

Risk Management and School Excursions

School Excursions

Museums and galleries have a number of responsibilities to uphold in participating as a host venue for school excursions.

The Department of Education and Training has an Excursion Policy that lists the requirements for the conduct of excursions by schools and units of the Department. In doing so it outlines the need for schools to conduct a risk assessment and to develop a risk management plan before seeking approval for any excursion.

Under the OHS Act and Regulation, principals and teachers organising excursions are required to ensure the health and safety of students, staff and excursion volunteers. This process aims to identify potential risks and their impacts, and a visit to the proposed excursion site by teachers is recommended. The Department of Education and Training Excursion Policy is available on the Department's website at: https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_admin/excursions/excursion_pol/PD20040010.shtml

What is Risk Management?

Risk management involves the identification, measurement, control and minimization of risks within your organisation. It is a process that requires ongoing monitoring and evaluation. The purpose of risk management for school excursions is to make excursions as safe as possible, and involves the identification of hazards, followed by the elimination or control of the potential risks associated with the excursion.

Developing a Risk Management Plan for School Excursions

The Excursion Policy is directed at schools and teachers initiating school excursions, however museums and galleries should be aware of the issues and procedures involved. Although not a requisite, you may choose to assist schools in this process by developing your own risk assessment and management plan, which may be reviewed and reused by schools wishing to attend your organisation. This may assist in making your institution a more viable option for school excursion.

An example of a Risk Management Plan for school excursions, along with information regarding this topic, is available on The Department of Education and Training's website at:

https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_admin/excursions/excursion_pol/PD20040010.shtml

The Lithgow State Mine Heritage Park and Railway has developed its own school excursion Risk Management Plan, which can be viewed at:

<http://www.statemine.org.au/learn.htm>

(Click on link to OHS Risk Management Plan near bottom of page).

It is also advisable that you speak to other stakeholders, such as museums, sector support agencies and schools, along with relevant council representatives, in developing a Risk Management Plan.

Risk Management for Museums and Galleries

Risk assessment and management should not be restricted to school excursions, and a Risk Management Plan should be developed and incorporated into the overall management of your organisation. Volunteering Australia has prepared an excellent publication, *Running the Risk? Risk Management Tool for Volunteer Involving Organisations*, which can be downloaded from their website at:

http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/html/s02_article/article_view.asp?id=129&nav_cat_id=164&nav_top_id=61&dsa=2178

Running the Risk is a practical tool to assist volunteer organisations in identifying their risks and implementing effective strategies for managing those risks. It is also advisable that you speak to other stakeholders, such as museums and museum advisers, in developing a Risk Management Plan.

Disaster Plans

Even if a Risk Management Plan is implemented, accidents may occur. It is therefore necessary to have a Disaster Preparedness Plan, which is an outline for people to follow in the event of a disaster. A useful resource for assisting in this process is *Be Prepared: Guidelines for small museums for writing a disaster preparedness plan*. This is available for downloading from the AMOL website at: http://www.collectionsaustralia.net/sector_info_item/2

Occupational Health and Safety

Museums and galleries are also required to follow occupational health and safety standards as outlined by the OHS Act and Regulation. For further information on these requirements contact WorkCover NSW on (02) 43221 5000 (Head Office) or access their website at: <http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au>

This organisation provides free kits and information on managing workplace risks. Useful documents that provide assistance and advice for small to medium sized businesses include the *Small Business Safety Starter Kit* and the *Risk Management at Work Guide*.

Insurance

Appropriate insurance cover is vital for all organisations and is a necessary risk management tool for the protection of volunteers and paid staff, as well as clients, customers and anyone else visiting your site. Insurance should also be considered for your organisation's collection. There are many different types of insurance, including Volunteer Personal Accident Insurance and Public Liability Insurance. It is advisable that volunteer organisations seek professional advice in addressing this issue.

In regards to your collection, rather than insuring the whole collection it may be worthwhile undertaking a risk assessment to determine how to alleviate real or potential risks. This is something that will have to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The following contacts can be of assistance in identifying your organisation's insurance needs:

- The *Arts Insurance Handbook: A Practical Guide for Artists and Arts Organisations*. Copies can be purchased from the Arts Law Centre of Australia. For more information please contact Arts Law via telephone: (02) 9356 2566, toll free: 1800 221 457, email: artslaw@artslaw.com.au or access their website at: <http://www.artslaw.com.au>
- *Australia Council* has produced a booklet entitled *Risk Management and Insurance for Arts Enterprises*. The booklet can be downloaded from their website at: http://www.ozco.gov.au/arts_resources/other/risk_management_and_insurance_for_arts_enterprises/
- The *Insurance Council of Australia Ltd* provides information on consumer guides, codes of practice and where to go for help regarding insurance related matters. This information is available on their website at: <http://www.insurancecouncil.com.au>
- Historical societies and organisations with a historical focus may be eligible to join the *Royal Australian Historical Society* (RAHS) which can in addition entitle your organization to join their Public Liability and Personal Accident/ Voluntary Workers Insurance Scheme. RAHS can be contacted via telephone: (02) 9247 8001, email: history@rahs.org.au, or the internet: <http://www.rahs.org.au/>
- *Our Community* provides facts sheets on insurance and risk management, available from their website at: <http://www.ourcommunity.com.au>

NSW Child Protection Legislation

The Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998 (NSW) relates to employment that involves direct unsupervised contact with a person under 18 years of age. Child related employment includes work as a volunteer. New employees in child related employment, in both paid and unpaid capacities, are required to disclose to their employer whether or not they are a prohibited person. For the purposes of the Act, a 'prohibited person' is a person convicted of a serious sex offence. Further information relating to the Act, along with advice such as how to adopt a policy statement in relation to child protection, and how to provide training and awareness about child protection issues, is available from the Commission of Children and Young People's website at:

<http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au>.

Training

Finally, it is necessary that all staff members are trained on health and safety practices and child protection issues. They should also be familiar with your organisation's Risk Management Plan and Disaster Plan. This will assist in ensuring the health and safety of all those who visit your excursion-friendly organisation.

Disclaimer: Information provided on this information sheet is a guide only. Organisations should seek legal advice for their specific circumstances.