two way communication. Apart from very small event sites this is often done using two-way radios, but conversations can be overheard so mobile phones are used for more critical conversations. It is important to source this equipment well in advance of the event and check that it works effectively at the event site. You may also need to provide earpieces if the event or areas of the event are particularly noisy. You will also need to train marshals in the use of your communication system.

It is important to use unambiguous language and avoid acronyms and jargon where possible. Where they are necessary, provide a glossary of terms to ensure that all parties are able to interpret the information in the same way.

Pay attention to labelling features on maps and version numbers on site plans as this avoids delayed responses, misdirected resources, and communication channels being blocked with requests for clarification.

Where possible, plans should identify who is responsible for specific tasks. Consider appointing a coordinator as a single point of contact, to receive, collate, cross-check and spread information about radio-channel frequencies, call signs, phone lines, alert cascades, contact lists etc.

Everybody should be aware of who is in charge, who is providing information and instructions and by what means these will be given (radio, mobile phone, in person etc.).

Public information is a major aspect of event planning. Well-informed members of the public are less likely to be frustrated, aggressive or obstructive. Consider what information the audience will require if the event is cancelled, delayed or shortened.

**Communication channels may include**

* Publicity material and tickets
* Local media, especially local radio
* Route-marking
* Signs
* Notices, information displays
* Screens
* Face to face contact
* Emergency public announcements
* PA systems

You should also consider how information could be conveyed to sensory-impaired individuals.

**Summary of points for emergency announcements:-**

* Early warning & timely information is essential
* Factor in the time it will take for people to be persuaded that they need to take action (e.g. evacuating the event)
* Clarity and quality of announcement delivery are crucial
* Consider whether an audience may respond better to an empathy figure
* Live, directive messages are more effective than pre-recorded
* The nature of the problem should be given where possible
* Announcements should be reinforced by message displays, where possible
* Important items should be repeated and the audience advised that messages will be repeated.