

Health and Safety at NZCF events

The new Health & Safety at Work Act (HSAW) came into effect on 4 April 2016 and has implications for all workplaces, including those run by volunteers. The aim of the HSW Act is to reduce the NZ's poor record of workplace injuries and improve the health of workers.

It requires people in charge of a business or other type of undertaking to properly assess risks and hazards created by their activities and to remove or minimise them where possible. The HSW Act sets out the processes to be followed to identify risks, sets up a procedure for the involvement of workers in the management of health and safety, and establishes higher penalties and more active enforcement by WorkSafe.

NZCF takes the aims and responsibilities of the Act seriously. We will support member choirs and NZCF regional committees as they adapt to this new way of thinking about health and safety.

At all NZCF events, the local NZCF committee headed by the Event Coordinator should take the following steps:

Preparation

- 1) When booking a venue, ask for the venue's Health & Safety policy document and review it. Identify any potential issues.
- 2) Visit the venue in advance of the event and ask the venue manager to guide you through all areas that will be used by participants and audience. Present any issues raised in your review.
- 3) Identify any hazards e.g. orchestra pit, scaffolding, work being carried out. Document these hazards for briefing volunteers closer to the time of the event. Ask the venue what steps can be taken to mitigate the risks caused by these hazards.
- 4) Ask the venue about their emergency procedures.

On the day

- 4) Brief volunteers and participants on any hazards as well as emergency procedures in advance. Assign roles for marshals as required.
- 5) Ensure that no exits are blocked by items brought in for the event e.g. musical instruments or risers.
- 6) At the beginning of the sessions, carry out a briefing to the audience and participants. This may be a standard message provided by the venue or something along these lines:

Welcome to (venue). In the event of any emergency, the alarms will sound (if relevant) and you will be led from your seats by our staff. The exits are situated here (show) and the assembly point is (location). Please do not panic and move in an orderly fashion.

In general:

- REVIEW your current Health & Safety practices: take time to think through your regular practices. Think about people, equipment, and environments
- IDENTIFY what your key health & safety risks are

- ASK QUESTIONS – involve workers and the other businesses - choir / venue : Encourage people to speak up
- IMPLEMENT appropriate controls
- EMBED H&S into our culture. This isn't just the law, it's good practice and the right thing to do.

Additional resources

Here is a good [summary of charities and volunteer associations' obligations](#) under the Act.

The WorkSafe NZ website is a good resource, including at these links:

[WorkSafe mythbusting – clear fact sheets about volunteer-based organisations](#)

[WorkSafe video presentation \(about 25 minutes long\)](#)

This is an excellent and easy to read article about the law in relation to Volunteers and Charities:

<http://www.prlaw.co.nz/article/193/111/Health-Safety-Law-for-Volunteers-and-Charities/>

Updated 2 June 2016.