



eGUIDE

August 2025

Security sub section
Guidance for events in
UK venues

AEV

ASSOCIATION
OF EVENT
VENUES

Resource Background

What is the eGuide?

The eGuide brings together guidance for achieving common standards of health, safety and operational planning, management and on-site conduct for events at all participating AEV member venues. The scope and development of the eGuide follows extensive consultation with operations professionals within the exhibition and event industry to ensure an overall approach that remains broadly acceptable to the community. The status of the eGuide is like that of an Approved Code of Practice. It is an industry-specific guide developed by authorised professionals from the UK event venues. It incorporates health, safety and operational practices that represent compliance with Building Regulations and health and safety legislation.

Now recognised as the industry's best practice document, the eGuide is continually reviewed by working industry professionals who represent the best advice currently available, and who themselves must work within the guidelines in their own professional capacities. Senior representatives from ACC Liverpool, Alexandra Palace, Business Design Centre, Excel London, Farnborough International Exhibition and Conference Centre, Harrogate Convention Centre, Manchester Central, NEC, Olympia Events, QEII Centre, Coventry Building Society Arena, SEC, Silverstone, Telford International Centre, The Brighton Centre, The O2 and The Great Yorkshire Event Centre currently sit on the **eGuide working group**, meeting twice a year to steer the guidance thematically and address any complex or contentious topics. Several additional venues also participate in this process and are gradually moving towards formal adoption of the document themselves. Additionally, **the eGuide sub-committee** works all year round to maintain the detail of the document, ensure consistency and simplify rules and regulations to the greatest possible extent.

The current eGuide sub-committee comprises:

Tim Byrne – Excel London

Ian Tynan - Excel London

Peter Boniface – Excel London

Del Cuttlan – Farnborough International Exhibition Centre

Michelle Baldwin – NEC (chair and chair of the eGuide working group)

Rachel Maybury-Smith - NEC

Paul Brough - Olympia Events

Jill Wadge – SEC

John Crooks - SEC

Instructions from this group are subsequently collated and actioned in the document by Alden Arnold, Head of Commercial and Projects, Association of Event Venues.

By coming together, and proactively seeking to identify where working conditions and regulations are common (or, due to unique site circumstance, different), contributing venues are, in essence, providing the answers to questions that organisers and supplier companies may have resulting in more efficient on-site activity, a smoother operation for the event organiser, and, therefore, a more polished product for the client, exhibitor and visitor.

In competent hands these guidelines should be an invaluable tool, simplifying health & safety planning and management and other operational issues on the floor.

Application

For the purposes of this document the word 'event' will generally apply to any event held in the participating eGuide venues. It must be noted that in multipurpose venues where exhibitions, conferences and other like events can be run alongside sporting fixtures or musical entertainment in arenas, other guidance or legislation may be more applicable for specific activities.

How to Use and Engage with the eGuide

The eGuide will save hours of painstaking and detailed work for any AEV venue seeking to maintain regulations that are compliant with UK law. Notwithstanding a few points of detail, which can be separately annotated, any AEV member venue that hosts any degree of exhibition business activity should be able to adopt these guidelines wholesale. The guide equally provides the basis for organisers to plan the operational management of their event and for suppliers and clients/exhibitors to understand what is required of them.

It must be stressed, however, that this is a **guidance** document. If meticulously followed, it should ensure that users are compliant with current health and safety law. Nevertheless, the particulars of each exhibition (or similar event) should still be considered on an individual basis and venues, organisers, suppliers and clients/exhibitors must all remember that it is ultimately their responsibility to ensure that they address health & safety, and other operational issues properly, in compliance with the law.

It must also be stressed that all employers have a legal duty to employ staff that are competent to manage health & safety, and other operations that are relevant to their level and range of responsibilities. This guidance alone is not a substitute for proper training and experience.

The committee welcomes any constructive comment on these guidelines. If you feel you can contribute, please email eguide@aev.org.uk, and your point will be considered at the next committee meeting.

If you require additional health & safety support there are several specialist companies providing consultancy, training and floor management capabilities within ESSA and AEO Associate membership.

EIA note on legal compliance

The Association of Event Venues (AEV), Association of Event Organisers (AEO) and Event Services and Suppliers Association (ESSA) are managed by the Event Industry Alliance (EIA) secretariat. EIA advocates those members of all three associations work within or beyond the requirements of UK law. Where a British standard, Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance, approved code of practice, other central or local government guidance or examples of case law suggest that specific working methods or standards are needed to meet the requirements of UK law, the EIA advocates that members adopt these. In instances where groups of members wish to collaborate on finding alternative, but equally as safe, methods of work that they feel are more suited to the operational constraints of the event industry than those described elsewhere, the EIA will facilitate that collaboration and any benchmarking or hazard and operability study (HAZOP) activity that is required, advise members of their specific duties and liabilities and, where requested, publish their findings, typically within the eGuide. The EIA cannot and does not however officially advocate any

standard or working practice other than those produced by HSE, British Standards Institution (BSI) or other government agencies and offices, whether published within the eGuide or not, and reminds all organisations, members and non-members alike, that it is their individual responsibility to assess the risks of their work and to establish practices that comply with the law and that prevent work-related injury and ill-health.

Security

Other relevant sections: Emergencies

Subsections:

General Guidance

- Bag Searches
- Official Passes
- Advice for Exhibitors and other Event Participants
- Emergency Procedures

General Guidance

1 Event organisers are reminded that it is ultimately their responsibility to ensure that sufficient security and stewarding staff are appointed to their event and to always liaise closely with the venue, from the earliest opportunity. Some venues insist on the use of their in-house teams; others have approved lists of suppliers. The venue will work with the organiser and their supplier to develop a staffing schedule for security, stewarding, front-of-house and visitor management staff. This may need to meet minimum requirements.

2 Manning levels should be determined by suitable and sufficient risk assessments to cover all eventualities and event requirements such as evacuation, access control, perimeter control, incident management, security of products and health and safety.

3 Organisers are advised to discuss the profile of the event with the security team and venue to identify the overall security measures appropriate for the event.

4 A counter-terrorism risk assessment should be carried out in advance of the event and shared with the venue and security provider.

5 Organisers should also consider:

- Overnight cover
- Which/how many doors will need to be open during build-up and breakdown
- Exhibitor access during the show including re-stocking
- How valuables will be secured
- Informing/educating exhibitors and other event participants about security risks

6 It is important that the organiser is aware of the different roles and functions of security and stewarding personnel. The venue's Security Manager can advise on these. Compliance with SIA (Security Industry Authority, the regulatory body of the security industry) guidelines is a legal requirement for venues and organisers.

7 During an event, Event Security Officers will always be in contact with the venue's Control Room and should be the first point of contact for all security issues. If a major security concern should arise, then the venue's Event or Duty Manager should also be notified. Security Officers will all be fully briefed on the venue's emergency procedures and will assist in these circumstances.

8 It may be possible for the organiser to use their own security staff at some venues. This should be discussed with the venue security team.

9 Organisers are reminded not to leave their event offices unstaffed and unlocked at any point during the event.

Bag Searches

10 Bag search requirements should be discussed with the venue; they may be compulsory, depending on the prevailing security alert status.

Official Passes

11 Organisers should always use a pass system for contractors, exhibitors and their own personnel from the start of tenancy. Pass holders should be issued, so that passes can be worn. During build-up, open period and breakdown of an event, admittance may be refused to anyone who cannot produce an official identification pass. All doors in use must be staffed and access should be restricted to staffed doors only. This is both for security and health and safety reasons.

Advice for Exhibitors and other Event Participants

12 Organisers should implement an effective method of communicating the following information to their exhibitors and other relevant parties:

13 There are many different contractors and exhibitors working within an event; products are on open display and can therefore be vulnerable. Exhibitors are responsible for the security of their goods and for taking out insurance. Please take a few moments to consider how you can secure your products and belongings while on-site. The following tips should assist you:

- Ensure you have adequate insurance to cover all items taken to the event
- Contact the event security company or venue security team for advice on how to secure the items. There may be an overnight secure store for valuable items
- Consider a lockable area or cabinet on your stand; ensure you have unique locks and keys (Request non-generic locks from the stand builder or furniture hire company)
- Lock away your personal possessions during the event
- Do not leave your items unattended at any time during build-up, the open period or the breakdown of the event
- Do not leave the venue until all visitors have gone each evening
- Think about how you design the stand and position desirable items, especially where you may not be able to keep an eye on them. Seek advice, particularly if you intend to display jewellery
- Always secure desirable and vulnerable items. Typically, these are: plasma screens, laptop computers, mobile phones and handbags
- Ensure you have enough staff, so that your area is not vulnerable to thieves and do not ask anyone else to watch over your property while you go for a break. They may become busy and not be able to keep an eye on it
- Remove all portable or valuable items each evening, especially on the evening the show closes. Do not leave them until the following day for collection
- Arrive in time for the event. Ensure your area is staffed at least 15 minutes before show open time each day, but remember that the hall is normally open from 0800 hours
- Ensure cash boxes are secured; use a money belt or 'bum bag'
- Use a night sheet, if available
- Hire an alarm for your area if you have valuable or portable items

- Consider a dedicated static guard
- Speak to the venue or stand builder about dedicated CCTV. Some venues offer stand CCTV for hire
- If you are a victim of theft, please report it immediately
- Make frequent checks around your area to ensure that no unidentifiable packages, cases or bags have been left on or near your stand
- Always Remain vigilant; be aware of suspicious people, incidents and packages
- Don't look after items belonging to other people; never touch or move unattended items
- Consider 'intellectual property theft' – can photographs be taken of sensitive information, machinery parts etc.?
- When leaving your area each night you must ensure that:
 - Machinery and appliances are switched off
 - Doors and windows are secured
 - Areas are clear of staff and visitors
- In the case of a security emergency or if you see anything suspicious, call the venue emergency number. Co-operate fully with any instructions you may be given

Emergency Procedures

14 Organisers must ensure that they, their team members, contractors and exhibitors are made aware of the venue's emergency procedures. These will differ by venue, so it is important that the procedures are communicated effectively.