

Safety Note 70

EVENTS IN THE GREAT HALL



Summary			
This Safety Note provides essential safety information for those organising an event within the Great Hall London Road Campus.			
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1 INTRODUCTION

There must always be an Event Organiser and Event Safety Coordinator who have responsibility for ensuring that all regulatory and university requirements are complied with, including risk assessment, licensing and health and safety management (see [Safety Code of Practice 33 Event Management](#))

The risks of failing to follow the correct procedures are:

- Health and safety of people in the building being put at risk
- Breaches of fire & health and safety legislation
- Conditions imposed on the premises licence being breached

2 EVENT APPROVAL

The university has a process in place to control events held on university premises. This is to ensure that each event is properly planned and managed by ensuring that a risk assessment is completed, and suitable control measures are in place by the organiser. [The event notification process](#) is managed by the Events Team and it should be noted, the event notification form and risk assessment should be submitted a minimum of 28 days before the event. Please see [Code of Practice 33:- Event Management](#) and the online Guide to Planning Your Event ([Events Guide - University of Reading](#)).

Guidance for External Event Organisers

If the event is being organised by an organisation external to the University of Reading the event organiser will be expected to liaise directly with Venue Reading regarding the provision of Safety Advice, Maintenance, Portering, Security and Catering etc. External event organisers will be required to provide their own safety coordinators, fire marshals and first aiders etc.

3 RESPONSIBILITIES

All events must have an appropriate person(s) allocated to the following roles:

Event Organiser – has overall responsibility the event. For all events the Event Organiser must:

- Be familiar with the Great Hall and any other areas being used by the event.
- Appoint an Event Safety Coordinator (which could be the organiser themselves).
- Ensure there are sufficient fire marshals on duty during the event. See Guidance below for external organisations.
- Liaise with the University Fire Safety Adviser (extension 8282), Event Safety Coordinator, and other University personnel before the event to ensure that all health, safety and fire safety requirements are specified and agreed. See Guidance below for external organisations.
- Ensure that satisfactory arrangements have been made with outside contractors for event services and supply aspects e.g. music, entertainers, sound systems etc.

- Be continuously present and remain sober throughout the event.
- Be prepared and able to cancel the event at any time leading up to or during the event if:
 - a) The agreed safety and fire safety aspects are not implemented, maintained or used as agreed.
 - b) Permission is refused as part of the internal Event Approval process.
 - c) Procedures as required by the Event Safety Coordinator or by any other person acting on behalf of the University e.g. Security or Health & Safety Services are not being followed.

In addition to the general responsibilities set out above, for internally organised events, the Event Organiser must:

- Where required, apply for event approval from the University using the [Event Notification Process](#).
- Attend to any relevant licensing requirements, N.B there are limits on the number of Temporary Event Notices (TENs) permitted for any single location in a year, therefore clarification should be sought from Venue Reading before applying for any TENs.
- Ensure that an adequate risk assessment has been prepared.

3.1 Event Safety Coordinator

All events must have an appropriate person to act as the Event Safety Coordinator

The Event Safety Coordinator has responsibility for the health, safety (including fire safety) and welfare of the event. The Event Safety Coordinator must be a responsible member of academic/ administrative or technical staff and may be combined with the role of Event Organiser. For events organised by Reading Student Union the Event Safety Coordinator should be a senior employee of the Union or their nominee.

The Event Safety Coordinator should liaise with the Event Organiser and other university departments and outside organisations as required. For all events the Event Safety Coordinator must:

- Prepare a risk assessment – see [Templates & Examples](#).
- As required, liaise with the University Health & Safety Services (extension 8888) the Event Organiser prior to the event to ensure that all health, safety and fire safety requirements are specified and agreed, and other relevant university departments such as Corporate Communications and Estates.
- Ensure that any health & safety, security, fire-safety or other licensing requirements are followed, including occupancy numbers.
- Ensure that arrangements are made to confirm the safety of equipment brought onto the premises for the event e.g. music systems, catering equipment and portable electrical appliances – electrical cables liable to be walked on should be protected with appropriate coverings to mitigate the risks of damage and trip hazards.
- Be continuously present and remain sober and clear-minded throughout the event. A Deputy Event Safety Coordinator(s) may need to be appointed to ensure a continuous presence throughout the event.
- Be prepared to instruct the Event Organiser to cancel the event for

serious breaches of any safety requirements or other unsafe conditions identified.

- Check with the Event Organiser to ensure the premises are cleaned after the event.

3.2 University Assistance

3.2.1 Estates Staff

Upon request the Estates staff will provide advice on the Great Hall services such as electrical power supplies and IT facilities. Estates are responsible for the erection of the stage wheelchair access ramp should it be required for the event. Contact them on fm@reading.ac.uk or telephone (0)118 378 8958

3.2.2 DTS Staff

Upon request DTS staff will provide IT facilities and advice. Contact them on dts@reading.ac.uk or telephone (0)118 378 6262

3.2.3 Porter Staff

Upon request University Porter Staff will support the event by:

- Unlocking and locking of the Great Hall.
- Seating layouts including the setting out of seats both in the auditorium and on the stage.
- Switching on and off the lighting.

Please see [Portering Services](#) for contact details and more information on the services provided.

3.2.4 Security Staff

Upon request University Security Staff may provide back-up support and will advise should an external security company need to be engaged. The person making the booking is responsible for ensuring that the security company to be contracted meets all legislative requirements in accordance with the Private Security Industry Act 2001. For more information on the services provided by Security and contact details please see [Security Services](#)

3.2.5 Health & Safety Services

Upon request Health and Safety Services will provide health and safety advice with regard to event management, location, food safety, fire safety and high risk activities. For more information on the services provided by H&SS and contact details please see [Health & Safety Services](#).

3.2.6 Catering Services

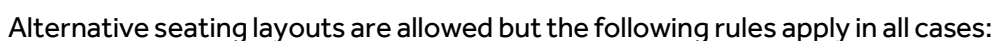
Catering Services should be used to supply foods to university events where High Risk foods are provided – see [CoP 29 Food Safety & Hygiene](#) Alternatively, an approved University supplier can be used. Health and Safety Services should be contacted to seek approval for any other supplier if there is a valid reason why

The Great Hall is licensed by the local authority as a place of assembly for up to 600 people standing and 500 seated.

During Graduation Ceremonies an additional 125 people may be on the stage. It may be possible to increase numbers on the stage by extending the stage however any increase in numbers on the stage should be discussed with the university Fire Safety Adviser. It is acceptable that children under the age of three can be carried into the hall by their parents. All children over the age of three must occupy seats. All children under the age of 16 must be supervised by a suitable adult at all times.

4.1 Seating

An acceptable seating plan is shown below:



- No seat should be more than seven seats away from a gangway.
- Seating must be secured together in lengths not less than four seats and not more than twelve seats.
- There must be a clear space of at least 305mm between the back of one seat and the front of the seat behind it.
- Gangways must be adequate for the number of seats served and at least 1.05m wide.
- There must not be any loose seating introduced into the shaded areas and gangways should be signed 'KEEP CLEAR'

5 SAFETY IN THE BUILDING

It is the responsibility of the University of Reading to provide a safe, secure, and well managed building. Those arranging an event within the Great Hall have a responsibility to ensure the event is planned safely for all those involved.

6 FIRE WARDENS

The Event Organiser is responsible for ensuring there is suitable fire procedure and enough Fire Wardens throughout the event to manage a safe and orderly evacuation in the event of a fire or fire alarm activation. [Fire Safety Induction/Refresher Training](#), [Fire Warden](#) and [Fire Evacuation Officer](#) e-Learning is available on UoRLearn for university staff.

Generally the number of fire marshals should not be less than two for the first 100 people plus one for each additional 100 people. Fire Wardens must:

- Be familiar with the fire procedures and their actions to take in the event of a fire.
- In the event of a fire / fire alarm be identified by a yellow Hi-viz jacket.
- Be familiar with all fire evacuation routes and the Fire Assembly Point.
- Ensure all available fire exit doors are opened and that people are directed to the nearest, safe available fire exit.
- Be familiar with the occupancy numbers and use crowd monitoring equipment such as counters if required to ensure no overcrowding occurs.
- Ensure gangways and exits are always kept clear.

7 FIRE ALARM SYSTEM

On hearing the fire alarm which is a two tone siren, the building must be fully evacuated.

The main hall does not have automatic fire detection therefore it is important in the event of a fire in this area the manual break glass call point, located adjacent to all fire exits, is used to raise the fire alarm.

The back of stage and basement areas are fitted with automatic smoke detection which will detect fire and raise the fire alarm automatically in the event of a fire. If a fire is identified in these areas before the fire alarm sounds, use a break glass call point to raise the fire alarm.

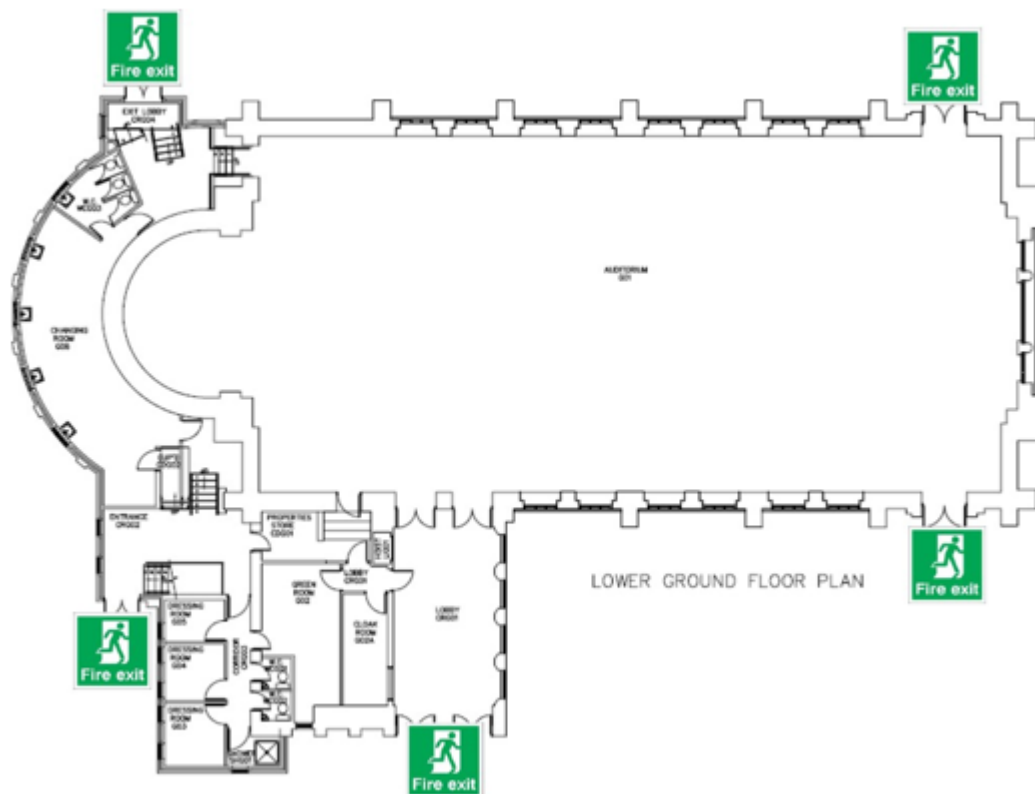
Security Services will automatically be notified of any fire alarm activation and will immediately attend to investigate the cause of the fire alarm activation.

Cosmetic smoke should not be used within the Great Hall.

8 FIRE EXITS

Event organisers must familiarise themselves with the locations of all fire exits prior to the event.

All fire exits identified on the plan below, including the external means of escape routes, must be checked immediately prior to the event to ensure they are clear of obstructions, easily opened and maintained available for use at all times the building is occupied.



9 FIRE ASSEMBLY POINT

The Fire Assembly Point for the Great Hall is located in the car park indicated on the plan below.



10 FIRE DOORS

There are several fire doors in the building, doors identified as fire doors with signs similar to those below must not be wedged open.



11 FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Fire extinguishers are located adjacent to all fire exits from the building.

The Event Safety Co-Ordinator and Fire Wardens should familiarise themselves with the location, type and operating instructions of the fire extinguishers.

Fire extinguishers must not be obstructed, covered, or moved.

12 GENERAL FIRE HAZARDS

Fire hazards must not be introduced into the Great Hall including:

- Cooking must not take place inside the Great Hall
- All portable electrical equipment must be in good condition and display an appropriate in-date test sticker.
- Only sufficient paper and cardboard for the event should be brought into the Great Hall with excessive material stored elsewhere.
- Smoking and vaping are prohibited within the Great Hall,
- Candles should not be used unless agreed by the university Fire Safety Adviser.

Health and Safety Services
Extension 8888

Email: firesafety@reading.ac.uk - Contact: David Sharp (University Fire Safety Adviser)