

Risk management – FAQs

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Risk banding

- **An event seems to sit between risk bandings. What should we do?**
Always err on the cautious side and upgrade the risk banding.
- **When does a Green event become a Blue event?**
If the event organisers have any role in a 'control' sense, for example altering layout or setting up equipment, then it becomes a Blue event. The Blue event checklist ensures that suitable checks are undertaken prior to and during the event set-up.
- **When does a Blue event become a Red event?**
If there are experiments or demonstrations taking place involving potentially hazardous, explosive or deflagrating substances, then this is certainly a Red event. Where young people are involved, heightened assessment is required, which is likely to mean that all demonstration / practical work involving them should normally be classified as a Red event.

Completing risk assessments

- **Can I re-use last year's completed forms?**
No. Complete a new form for each event but by all means re-use information from previous forms as long as these are suitably amended, where appropriate, to take account of changed circumstances.
- **We are organising the same event at a number of different venues. Do I have to complete separate Red event forms for each venue?**
Technically, yes. This is because every venue has the potential to be different. Consequently these differences need to be taken into consideration. However, where there are no significant differences then a single form that includes details of all the dates/venues will suffice.
- **Who is responsible for completing and signing the declaration form?**
The organiser(s) of the event are responsible for ensuring a risk assessment has taken place and sending in the declaration to us for Red events. In the case of events organised by Royal Society of Chemistry Local Sections, Interest Groups and other member groups, this will likely involve the chairs/leaders of the respective group.
- **We sometimes have to observe procedures set by the host venue that we use and complete their documentation. Do I also have to complete the Royal Society of Chemistry forms?**
If it is a Red event then an appropriate and sufficient risk assessment must be carried out and a completed declaration form sent in to us. However, as long as their documentation fulfils the Royal Society of Chemistry assessment requirements, and includes the essential details (such as title, date, venue, and organiser), it isn't necessary to use our templates. A copy must still be retained.

- By completing a risk assessment, do I become liable if something happens that I didn't foresee?**

Completing the forms isn't a legal requirement, but carrying out a suitable risk assessment is. If you don't complete the forms you may find it difficult to demonstrate that a suitable and sufficient risk assessment had in fact been carried out.

In the event of an accident or incident, the completed form(s) will demonstrate that you have followed our approved practice and taken reasonable steps to mitigate foreseeable risk.
- Do forms have to be signed by the chair of the Local Section/Interest Group etc?**

No. The signatory should be the person who has completed the form.
- Does it have to be the same person in the organising group (eg Local Section, Interest Group) that completes the forms for all the events?**

No. Many groups distribute the responsibilities for organising events around their members to ease the individual workload. It is advisable that the person with most control over the event and who is competent in assessing risks should undertake the assessment.
- We are simply sponsoring an event and aren't involved in its organisation. As a sponsor, the event features the Royal Society of Chemistry logo. Do we need to complete a risk assessment?**

If we are the primary sponsor for a Red event, we still ask that you send in a declaration form stating that a suitable and sufficient Risk Assessment has been carried out.

Although it is the responsibility of the organisers to carry out the risk assessment, we advise you to check that a suitable and sufficient assessment has been carried out and inform us of this through completing the Red event declaration form.
- We are putting on a joint event with another organisation. Who is responsible for carrying out the Risk Assessment?**

Whoever has the main role/control in the organisation of the event should complete the risk assessment. We ask that the risk assessor follows our procedures, including sending in the declaration form for a Red event.

From our perspective, where we are involved we need to be sure that a suitable and sufficient assessment has been undertaken.
- If suitable and sufficient risk assessment/management is carried out for an event, does it matter if the Royal Society of Chemistry forms are filled in?**

Yes. It is important that the declaration form is sent in for any Red event that includes our brand ie The Royal Society of Chemistry name or logo. The risk assessment can be carried out using any template or methodology that appropriately assesses and manages the risks.
- We organise only lecture type events, as opposed to demonstration lectures, within our local university, so is the risk management process excessive?**

No. There is a legal requirement to carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessment. Our forms and templates are a relatively simple approach to achieving this and the risk banding approach means that for such relatively low risk events their completion isn't disproportionately time consuming.
- We have booked an external presenter for a practical activity. Who should complete the Red event forms.**

You, as the organiser, are responsible for ensuring that the external presenter completes a risk assessment for the practical activity. The presenter should send the completed assessment to you, enabling you to complete and send the declaration form to us.
- Despite reminders, a presenter we have booked for a series of demonstrations hasn't sent us a completed risk assessment and the two-week deadline has passed. What do we do?**

Advise us of the situation. You can't complete the risk assessment process until you are confident that risk has been appropriately assessed.

If, on the day itself, if the risk assessment hasn't been completed, then, before the event goes ahead, you must assess the arrangements yourself and make a judgment as to their suitability and sufficiency and whether or not the event can proceed safely.

Make sure that you keep a comprehensive written record of all the agreed experimental protocols.

- **Do I need to check insurance certificates when I book a venue, or arrange travel?**

No, but do make sure that you use reputable companies for which it would be reasonable to assume that they had fulfilled all their legal requirements.

Submitting forms

- **What happens if we don't submit the Red event declaration forms on time?**

We could ask for the event to be cancelled if we aren't confident that a risk assessment is being carried out. However, in reality, we would try and work with you to ensure that a suitable and sufficient risk assessment is undertaken before the event.

- **Will I get a reminder to send in any necessary 'declaration form'?**

There is no automatic reminder for the declaration.

- **Do I have to keep sending in completed declaration forms for repeat Red events when I sent in one earlier in the year and only the date has changed?**

Yes, but, as long as there are no significant differences, it is only necessary to advise us of the details of the event referring to the previous form(s).

- **What will happen if a group persistently doesn't complete and/or submit the necessary risk assessment procedures?**

We could withdraw group's right to hold Royal Society of Chemistry events and associated insurance cover.

- **Should I check the details of a Red event risk assessment submitted to me by an external presenter before submitting the Red event declaration form to the Royal Society of Chemistry?**

Yes, but it is accepted that certain assumptions may be made regarding the competency of the presenter if they are endorsed or recognised by the Royal Society of Chemistry. You should ask the presenter questions about the assessment should you have any doubts.

Accidents & incidents

- **In the event of an accident, does the Royal Society of Chemistry provide insurance cover?**

Yes. Any event carried out under the Royal Society of Chemistry banner is fully insured including appropriate personal accident and public liability cover.

- **There has been a serious accident at our event. An investigation has shown that the risk assessment of the experimental work completed by an external demonstrator was flawed. I signed the form submitted to the Royal Society of Chemistry, so will I be held liable?**

The Royal Society of Chemistry would seek to assume vicarious liability/responsibility for the actions of all individuals whom it 'employs' other than for actions that could subsequently be deemed 'individually reckless'.