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The Scottish Poppy Appeal Volunteer Organiser's Guide to

RISK ASSESSMENT

Poppyscotland has a responsibility to ensure that volunteers are kept safe whilst undertaking their role. Risk assessment means taking a systematic approach to looking at what could cause harm to people and minimising all possible risks. As a Volunteer Organiser, you act as Poppyscotland's representative in your area. It is important that you understand how to assess and reduce risk in your area of volunteering.

Definitions:

Risk assessment

A risk assessment is a careful examination of what, in your work or volunteering, could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm.

Hazard

A hazard is anything with the potential to cause harm to a person (exposed electrical wire, slippery floor, uneven paving, heavy traffic etc.)

Risk

A risk is the chance, high or low, that somebody could be harmed by a hazard, together with an indication of how serious the harm could be.

How to complete a risk assessment:

Completing a risk assessment doesn't need to be complicated. As each of the following steps are carried out, a Poppyscotland risk assessment record should be completed. An example generic risk assessment record is included as part of this guide and you can download a blank version from www.poppyscotland.org.uk/volunteer-guide.

The Health and Safety Executive recommend the following 5 steps:

Step 1 – Look for the hazards

Walk around the location to be used and look afresh at what could reasonably be expected to cause harm. Read any instructions/regulations available from venue management, owners or operators. Consult/liaise with the police and local authority in the case of public venue. Use the following examples as a guide:

- Slipping/tripping hazards (stairs, floor coverings, paving stones, cables, kerb stones);
- Acommodation (suitability for event, adequate space, obstructions);
- Access (assessable, obstructions, locked, clearly marked, wheelchairs);
- Seating (comfort, adequate capacity, in good repair);
- Lighting (enough, safe, height/clearance for standards);
- Temperature (too warm, too cold);
- Vehicle traffic (people and traffic do not mix, police advice, parking facilities);
- Overhead hazards (trees, cables, bridges, signs, weather);
- Security requirements (police advice, VIP/visitors, security threat);
- Locked/unlocked/guarded door policy, search policy;
- Manual handling (is assistance required? Could it be avoided?).

Step 2 – Decide who might be harmed and how

There is no need to list individuals by name, just think about the groups of people who will be involved in the activity or who may, inadvertently, become involved. Record the group who may be affected against the hazards listed, for example:

- Event participants
- Poppyscotland volunteers and staff
- Visitors/audience
- General public/incidental onlookers
- Venue staff/maintenance /cleaners
- Contractors/delivery personnel
- Youth Groups (Cadet Forces, Guides etc)
- Pregnant women
- Elderly and infirm
- Disabled/wheelchair users

Step 3 – Evaluate the risks and decide whether existing precautions are adequate, or if more should be done

Consider how likely it is that each hazard could cause harm and which hazards will cause most harm – in other words, the hazards that must be dealt with as a priority. The law states that we must do what is reasonably practicable to make your event safe for everybody. Therefore, your real aim in Step 3 is to remove the risk from all hazards or make the risk as small as possible by taking reasonable precautions. So, take the following action:

- Draw up an action list and group the hazards (from Step 1) into priority using the categories
  - High, Medium and Low.
- Consider each hazard and ask yourself two questions:
  - Can I remove the hazard? If the answer is yes, take the necessary action and record the action taken in the risk assessment.
  - If not, can I control the risk?
- To control the risk, apply the principles
  - Try a less risky option (change venue, time, date etc).
  - Prevent access to the hazard (screen off, cover up, lock access, re-route the event etc).
  - Reduce exposure to the hazard (temporary repair, repair, re-route the event, etc).
  - Create an alternative plan (wet weather programme).

Step 4 – Record your findings

You must log your findings and action(s) taken in your risk assessment record. This means recording the significant hazards, points considered, conclusions and action taken.

Your record should show:

- that a proper check was undertaken;
- you considered who might be affected;
- you dealt with all the obvious and significant hazards;
- that the precautions taken are reasonable and the remaining risk is low.

Step 5 – Review your assessment and if necessary, revise

Keep your risk assessment record for future reference and to provide to groups and voluneteers who support you. Should the event be held regularly, the record will help you or other organisers to complete future risk assessments. Every assessment should be approached through fresh eyes; a revision of any previous hazard consideration must be undertaken as conditions continually change.

Assessing risk in your area

We have included an example generic risk assessment record as part of this guide, with a blank version available to download from www.poppyscotland.org.uk/volunteer-guide.

The Volunteer's guide to Staying Safe should be provided to everyone who supports Poppyscotland. This pocket guide will support you and your volunteers to consider and reduce risk.

If you require any support with assessing risk, please contact us on volunteer@poppyscotland.org.uk.

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Poppyscotland Volunteer Risk Assessment Record
Generic Poppy Appeal Collection - Example

Hazard	High	Med	Low	Control measure, to reduce risk
Cash handling and counting				
Attempted attack / theft of small amounts of cash or promotional items from collection points or stalls / marquees			•	Cash collected in sealed containers. Containers in possession of persons, not left unattended Regular collections of cash and transfer to safe storage / bank Put in place rota for collection of tins and communicate this to street collectors in pre-collection briefing.
Attack / theft whilst in charge of sums of cash – transporting cash from collection location to safe storage on foot.			•	Collections and on foot transfers done with minimum of two persons. Person(s) nominated to monitor and manage transit of cash.
Staff / volunteers retrieving and carrying full tins from collectors - Manual Handling with potential for injury.			•	Manual handling advice to be included in pre-event briefing
Staff / volunteers retrieving full tins from collectors and transported by vehicle - Road Traffic incident during transit			•	Routes planned and plan shared with family member in advance of collection.
Use of premises / structures during the day.				
Use of temporary premises – unknown site-specific risks i.e. slips and trips; fire evacuation; electrical and gas installations.			•	Inspection of proposed temporary venues by Volunteer Organiser. Brief from venue staff to be cascaded to all Volunteers. Pre-collection briefing on evacuation, identified location hazards and person in charge to be included in pre-event briefing.
Erection of marquees / stalls / A boards / flags etc. – manual handling; affected by adverse weather; creation of trip hazards.		•		Equipment to be used, trained / competent person in charge of use and erection, location of equipment identified in advance. Person nominated to monitor such equipment during the day and to act in event of deterioration of weather conditions.
Collections on the street and in buildings (excluding personal safety).				
Volunteers and collectors exposed to adverse weather conditions for excessive periods.		•		Volunteers provided with advice in advance on personal requirement to monitor weather conditions wear / bring appropriate clothing. Include in pre-collection briefing information on personal responsibility to withdraw from outside in event of adverse weather conditions. Should adverse weather increase risk to participants, Organiser to adapt withdraw from activity.
Slips and trips on pavements, public highway; on entrances to buildings and when entering building to drop off/collect tins.		•		Volunteers and staff provided with advice in advance on appropriate footwear, personal responsibility to be aware of own surroundings. Cadet or youth groups supervised by person with responsibility to monitor surroundings, access and egress and behaviour of cadets and youth groups. Briefing to include reminders on need to monitor surroundings during collections.

Use and movement of people (including personal safety)				
Lone collector in a public area – potential for violence and aggression.			•	No lone collectors located in public venues (stations; shopping centres; parks; car parks etc.) Military groups locations to pre -notify Civilian Police. Nominated Officer (or other person) in command of collecting groups responsible for monitoring situation and withdrawing group to safe location in event of trouble.
Physical or verbal abuse by those under influence of alcohol or for racial reasons.			•	As above.
Physical or cognitive inability of collectors working in challenging environments – standing for long periods of time; cold temperatures / precipitation.			•	Volunteers and staff provided with advice in advance on personal requirement to withdraw and take regular rest breaks.
Safety or security threat – inability to proceed with in the event of a forewarning of a credible targeted threat.			•	Internal spaces – obtain / agree evacuation strategy with venue management Volunteers to be informed of need for vigilance and plan for a 'safe' meeting point in the event of a security threat. Volunteers to prioritise personal safety.

Volunteer Organiser Name		Date of Risk Assessment	
PA Area Name		PA Area External Reference	

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