

Events Industry Council

Risk Management Guidebook



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-  **Our mission:** EIC is the global voice of the business events industry on advocacy, research, professional recognition and standards.
 -  **Our vision:** Enriching lives and driving economic growth through the power of events worldwide.
 -  **Our values:** Ethical, Transparent, Inclusive, Innovative, Responsible.
 -  **Our members:** The Events Industry Council's 30+ member organisations represent more than 103,500 individuals and 19,500 firms and properties involved in the events industry globally.
-  **EIC Signature Programmes:**

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knowledge

leadership

Event Risk Management Guidebook

Adapted from the Events Industry Council Manual, 9th Edition.

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Foreword

24 June 2021

While our industry continues to weather the knowns and unknowns related to COVID-19, we know with certainty that we remain committed as global business event professionals to sound risk management, analysis and preparation. As part of our commitment to building back stronger and being our own best advocate, we must remind ourselves and those outside of our industry such as policy makers that this expertise and commitment is not a response to the challenges we've faced since the onset of the global pandemic, rather, an activation of a long-held dedication to duty of care for our workforce, our participants, and the communities we serve. As with any test, we need to listen to our teachers and mentors, investigate for facts and ask for help when needed. We should approach the moment with humility and empathy, and with confidence in knowing that we have done our due diligence as professionals committed to excellence, creating safe and engaging experience and with the utmost care for those we serve globally.

The Events Industry Council's 30+ member organisations represent over 100,000 event professionals worldwide. We stand together, committed to providing timely and relevant educational resources for the communities we serve.



We are releasing this updated version of the EIC Manual 9th Edition's Risk Management chapter as a workbook for you to use in examining your preparedness for emergencies or crises that your organisation may face now or in the future.

Special thanks to Tyra Warner, PhD, JD, CMP, the principal author of this guidebook for her ongoing service to our industry and our workforce. We are indeed better for her incredible leadership!

Amy Calvert
Chief Executive Officer
Events Industry Council

What is a risk? What is risk management?

This workbook has been adapted from the Events Industry Council Manual, 9th Edition. The original chapter was contributed by Tyra Warner, PhD, JD, CMP and was reviewed by Paul Cook.

Risk management, as applied to the events industry, is the ongoing process of assessing the risks that may threaten attendees, the meeting or event itself, the organiser, or partner-suppliers, and applying the appropriate measures to manage the probability and consequences of such risks. The term “risk” refers only to the possibility that something may occur and not to the occurrence itself. So for example, there is a *risk* that an *emergency*, *crisis*, or *disaster* may occur.

This workbook is devoted to serious emergencies, crises, or disasters that may threaten life, health, property, or financial viability of a meeting, business, or organisation. It does not address minor inconveniences such as running out of asparagus on the buffet or having the bulb on the projector go out in the middle of a session. It does apply to things like natural disasters, political unrest, assault on persons, building collapses, power outages, or similar major occurrences. For simplicity, we will call them all “crises” in this workbook, although each has a unique definition as you will see below.

Important Terminology¹

Business Continuity	The capability of the organisation to continue delivery of products or services at acceptable predefined levels following a disruptive incident.
Emergency	Any incident, whether natural, technological, or human-caused, that requires responsive action to protect life or property.
Crisis	Abnormal and unstable situation that threatens the organisation’s strategic objectives, reputation or viability.
Disaster	Situation where widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses have occurred which exceeded the ability of the affected organisation, community or society to respond and recover using its own resources.

Stages of a Crisis, Emergency or Disaster

There are four basic stages in any crisis, emergency, or disaster: (1) mitigation, (2) preparedness, (3) response, and (4) recovery (Mileti, 1999).

¹ Source: Disaster Recovery Journal Glossary: <https://www.drj.com/resources/tools/glossary-2.html>

Figure 1. Four Stages of a Crisis, Emergency, or Disaster.



These stages are generally presented in a circular fashion to show how each stage flows into the next because crisis management is an ongoing process and not a one-time activity. Most of what is addressed in this workbook-- including measures like writing a risk management plan, buying insurance, or hiring security—fall into the **Mitigation** and **Preparedness** stages of the above diagram. It is having these elements in place, regularly reviewed and updated based on changes in the environment, politics, the meeting, the organisations involved, and many other factors, that allow for a quick and effective **Response** and **Recovery** when a crisis does occur.

Mitigation is putting measures into place that will either reduce the likelihood of a crisis occurring at all or reducing the consequences if it does occur. So a mitigation measure might be having a contract for an indoor venue as a contingency plan in case your outdoor venue gets rained out. It might also be deciding not to choose a destination whose political climate leads you to believe it might disrupt your meeting.

Steps of Risk Management Planning

A risk management plan involves the following five steps:



Step 1: Identifying Risks

Risk assessment (or risk identification) is the process of identifying the risks specific to the destination, meeting or business event being planned. This is the point at which the meeting professional creates a list of all of the risks associated with his or her meeting, facility, or business.

The first step in risk assessment is to consider how various aspects of a meeting or event may invite risk. That is, what vulnerabilities are inherent in the meeting or event based on factors such as destination, venue, programme, participants, and so on? The chart below gives some examples. For any particular meeting or event, there may be more meeting aspects to consider and each may have different risks, so this process must be undertaken for each meeting and for each individual instance of a recurring meeting.

Table 1. Risk Assessment Example.

Meeting Aspect	Risk (or vulnerability)
Destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choosing a destination known for political instability • Visas required for most attendees to travel to the destination • Destination is currently experiencing a high rate of new infections in a health crisis
Venue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City centre location has history of crime against tourists • Resort remotely located and minimum two hours from nearest hospital • Several other groups in the convention centre, including one that may be a protest target
Attendees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy drinkers • Elderly group • Youth programme
Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political speaker may draw negative press, picketers • Fun run or other physical programme may create health & safety risk
Other?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human rights record of destination conflicts with organisers' commitment to social responsibility

The risk assessment process must consider both internal vulnerabilities and external threats. Table 1 illustrates some of each.

Workbook Activity 1: Risk Identification

Complete the following risk identification table based on your own event.

Meeting Aspect	Risk (or vulnerability)
Destination	•
Venue	•
Attendees	•
Programme	•
Other?	•

SWOT Analysis

Another way to undertake this process might be to use a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis. When conducting a SWOT analysis, strengths and weaknesses are internal to the meeting or event itself, so include factors pertaining to the host organisation, the programme, the participants, and other stakeholders. Opportunities and threats are external to the meeting or event, so would include elements related to the destination, venue, or other groups.

Either the risk assessment or the SWOT analysis will yield similar results regarding the risks. The advantage to the SWOT analysis is that it also provides an opportunity for meeting and event professionals to consider what *mitigation* measures they have in place. That is, what are their internal capabilities and which will help reduce the likelihood of a crisis occurring or reduce the severity of the consequences if it does occur. Table 2 provides an example of a SWOT analysis.

In some sense, this combines risk assessment with the beginning of the *risk analysis* phase of the process (see next section). Meeting professionals should use whichever method makes the most sense to them.

Table 2. SWOT Analysis Example.

Strengths (internal)	Weaknesses (internal)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ample planning time to inform attendees about the need for visa for travel • International attendees who are savvy about travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy drinkers • Elderly group • Youth programme • Political speaker may draw negative press, picketers • Fun run or other physical programme may create injury risk
Opportunities (external)	Threats (external)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Venue staff is trained in appropriate alcoholic beverage service protocols • Destination management company communicates which other groups may be meeting in the city or venue at the same time • Venue has on-site medical doctor/nurse and clinic • City centre location so off-site events can be held nearby; attendees won't walk long distances at night 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choosing destination known for political instability • Visas required for most attendees to travel to the destination • City centre location has history of crime against tourists • Several other groups in the convention centre, including one that may be a protest target • Destination lacks hospital capacity for projected epidemic or pandemic surge



Workbook Activity 2: SWOT Analysis

Complete the following SWOT Analysis based on your own event.

Strengths (internal)	Weaknesses (internal)
Opportunities (external)	Threats (external)

International standards for managing risk

The international standards for managing risk have been set by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) via the 31000: 2009 report. Kevin Knight (2012), an expert in the field of risk management from Australia, wrote, “In many jurisdictions, emergency preparedness planning focuses on the sudden onset of natural hazards... Of course, not all emergency events are caused by nature. However, consequences from emergency events may be similar, regardless of the trigger involved. It is therefore imperative that the final document adopts an all-hazards approach and provides a method that is suitable for considering other sources of risk. These include disease (human, animal and plant), insect/vermin plague, and those risks arising from technological and other human sources...” (para. 19).

To illustrate best practices, organisations in several countries have developed emergency management manuals for large events (although they do not always apply to meetings and conferences). [Emergency Management Australia](#) (1999) has published a manual for emergency management practices specifically geared toward large events. . In the United States (US), the [National Fire Protection Association](#) (NFPA) Standard on Disaster/Emergency Management and Business Continuity (2013) suggests assigning threats or hazards into three categories: (1) natural disasters, (2) human-caused, and (3) technological. This step is useful because threats in each of these categories may have similar responses, so they can be grouped together in the risk management plan created. This is also a good way to double-check that you have identified everything you need in one of the risk assessment methods above.

Threat Assessment

The risk assessment process is part of threat assessment, but threat assessment is more specific and must be customised for each meeting, venue, destination, and programme. Threat assessment is just what it sounds like—the process of assessing the threats to people, property, the organisation, the meeting, or any of the other at-risk elements identified during the risk assessment.

As mentioned previously and illustrated in the Weaknesses and Threats in Table 2 SWOT Analysis, threat assessment is going to vary by organisation, programme, destination, time and many other factors. This is why it is so important to conduct the SWOT analysis for each meeting or event. There may be no perceived risk in holding a meeting in a certain destination, but if a bombing of a downtown hotel occurs later today, then a threat is created or escalated that may not have been there before. Threats can change in a moment’s time and so must be monitored on an ongoing basis.



Capability Assessment

Capability assessment is likewise part of **risk assessment** and **risk analysis**. Capabilities and threats can be viewed as two sides of a coin. Just as threats are the negative risk-creating aspects of the meeting components, capabilities are the positive risk-reducing aspects of the meeting components.

Some of the elements illustrated in the strengths and opportunities section of Table 2 SWOT Analysis are capabilities. Capabilities are those things already in place that may assist in emergency response should it be necessary. Things like fire extinguishers in a meeting facility, a hard-wired sprinkler system, automated external defibrillators (AEDs), security personnel, and training staff in emergency response are all examples of capabilities.

Workbook Activity 3: Review of Potential Threats

Using the three categories of threats identified above, review the potential threats to your event(s):

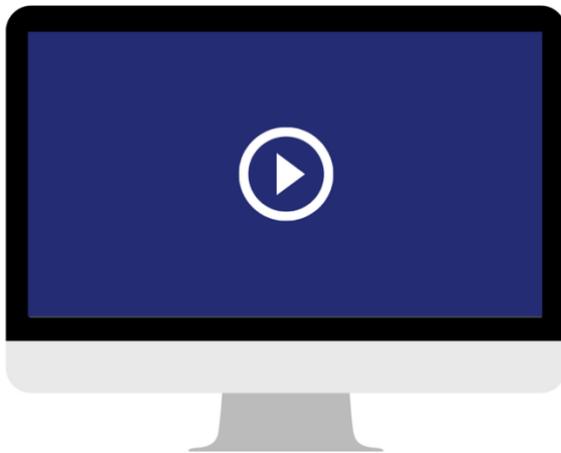
Natural Disasters	Human-Caused	Technological

The risk assessment process is important because if something were to happen and someone or something was injured, damaged or lost, one of the first legal inquiries would be whether the meeting professional did his or her best in planning the meeting. That is, did he, she or they use **due diligence** in choosing the destination or venue? Did he, she or they choose reputable vendors to provide catering, motor coach transportation or other services? In the US, this standard is related to the **reasonable prudent person** standard which basically asks "Did this meeting professional do what a reasonably prudent meeting professional with similar experience and training would do under the same circumstances?" Other countries may have different specific legal standards, but the idea of **negligence** (even if called something else) or failure to use due care, is nearly universal.

Part of determining risk for a particular meeting or event requires knowing the laws, contract requirements, ordinances, permits, and licenses specific to the country, destination, venue, activities, and services of the meeting or event. For example, a meeting planner needs to know the disability laws (or lack thereof) of the country in which the meeting or event is held. The UN [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) and its [Optional Protocol](#) went into effect in 2008. There are currently 91 signatories to the Convention, which affirms the rights of equal enjoyment of persons with disabilities, when it opened for signature in 2008, but only 76 signatories to the Optional Protocol, which provides a complaint mechanism for violations of the Convention (United Nations Treaty Collection, 2013). Thus, not all countries abide by the convention and some countries have their own laws addressing disability rights. The US, for example, has the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA) law and copious guidance from the government on following it (US Department of Justice, 2013). Similarly, most of the U.K. is covered by the [Equality Act of 2010](#), which also comes with guidance (Gov.UK, 2013).

When determining risks for a meeting, consult with others. Talk to colleagues who have held similar meetings or met in the destination or venue previously. Conversations between the planner and the venues or supplier-partners are also helpful at this stage.

In certain situations, it may be particularly important to get legal advice as well as advice from insurance or accounting representatives. In the case of international meetings, talking to someone more familiar with the destination, culture, and current state of affairs in the destination, such as a regulatory body, destination management company, or tourism bureau could be critical to the success of the meeting in an emergency situation.



Learn more about the work of the United Nations to Expand the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Step 2: Analyse Risks

You cannot plan for every single risk that might occur. Even the most experienced planners with the most sophisticated risk management plans may not have considered possibilities like the *Eyjafjallajökull* volcano in Iceland, which erupted in April 2010, resulting in the cancellation of thousands of flights and stranding tens of thousands of meeting and event attendees and travelers in and out of Europe for several days (Hatch & Kovaleski, 2010). Likewise, the COVID-19 pandemic took even the modern medical world by surprise. Thus, in the risk analysis phase, consider all the risks identified in the risk assessment phase and then narrow them down.

To begin this process, the meeting or event professional examines damage, loss, or liability exposure, potential, and timing. Table 3 gives an example of this process.

Table 3. Risk Analysis of Damage, Loss, or Liability Exposure.

What is exposed to damage, loss, or liability?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property • Persons • Cash • Reputation • Environment
What could cause damage, loss, or liability?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural disaster • Human-caused event • Technological event
Who could suffer damage, loss, or liability?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting organiser • Venue • Destination • Attendees • Exhibitors • Sponsors • Members • Shareholders • Other meeting stakeholders
When might damage, loss, or liability occur?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before the meeting • During the meeting • After the meeting

The content in each of these categories may vary depending on whether a meeting or event is hosted by a corporation, an association or non-profit organisation, or another type of organisation, such as a government agency.

Accepting, Managing, and Avoiding Risk

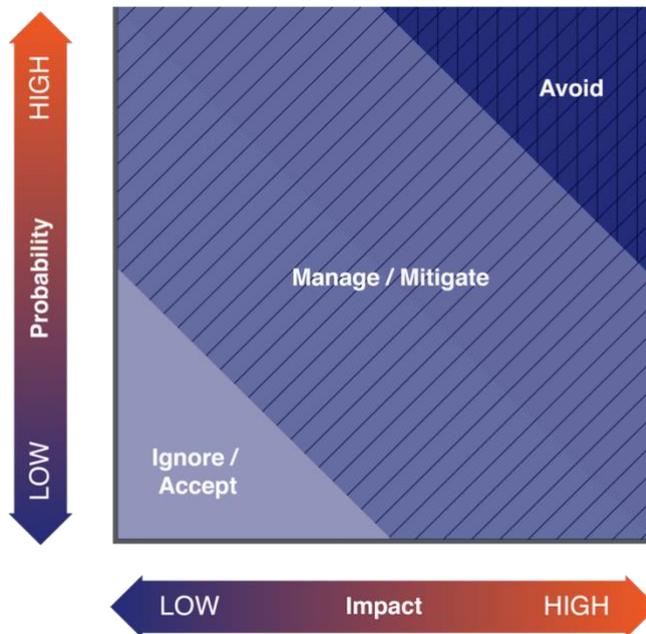
The meeting professional has three choices when facing risk:

1. Accept/ignore the risk
2. Manage/mitigate the risk (which includes transferring the risk to someone else, such as through insurance or contracts)
3. Avoid the risk

Which category a particular crisis, disaster, or emergency falls into depends in large part on the probability or likelihood that the risk will occur and the potential consequences if the risk actually does occur.

Accepting or ignoring the risk is a choice that is likely made if the probability of the risk occurring is very small, or even if it does occur, the consequences would be minimal. Managing or *mitigating* the risk is what is done with crises, disasters, or emergencies that have either a high probability of occurring or significant potential consequences. The risks that are to be avoided, if possible, are those that have both a high probability of occurring and high consequences if they do occur. This is graphically depicted in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Probability-Consequences Grid.



Workbook Activity 4: Risk Acceptance, Mitigation and Avoidance

Using the risks that were identified in workbook activities 1, 2 and 3, complete the following table and assign each risk to a category.

Ignore / Accept	Manage / Mitigate	Avoid

Most crises, disasters, and emergencies cannot be avoided. For example, a meeting professional certainly wants to avoid a hotel fire. However, it is beyond the control of the parties if the fire is started by an arsonist on purpose (human cause), an electrical fire (technological cause), or a lightning strike (natural disaster). Although the meeting professional would like to avoid that risk, the reality is that the best that can be done is to manage/mitigate the risk by making sure the hotel has been properly inspected; identifying where fire extinguishers or sprinkler systems are; being aware of the number of emergency exits and their width, that emergency lighting is correctly working, and procedures in case the fire alarm goes off; and having insurance to cover any damage resulting from fire.

The meeting professional may be able to avoid a risk such as a hurricane or typhoon, however, by not choosing a coastal destination during hurricane season for the meeting or event. The risk of travel disruption due to snow can be avoided by changing meeting dates to spring or summer. Even in these examples, however, risk still exists that the hurricane or snow will disrupt travel to or from the meeting destination.

Although it sounds like the meeting or event professional is shirking responsibilities, certainly some risks are either so unlikely to occur or would have such minimal repercussions if they do occur that the organisation simply acknowledges the risk and moves on. Doing business of any kind is a risk. Getting out of bed in the morning is a risk. For example, perhaps there is a risk that someone will get a minor laceration or bruise during the team-building exercise. It frequently happens, but other than perhaps applying a bandage, this may be a risk the meeting or event professional chooses to ignore. This is a low consequences risk.

Likewise, the planner might say the risk of a meeting being affected by a meteor shower is so unlikely (low probability) that she or he is going to ignore that risk. Of course, in February 2013, a meteor shower did physical damage in Russia and injured over 1,000 people (Black, Milanova, & Smith-Spark, 2013). So risks that are ignored or accepted can happen. It is up to the meeting or event professional to decide whether the risk is worth spending limited time or resources on to manage/mitigate or avoid.

Despite having experienced health risks like Mad Cow disease, SARS, Avian flu, Zika virus, and others, the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic were more than most meeting professionals were prepared for. It is not that meeting professionals accepted or ignored health risks or could avoid them, but it took the meetings industry (and the rest of the world) a while to determine how to manage the risks.

Most of the meeting or event professional's time is spent on managing or mitigating risks. This means putting into place measures that will:

- 1) Reduce the probability that the crisis, disaster, or emergency will occur.
- 2) Reduce the consequences if the crisis, disaster, or emergency does occur.
- 3) Transfer all or some of the risk to another party.

This is done through a variety of means including developing and implementing a risk management plan, hiring security, using the services of experts to help manage specific risks, negotiating strong contracts, purchasing insurance policies, and simply thorough professional planning. Some of these techniques may fall into multiple categories. Table 4 provides some examples, but is by no means exhaustive.

Table 4. Risk Management or Mitigation Techniques.

Reduce probability of the risk occurring	Reduce the consequences if the risk occurs	Transfer risk to another party
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selecting a speaker who is not controversial. • Choosing a safe destination and venue • Ensuring the venue provides adequate security and staff or hiring externally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracts (e.g., attrition, cancellation, <i>force majeure</i>) • Provide security • Waivers of liability • Having medical or safety personnel and equipment on-site • Using third-party suppliers with appropriate training and certifications for higher risk activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance • Contracts (e.g., indemnification clause) • Using third-party suppliers with specialised training, insurance and equipment for risky activities



Workbook Activity 5: Managing and Mitigating Risk

Using your table from activity 4, determine how you will address each of the risks in the Manage / Mitigate category by assigning specific actions to the table below.

Reduce probability of the risk occurring	Reduce the consequences if the risk occurs	Transfer risk to another party

Planning and servicing meetings or events are risky activities. So most of the meeting or event professional's risk management efforts are spent reducing the probability of crises, disasters, and emergencies occurring or reducing the consequences of the crises, disasters, and emergencies that do occur. However, there are a few ways to transfer all or part of the risk to someone else. This is desirable, of course, because it reduces the drain on resources or cash for the meeting or event host (the organisation).

Insurance is one way to transfer at least some of the (mostly financial) risk to the insurance company. By paying an insurance premium, the meeting professional can take out a policy that requires the insurance company to pay out in the event of certain circumstances. There are many different types of insurance policies and they vary not only from country to country, but from insurance company to insurance company. More details about some of the common types of insurance policies are in the next section.

Likewise, contract clauses such as **indemnification, attrition, cancellation, and force majeure** serve to transfer or apportion risk between the policies. Indemnification clauses, in particular, are closely tied to insurance coverage amounts, as the parties will sometimes agree to indemnify one another up to the amount of insurance they carry.

Risk management should never be thought of as "another" thing for the busy meeting or event professional to do. Instead it should be integrated into every stage of the planning and execution of the meeting or event. Some of the tools available to help mitigate and manage risk are indicated in the next section.

Before embarking on risk management for meetings or events, however, the meeting or event professional must understand their organisation's *risk profile*. That is, how willing is the organisation to take risks? Some organisations are very risk averse, while others are willing to take more risks under the philosophy of “no risk, no reward.” While hopefully no organisation is willing to take great risks with people's lives and health, a risk averse organisation might avoid including activities at a meeting such as zip lining, white water rafting, or hot air balloon rides out of fear of liability, financial repercussions, and damage to reputation if someone got injured. An organisation willing to take more risk might want to have just these types of activities because they know they will have a positive impact on attendees' perception of the meeting or event. Even the latter group, however, is likely to want appropriate insurance and waivers of liability to manage the risk. A waiver of liability is a legal document signed by a person participating in an event or activity that verifies that the participant acknowledges and assumes the risks involved in participating. To be enforceable, a waiver of liability must be very carefully written. In a dispute, if it is found that a participant was not fully informed of or could not have understood the risks they were assuming, the waiver may not be enforceable.

Another issue to consider is what risk management measures are required by the city, state, province, or country in which the meeting or event is being held. The organiser must comply with the laws and regulations of the jurisdiction in which the meeting or event is being held. It is well established in most countries that ignorance of the law is no defense. If you are doing business in that country, you are deemed to be familiar with the law of doing business there. Each jurisdiction may have its own requirements regarding things like:

- Permits
- Licenses
- Insurance
- Accommodation for persons with disabilities
- Waivers of liability
- Health and safety of employees
- Food safety
- Unions
- Approval of exhibition floor plans
- Capacity limits

Before selecting risk management techniques, evaluate all available options to manage the best possible outcome—whether “best” in this case means it will reduce the risk most significantly, it is the most cost-effective option, it addresses the highest number of risks, or it is the one approved by the organisation's decision-makers. Likewise, risk management techniques must be regularly evaluated following a meeting or event. For some risks, several different techniques must be tried before the most effective option is determined as cost effective and least disruptive to the meeting, event, or organisation.

Step 3: Emergency Planning

A meeting or event professional has no greater responsibility than ensuring the health and safety of their staff and attendees. In order to do so, they need to develop and be prepared to implement an emergency response plan. Just creating a plan is not sufficient – risk management needs to be infused into all aspects of meeting and event management, and the emergency response plan should be a living document that is regularly reviewed, tested where appropriate, and updated.

The event planner is not alone in the risk management process. Other stakeholders, both internal and external, who may have direct responsibilities or expertise in crisis and emergency planning, should be consulted in the development and coordination of the emergency response plan include:

- Internal risk management department
- Public relations team or firm
- Suppliers, including the event venue and transportation companies
- Local authorities including emergency response services such as the fire department, police, and ambulance services
- Insurance providers, who may conduct site inspections and provide valuable resources to the meeting or event planner

Consultation and communication with local authorities or experts is vital when developing the emergency response plan.

Elements of an Emergency Response Plan

An emergency response plan should include the following elements:

- Chain of command. It should be clear who is in charge of making decisions and under which circumstances. It should also be clear who to contact if the primary decision maker is not available.
- Emergency action plan and control procedures.
- Crisis communication plan. The meeting or event planner should know who will be the spokesperson in the event of an emergency. This person should receive media and crisis communication training.
- Implementation strategies. This section will outline the activities that need to occur, such as safety inspections and incident reports, any resources that are required, and the plan should also include contingency measures.

Workbook Activity 6: Elements of a Crisis Management Plan

Complete the following table for your event.

Chain of Command
Describe who is in charge of making decisions and under which circumstances. Also note who to contact if the primary decision maker is not available.
Emergency Action Plan and Control Procedures
Describe emergency and control procedures for your event.

Crisis Communication Plan and Spokesperson

Describe who is authorised to speak with authorities and media in the case of a crisis and under which circumstances. Also note whom to contact if the primary spokesperson is not available.

Implementation Strategies

Outline the activities that need to occur, such as safety inspections and incident reports, any resources that are required, and also include contingency measures.

Assessing and Communicating the Emergency Response Plan

It's not enough to just create a plan; the plan also needs to be monitored and tested. This could include drills and reviewing incident reports. Very often, those that are tasked with implementing the emergency response plan have important insights about the effectiveness of the plan. As such, front line staff and all those who are tasked with implementing the emergency response plan should be consulted and involved in the assessment of the plan.

The plan also needs to be communicated to key stakeholders to ensure that everyone knows how to respond in the event that the plan needs to be put into action.

Workbook Activity 7: Assessing and Communicating the Emergency Response Plan

Complete the following table for your event:

How will you monitor and test your risk management plan?
Who are the key stakeholders for managing your risk management plan, and how will they be consulted?
How will you communicate your risk management plan? What steps will you take to review the plan on a regular basis?

Event Insurance

As mentioned in the previous section, meeting and event professionals can transfer risk through the purchase of insurance. From an ethical perspective, meeting and event professionals should be involved actively in risk management, regardless of whether they have purchased insurance.

There are many types of insurance available for events and it is important to research the types that apply in the jurisdiction where your event is being held. Note: the term in Europe is “insurance cover,” the term in the US is “insurance coverage.” Event planners should discuss their specific needs with an experienced industry insurance agent. In some jurisdictions it may also be advisable to consult an attorney or lawyer. As insurance requirements will vary significantly, it is helpful to review the following criteria to determine your event specific needs:

Table 5. Determining Insurance Needs.

Who	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Who should be insured? This may include the meeting or event organiser, suppliers, vendors, exhibitors, ▪ Who is responsible? Depending on the jurisdiction, negligence may or may not be a requirement in order to be found liable. ▪ Who should be consulted? Working with an insurance professional with event industry expertise is highly recommended. ▪ Who is covered under the policy? Be clear who is covered, including participants and staff, as well as sponsors, exhibitors, temporary staff, and volunteers.
What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What types of insurance are required for your event? ▪ What restrictions (if any) apply to the cover?
Where	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Where is your event being held, and what are the legal requirements in that particular jurisdiction?
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When is the insurance in effect? Be sure to include pre- and post-meeting or event dates, including move-in and move-out dates. ▪ When should insurance be acquired? Acquiring insurance early in the process is needed to provide protection in cases of risks such as natural disasters that may have an impact on your event even if when occurring several months before the meeting or event opens.
Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Why is insurance needed? To determine this, analyse your specific risk factors.
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How will the insurance be acquired and managed?

Examples insurance types that apply to meetings and events, to limit liability and protect against losses, are listed below. Applicability and terminology may vary by jurisdiction.



Workbook Activity 8: Determine Insurance Needs

Using the questions outlined in Table 5, complete the following table to assess your insurance needs.

Who	
What	
Where	
When	
Why	
How	

Workbook Activity 9: Types of Insurance

The table below describes different types of insurance that are available. Review the list and select the ones that are relevant for your event.

Type of Insurance	Description	Select if applicable
Commercial general liability / public liability	Provides protection against claims involving bodily injury and property damage. Consider a high limit. It protects the business from damage or loss that occurs on business premises or sometimes “temporarily off business premises.” Some venues may have a minimum insurance requirement.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Umbrella policies	An umbrella policy is essentially insurance to cover gaps in coverage under the primary insurance policies. Since most claims will be covered by the primary insurance policies, umbrella coverage is relatively inexpensive, but can provide much-needed extra protection. This type of insurance is more common in the United States.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire liability	Under the terms of a facility contract, the event sponsor may be held responsible for fire damage to the building caused by negligence. Fire legal liability insurance provides protection. Be certain the contract releases the event sponsor from other damage to the building, including damage caused by an exhibitor. Ask the facility to add your organisation’s name to the building’s fire insurance or its all-risk policy.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medical liability	Medical payment insurance provides reimbursement of medical expenses for injuries that occur at the site (excluding those suffered by employees and sometimes volunteers), regardless of your legal liability. If you maintain a first-aid station, know if medical malpractice insurance will protect you and the nurses, doctors or paramedics staffing the station against claims for failure to render proper or adequate medical assistance. Primarily applies in the United States.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Independent contractor liability	Require all contractors to provide a certificate of insurance showing that they carry worker’s compensation (or employer’s liability) and general liability insurance (with a liability limit of at least \$1 million or your local currency equivalent). Add independent contractors liability insurance to protect you against any suit brought against you or the event sponsor as a result of negligence on the part of an independent contractor. Primarily applies in the United States.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Products liability / host and alcohol liability	If you operate a food concession or serve food and drink at a reception or dinner, products liability insurance can protect your group against claims, such as food poisoning. Host liability or alcohol liability (depending on local laws) insurance protects the event sponsor against claims resulting from serving alcoholic beverages, and may be required in certain jurisdictions.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional insured	If a group rents or charters buses, automobiles, boats or aircraft, there is a substantial liability exposure for injury to persons and damage to property. During contract negotiations for such vehicles, ask to have your organisation named as an additional insured on the lessor's insurance policy for liability, property damage and medical payments, and have the contract stipulate that the organisation shall not be held liable for damage to the vehicle itself. If the lessor's insurance company will not include the organisation as an additional insured, obtain that insurance yourself. Make sure your organisation is named as co-insured on any vendor's policy, above and beyond any coverage it may have. Also, require the insurance company to give notice of any non-renewal or cancellation of the policy or rider.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Valuable papers and records	Before mailing, event materials may be stored at a printer's place of business or warehouse, which may be insured in case of damage. However, valuable papers and records insurance is available to pay for the cost of reproducing any papers, pamphlets or records (or any part thereof) as a result of damage by fire, water, vandalism, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
On-site office	The computers, laptops, mobile devices , walkie-talkies and other equipment a group owns or rents for use at the event facility can be insured against loss or damage by fire, theft, explosion, water damage, vandalism and malicious mischief. Ask for office contents coverage. During the course of an event, a group may collect cheques. Daily deposits are recommended, but burglary and robbery insurance is available to cover cash and cheques as an additional precaution.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exhibits	Exhibitors can insure their exhibit property through a special programme that may be offered on a voluntary basis, for coverage at the exhibition site as well as in transit, to and from. If the exhibitor's own general liability insurance does not extend to the exhibition site, liability insurance can be purchased, as well as insurance to cover a potential loss in the event that booth property does not arrive.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employers' liability / worker's compensation	The event sponsor's worker's compensation (or employer's liability) policy probably covers employees who work at the event. If temporary on-site staff is put on the payroll, keep a record of salaries and the jobs performed. The insurance company will ask for this information during the audit at the end of the policy term. Also available is accidental death and dismemberment insurance, as well as accidental medical payment insurance for volunteers.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travel	Delegates and guests should be made aware that the organisation sponsoring the event is not responsible for their personal property. You can, however, offer for purchase travel insurance for the term of the meeting or event, including travel to and from it.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Non-appearance	Events can be insured against non-appearance by speakers or entertainers. A contract with a celebrity may contain a clause that indicates he, she or they does not have to appear in the case of sickness or travel related delays. Insurance may cover any losses incurred as a result. The circumstances when the insurance applies must be clearly stated in the policy and understood by both parties.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Event cancellation	Cancellation insurance protects a group against loss of revenue if the event is interrupted or cannot be held because of fire, weather, a strike, or other insured hazard. The insurance also can pay for reasonable extra expenses incurred because of adverse circumstances, as long as the extra expenses are approved by the insurer in advance. For example, a taxi strike may require a group to hire buses to pick up people at airports. Insurance is available that would reimburse for this added expense.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enforced reduced attendance	This is an extension that protects you from lower than expected attendance due to certain circumstances beyond your control (so not low attendance due to insufficient marketing, for example). Events vulnerable to the disruption of travel, particularly those involving flying overseas, need this coverage. Caution: This should not be construed as insurance against attrition. It effectively pays due to a <i>force majeure</i> incident. That does not include problems like prospective participants' fear of travel, higher airfare, or similar issues which, although beyond your control, are typically not included in this coverage.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Property damage	You need to insure your own property, which you take on-site to an event. You are responsible for any property for which you hold direct responsibility as well, such as rented audio-visual equipment, marquees or plants. In addition to the above, there may be a need for further property damage cover when the venue makes you responsible for damage to the venue.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Money insurance	Where events have a paying public, attendance or delegate fees are paid by cheque or cash, and those monies may be vulnerable to theft on site or during transit to or from a bank. Your risk terminates, incidentally, from the moment the money is handed to an approved security organisation. Money insurance indemnifies you against the loss of the cash or cheques while at the venue or in direct transit to or from the bank.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Third party losses	Research will usually be necessary into the liability of the event organiser for any losses incurred by subcontractors when an event is cancelled through natural causes (e.g. hurricanes, earthquakes, etc.). These can be covered by insurance if they are specified in advance.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Step 4: Emergency Response

In the event of an emergency on-site at a meeting or business event, the meeting or event planner should have an easily accessible and readable written plan for emergency response. The worst time to make decisions about how to respond to an emergency is after the emergency has occurred. It is much better to think about what could happen, plan for it, and practice those plans before even going on-site. Remember that a meeting facility and destination may have its own plan, so the planner should consult and coordinate with representatives from the venue and destination to decrease the risk of creating greater chaos if an emergency occurs.

Workbook Activity 10: Capabilities Assessment

Assess the capabilities for responding to a crisis at your event. Use the SWOT Analysis from Workbook Activity 2 as a starting point. Consider capabilities for communication, equipment, and ability to respond.

Stakeholder	Capabilities
Your organisation	
The event venue	
Local authorities	
Other Stakeholders	

Confer with Authorities

To create an emergency response plan that will actually work in the event of an emergency, a meeting professional must confer with the proper facility and destination authorities. Some of the elements that need to be discussed are:

- Venue access
 - What are the entrances from which the venue can be accessed?
 - How are these entrances managed/controlled/monitored?
 - What are the accessibility points to the meeting space?
 - Who has access to the meeting space?
 - What is the most direct access for emergency responders?
- Venue information
 - What alarm(s) will be sounded (e.g., one type of alarm or one for evacuation and one for sheltering in place?). Are there visual alarms for hearing-impaired guests?
 - Is there a public address system that will explain the appropriate response to guests and participants?
 - Does the public address system reach hotel or meeting rooms or just hallways and public areas?
 - What are the evacuation routes? How will guests and attendees be directed to the proper evacuation exit?
 - Where will evacuated guests and attendees gather? What process does the venue have, if any, to determine whether everyone has evacuated?
 - How does the venue handle the evacuation of persons with disabilities?
- On-site medical personnel and equipment
 - Is there an on-site physician, nurse, or emergency medical technician? If so, where are they located and during what hours?
 - Where are first-aid stations located? How are they equipped?
 - Are there automated external defibrillators (AEDs) on-site? If so, where? Who is authorised to use them?
- Off-site medical care
 - Where is the nearest hospital or other medical facility? Where is the nearest 24-hour dental clinic?
 - What number is to be dialed to reach destination emergency services?
- Communication
 - What is the preferred mode of communication to reach security in the event of an emergency? Police? Fire? Emergency medical technicians?
 - Are there “house” phones in the meeting space? If so, where? Is there a “dial-out” number or are they strictly for internal communications?
 - How can key facility and destination staff be reached after traditional business hours?
 - Verify the policy that the meeting planner is to be contacted as soon as any attendee emergency arises.
 - Who is designated to speak to the media?
 - How will you verify the status of all attendees (including your staff) and reach or help them reach their loved ones?

There may be other questions that a meeting professional wants to ask and have clarified, but at least the above should be asked verbally or in a questionnaire or checklist form. For any meeting or business event, there may be other important questions. For example, a meeting that includes guests from different countries, questions about the locations of the embassies may need to be asked.

Emergency Response Plans

Emergency response plans should be created for potential emergencies, crises, and disasters. Rather than trying to create a separate plan for every type of emergency, crisis, or disaster imaginable, group your response plans by the type of response. For example, fire, carbon monoxide, or gas leak will all require a similar response, culminating in evacuation. Consider whether these can be grouped into one emergency response that can include all of the steps from hearing the alarm, to taking precautions regarding breathing in dangerous elements, to evacuating and gathering in one spot.

Make emergency response plans easy to follow. Although there are many things that need to be done in an emergency, the emergency response plan should focus on two main things: (1) getting people out of harm's way and (2) contacting the proper emergency responder (e.g., fire, police, ambulance). In general, emergency response plans should be no more than 10 steps. Too many steps or detailed instructions can slow down a person's response or confuse them and may actually make the emergency worse. The threat assessment should give the meeting or event professional an idea of what kinds of emergencies should be in the emergency response plan. Fire, political, protest or bomb threat, medical emergency, assault, and other threats deemed to be most likely in the risk analysis are the ones to address first. Others may be included based on the specific meeting or event, venue, or destination.

Communication

In the event of emergency, crisis, or disaster, effective and concise communication are critical. In this very connected society, there are many means of communication including telephone, e-mail, social media, television, radio, and Internet. In a disaster or catastrophe (such as the September 11, 2001 attack on New York City and Washington, DC or the 2004 Asian tsunami), one or more of these communication channels may be completely unavailable. For example, mobile telephone towers may be down or a power outage may render television unusable. Even if the mechanical aspects work, sometimes traffic overloads from the sheer volume of calls, e-mail, or social media may render the system unavailable for a time.

Even in an emergency that doesn't rise to the level of a disaster or catastrophe, efficient and effective communication is critical. Internal communication between the meeting or event planner and staff, and external communication between the meeting or event planner and the facility, must be immediate and available. In an emergency, have several levels and types of communication systems available. For example, ideally, a landline (e.g., a house phone) could be used to contact the hotel personnel, mobile phone numbers could have been exchanged, and perhaps hand-held radios could be utilised to facilitate communication.



Some strategies and tools that should be in place before a meeting or event begins include:

- meeting or event planner has direct telephone extensions for key venue staff;
- mobile phone numbers, e-mails, and social media sites have been exchanged between meeting organiser staff and key facility staff;
- meeting or event planner has numbers for summoning destination emergency response providers;
- meeting or event planners have a system for contacting everyone within their organisation;
- hand-held radio channels—one for regular communication and a different one for emergency communication—have been established; and
- emergency outgoing voicemail messages and Web site are created and in place to inform people outside the organisation of the emergency response status.

Contingency Plans

Contingency plans should be created in the event that a meeting or event has to be postponed, cancelled, relocated, or significantly modified due to an emergency, crisis, or disaster. Create these contingency plans in advance rather than puzzling through what should be done once the emergency occurs. For example, having a plan for delay, cancellation, or relocation of an event due to inclement weather should be done well before the start date of the event.

To be most effective, contingency plans should have a clear activation indicator. This means answering the question, “*At what point do we implement Plan B?*” before the meeting even starts. Tie these activation indicators to a specific defined measure. For example, the contingency plan for weather may have an activation indicator that the event will be canceled if 24 hours prior to the event, the weather forecast calls for 2 inches (5 centimeters) of snow. It should also have a specific activation indicator communication channel. Continuing the example of snow, whose weather forecast are we going to follow? Will we tune into a specific radio station? Will we watch a specific television station? Will we seek information from the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) or an international equivalent?

Only after these things have been established can we determine what the contingency plan contains. While some determinations can only be made at the time of the occurrence, many decisions can be made in advance. For example, a secondary location for the event, confirmed as available on that date and time, must be identified in advance. The decision to relocate the event will be made at a time closer to the event, but the research on the alternate location should be done in advance.

Arrange Security

Every meeting or event has unique security needs. In the risk assessment and analysis phases, the meeting planner should be able to determine specific security needs by evaluating numerous aspects of the meeting or event (see Table 7 Determining security needs).

Table 7. Determining Security Needs.

Meeting or event characteristic	Specific examples
Type of meeting or event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference • Corporate product launch • Exhibition • Incentive programme
Hours of operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set-up and/or load-in • Hours of meeting or event • Down times between days • Break-down and/or load-out
Destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination in which another language (or languages) are prominently spoken • Political and civil unrest • Terrorism risk • Destination in which theft or loss will not be covered by standard insurance
Venue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and nature of entrances and exits • Public building that non-attendees may legally enter
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physically strenuous activities (e.g., ropes course, team-building activities) • Unfamiliar or potentially dangerous activities (e.g., hot air ballooning, zip lining, sky diving) • Risk of theft
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VIPs • Famous participants (e.g., celebrities, political figures, etc.) • Youth
Insurance requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certain security requirements may have to be met to maintain validity of insurance policies.



Types of Security

The type of security needed for a meeting or event will vary by the elements in Table 7 Determining security needs. A meeting or event professional should not assume that security provided by the venue is necessarily adequate, though the country, type of venue, and rating of a hotel (whether the U.S.-based AAA rating or Europe’s HotelStar (HotelStars.EU, 2013 or other rating type) will provide differing levels of security. Many meetings or events require one or more types of supplemental security.

Workbook Activity 11: Determining Security Types

Review the security types described below and determine the requirements for your event.

Type	Select if Applicable
Contracted. When an outside company is hired to provide uniformed or non-uniformed security personnel for a meeting or event, the service is contracted. Security personnel may or may not carry weapons, depending on the applicable laws in the country or state of the event.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Law enforcement. On- or off-duty law enforcement officers may be used and may be uniformed or in plain clothes (under cover).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Peer. Trained security personnel that may be of a similar age and appearance as the meeting or event participants are “peers.” Peer security personnel are generally dressed as the meeting or event attendees are, although they are clearly designated as security	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal. Also known as “bodyguards,” personal security may be assigned to one specific person or to a small group of people.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proprietary. Security personnel employed by (or hired by) a venue, company, or organisation with a defined scope of responsibility.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer. Unpaid volunteers with a variety of responsibilities. Volunteer security often provide information, direct traffic, and check credentials at entrances, but rarely handle situations that rise to the level of danger, including theft or physical risk. (Silvers, 2008)	<input type="checkbox"/>



Whatever type of security is used, meeting and event professionals must be sure that they are well informed and well trained regarding expected services. Meeting and event professionals should only use licensed, bonded, and insured services when hiring professional security, and should check for pertinent accreditation or other credentials as required by insurance carriers or to ensure legitimacy in the jurisdiction. Security companies should be willing to provide references prior to hire, as well as a copy of their certificate of insurance.

If professional security services are used, allow the security company to help develop (or at least review) emergency response procedures for the high probability and high consequence risks identified in the risk analysis. If local, the security service may have its own emergency response procedures. The meeting or event professional should be willing to adapt his or her own procedures to those the security company has already developed, especially if those procedures have been tested and proven effective, or at least discuss emergency response procedures (and include the venue and/or destination in the discussion) so that everyone agrees to the appropriate response in a security situation.

Channels of communication, both internal (between security and the meeting or event organiser and facility) and external (between security and the meeting or event organiser and local authorities) should be established well in advance of the meeting or event. The purchase or rental of certain communication equipment may be needed. Include these needs in the request for proposals for security services, as the bidding security companies may have different recommendations and may or may not include communication equipment in their quoted cost and scope of services.

Local Authorities

Local authorities should be informed about some meetings or events, especially if the meeting or event has a significant risk factor (e.g., is very large, will be attended by one or more persons likely to draw attention from media or picketers, including a parade or protest, etc.). Discuss risks with fire and police authorities prior to the meeting or event. It not only alerts them so they can staff properly and be prepared to respond, it may also alert the planner to permits, licenses, or registrations that have to be submitted in order to lawfully hold certain activities on public property.

Many international meeting and event planners routinely inform the embassy or consulate in the country in which they will be gathering so that, if there is a security or consular issue, the embassy is forewarned and can be prepared to render aid or assistance. It is recommended that individual travelers do the same. For example, the US Department of State maintains the Smart Traveler Enrollment Programme (travel.state.gov) for US travelers to register their international travels. Upon registering, the traveler receives any travel alerts or warnings about their destination country.



Incident Reporting

If an incident occurs at a meeting or event, it is crucial to have an incident report form completed—even if the danger is averted or someone says they would prefer not to. An incident report form completed at the time of an incident is the best record of what occurred and can be used later against a charge of negligence. In many instances, the venue and the meeting or event organiser (or designated security personnel) may complete separate incident report forms. Because either or both may be accused of negligence, the separate incident report forms protect them individually. A process for completing, reporting, and managing incident reports and follow-up should be determined prior to any incident, ideally when the risk management plan is developed.

Workbook Activity 12: Incident Reporting Process

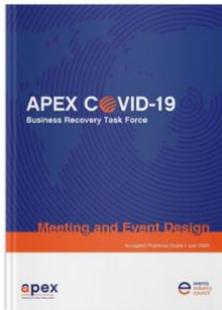
Outline the process for incident reporting for your event(s):

How will incident reports be completed?	
What information needs to be communicated?	
How will incident reports be managed?	
What follow up measures are needed?	

Additional Risk Management Resources

Resources from the EIC APEX COVID-19 Business Recovery Task Force

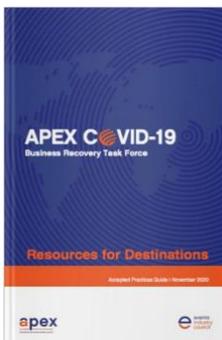
Meeting and Event Design Accepted Practices Guide



The guide provides these customisable tools:

- A meeting and event decision grid
- A code of conduct for pre-event, post-event and onsite
- Meeting and event success metrics (pre- and post-vaccine)
- Attendee communication considerations
- Resource guide

Resources for Destinations Accepted Practices Guide



This guide:

- Maps the event journey in a destination
- Provides key planning questions for CVBs/DMOs and event organisers
- Provides a crisis communications resources and worksheet
- Discusses the transforming role of CVBs/DMOs, convention centres and major venues during COVID-19
- Links to global and regional pandemic communication resources
- Offers a look inside CVB/DMO practices

Events Industry Council APEX COVID-19 Business Recovery Task Force Resources

Accepted Practices Guidance



To date, EIC and the taskforce have curated and aggregated:

- 7 guidance documents
- 7 additional resources
 - 12 webinars
 - 1 Career Centre
- 7 regional economic impact summaries

Additional Resources



Career Centre



Over 50,000 views

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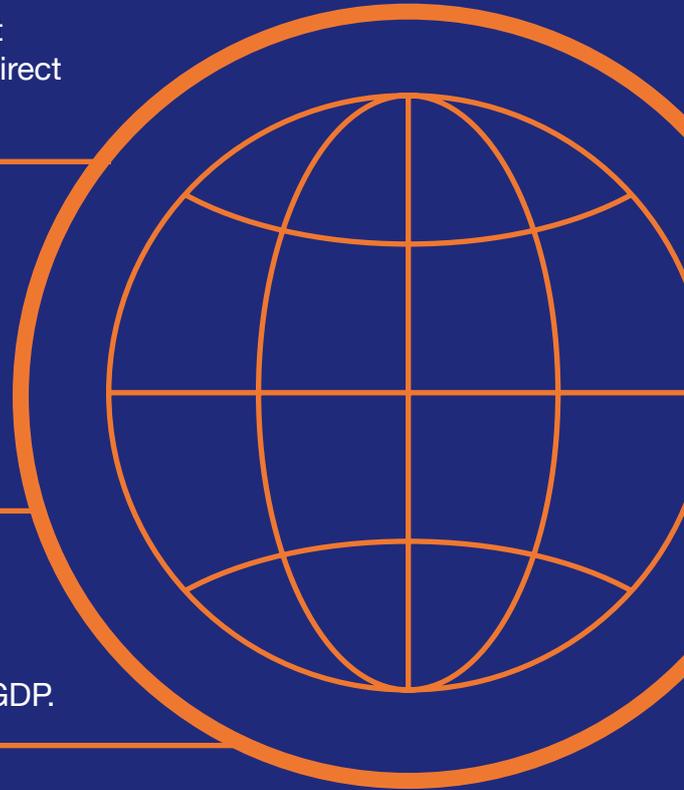
Meeting and event professionals support events that generate **\$1 trillion USD** in direct spending globally.



The **\$1.5 trillion USD of total GDP** supported by global business events would rank the sector as the 13th largest economy globally, larger than the economies of countries such as Australia, Spain, Mexico, Indonesia, and Saudi Arabia.



Business events supported **10.3 million** direct jobs globally and generated **\$621.4 billion USD** of direct GDP.



Source: 2018 Global Economic Significance of Business Events

Events Industry Council Member Organisations

Our global federation includes more than [30 member organisations](#) spanning 100+ countries and representing 103,500 individuals and 19,500 firms and properties involved in the events industry.



