



BandSafe

BandSafe #7

Health and safety

This checklist will help all bands to be aware of the sort of risks that a typical band will face and how to address them through robust procedures and policies. Use this document, along with **BandSafe #6: Risk assessments** to create a robust set of policies and procedures that are tailored to your particular needs and situation(s). It should be noted that this checklist and risk assessment template do not include any reference to additional measures that may need to be put in place to control risk linked to exceptional issues, such as the Covid-19 Pandemic. In such situations, bands should of course adhere to regulations and guidance issued at the time.



Health and safety

Health and safety commitments in brass bands

Aside from usually employing the Musical Director, brass bands are mainly run by volunteers and therefore may not consider themselves as employers. However brass bands are still considered to have a “duty of care”, under civil law, to those who are employed, work as volunteers and those who use their services. It is, therefore, necessary to consider these guidelines and adapt these considerations to your band environment where practical. The clearest way of addressing your commitment as a band to health and safety is to use these guidelines as the template for your own health and safety plan, and to ensure that your plan is reviewed annually and, together with your risk assessment and notes of any significant incidents, brought to the attention of your committee for signing off.

- The Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) is the main piece of legislation governing health and safety at work. It places a duty on employers to ensure the general health and safety of their employees, as well as volunteers and members of the public using services provided by the employer.
- It is recommended that bands should have an appointed person with responsibility for health and safety issues. The name and contact details of this person (normally a committee member) should be included in the written health and safety plan and care should be taken to ensure that band members know whom they should speak to if they have health and safety concerns.

Brass Bands should consider the following areas when reviewing health and safety.

- Safe equipment (usage, storage and handling)
- Safe substances (e.g. storage of cleaning chemicals)
- Safe and healthy workplace (see **BandSafe #7 – Safeguarding** and **BandSafe #10 – Whistle-blowing policy** for more details)
- Fire safety
- Safe and healthy working environment (production of risk assessments)
- Information, instruction, supervision and training (providing volunteers’ and members’ access to policies)
- Activities outside the band room e.g. concerts.

These guidelines will focus on the band room environment and equipment, including substances. If the band rents a space for rehearsal, the responsibility for some aspects of these guidelines falls to the owner. However, checks should still be in place to ensure the environment is safe. For example, the band should ask for a copy of the venue’s risk assessment and ensure that it takes account of the specific purpose for which they are renting the space and any specific needs of their members.



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Electricity in the band room

- Ask band members to complete a quick check each time they use an electrical item and report problems such as loose wires, overheating etc. to the health and safety officer.
- Carry out annual Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) – if possible, use a qualified person to do this, or, at least, someone who has received some training in using the PAT testing equipment.
- Minimize the use of extension leads and multiple adaptors.
- Securely fasten leads to reduce the risk of entanglement or trips.
- Turn off electrical equipment when not being used.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

- Any chemicals should be recorded on a risk assessment stating how they are stored and details of protection required when using (e.g. gloves, masks etc.). For this information see labelling.
- Ensure substances are clearly labelled and stored in their original container.
- Keep substances locked away. Consider using more environmentally friendly alternatives.

First aid arrangements

- Adequate “in date” first aid equipment suitable for the number of members and volunteers in the band.
- Appointed people within the organisation with First Aid training.
- A reporting procedure for accidents and “near misses” using an accident book or accident reporting forms. Information to be kept and stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
- A phone that can be used for getting help and contacting relevant individuals, if the need arises.

Accompanying children to hospital

- Ideally if the situation is not an emergency then the parent/carer should be contacted in order to take the child to hospital.
- In an emergency call 999 and ask for an ambulance or a paramedic. In this situation, every effort must be made to accompany a child to hospital, in the ambulance.
- Where possible the main leader should try to remain with the group and allow another responsible adult, preferably a member who has a DBS check, to accompany a child to hospital.
- It would not be good practice for a band member to use their own vehicle to take a child to hospital unless advised to do so by a medical services. This could happen in exceptional circumstances if, for example, emergency vehicles are delayed. In unlikely event of this occurring it would be best practice for 2 adults to travel with the child.)



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Fire safety/emergency procedures

- Access to a telephone is essential at all times, in case of an emergency.
- Signage on fire exits should be easily visible and exits should be checked regularly for potential blocks or obstructions.
- Include fire safety within the risk assessment; consider any high risk areas, the storage of combustible materials and what measures are in place, both to reduce risk in these areas and to combat fire, if necessary (e.g. fire blankets/extinguishers).
- Fire extinguishers checked annually and included within risk assessment review; training on the use of fire extinguishers should be given – using the wrong extinguisher could make the situation worse.
- An evacuation procedure should be developed, taking account of emergency exits, assembly points, fire wardens and provision for vulnerable members.
- Fire drills should be carried out regularly, as if in an emergency; this should include the taking of a register.

Completing risk assessments

A risk assessment form should be completed, taking into account; the physical environment, the activities that take place, any disabilities or mobility issues in respect of band members and others who may be present, the equipment used and the different types of possible accidents.

Risk assessments should be carried out, both for the normal, regular rehearsal space for the band (and reviewed annually) and for concert venues and other places and events outside the band's usual 'home'. If the band's normal rehearsal venue is used for a new type of event, again, a risk assessment should be carried out so that any new risks are taken account of and managed.

The physical environment might include:

- Car park
- Steps and stairs
- Uneven surfaces
- Lighting
- Slippery floors
- Storage of equipment/ personal belongings
- Seasonal changes; e.g. snow and ice, leaves
- Access to exits
- Transporting people to rehearsals/concerts/contests
- Moving and handling equipment
- Playing concerts outside
- Rehearsals, sectionals and one-to-one tuition
- Fundraising activities
- Making refreshments
- Cleaning/DIY work in the band room
- Social activities
- Concerts for which the band is responsible for the audience



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The equipment might include:

- Instruments
- Music
- Stands
- Chairs
- Cleaning equipment
- Catering equipment
- Electrical appliances
- Gas appliances, such central heating boilers
- Office equipment

Possible types of accidents to consider are:

- Slips, trips and falls
- Traffic accidents
- Poisoning
- Electric shocks
- Burns and scalds
- Choking, suffocation or strangulation
- Cuts from broken glass or other sharp objects
- Sunburn or bites
- Manual handling injuries

A risk assessment form should be completed, considering the relevant aspects above by the band health and safety officer.

If a risk assessment is for an outing or trip, it needs to include transport arrangements. Risk assessments for trips to venues/events operated by a third party should include contacting the organiser or manager of the venue/event to check that they have their own risk assessment and that appropriate safety measures are in place.

See **BandSafe #6 – Risk Assessments** for further help in identifying and rating risks.



Health and safety

Manual handling

Band members should be made aware of the dangers of lifting heavy objects and the associated injuries. Manual handling should be included in risk assessments, and measures taken to reduce the risk of injury. These measures may include:

- Ensuring equipment is stored in a suitable bag, box or container that is fit for purpose. These should not be overfilled;
- Consider the minimum number of people required to move particularly heavy objects (e.g. timpani);
- Using trolleys, barrows or carrying straps where necessary.

Typical potential hazards that have been identified are:

- Carrying instruments;
- Carrying chairs and tables;
- Carrying PA equipment;
- Loading vehicles for concerts and events.

Insurance

All bands must be covered by Public Liability Insurance. A copy of the certificate should be displayed in the rehearsal room.

Training and information issues

There may be a number of different training issues to consider in terms of health and safety. These could include:

- Training for your named person for health and safety so that they understand your band's responsibilities in this area, and can take a lead role in ensuring these are met;
- First aid training.





Health and safety

What to do now?

A process for putting a health and safety plan in place

1. Identify a named person responsible for health and safety within the band.
2. Undertake a review of health and safety within the band room and compile a health and safety action plan. This plan should include but is not limited to;
 - a) An agreed fire evacuation plan;
 - b) A list of equipment that requires checking and when these checks are due to be made. This may include boiler services, fire extinguishers, PAT testing. You may also wish to include details of insurance and when this should be renewed;
 - c) Risk Assessments for both the environment and the activities that take place (both within and outside the band room).
3. Any key actions that have arisen from the review (these should be named in the risk assessments) which require urgent attention, how these are going to be resolved, by whom and a timescale.
4. Set a date for a further review. It may be appropriate to have health and safety as a regular item on the committee agenda and for the person with designated responsibility for health and safety to give a regular update.