

IF Oxford: Friday 17 Oct – 2 Nov 2025

RISK ASSESSMENT for events taking place in physical and digital venues across the Festival.

This risk assessment covers the Festival as a whole.

Each activity provided by an external partner will have its own individual risk assessment.

Provider	Oxfordshire Science Festival (T/A IF Oxford)
Activity description	Events and hands-on activities in physical and digital spaces
Who will be exposed to the hazard?	Oxfordshire Science Festival staff, speakers, volunteers, members of the public, contractors
	These risk identification documents consider any hazards specific to the activity greater than everyday hazards such as slipping, tripping or falling on stairs, trapping fingers in doors and cuts and bruises which are inherent in all environments.

Events in digital spaces Approx. 10% of the 2025 Festival will take place on digital platforms including Zoom and YouTube		
Hazard	Control measures	Rating after control measured applied
Disruption	☐ Audience members are required to pre-register for Festival events, and only registered attendees will be given access to the event platform. ☐ The Festival is a busy environment where people may become agitated for any number of reasons. Event organisers reserve the right to refuse admission or remove people from a digital event, without refund, for reasons of disruptive behaviour or non-compliance of rules or regulations. ☐ Some events will be held as Zoom webinars, where audience members will have cameras and audio disabled upon entry to the event. Questions will be submitted by text-based Q&A, which will only be visible to event admins and panellists. ☐ A small number of events requiring audience participation will be held as Zoom Meetings where audience members will have cameras on (with an option to turn them off if they prefer), and microphones muted on arrival. Admins will unmute audience members to give them the opportunity to speak. ☐ If an individual is behaving in a disruptive manner, a member of Festival staff (or designate) should observe the following procedure: 1. (If appropriate) thank the attendee for their comments (which may be forwarded to the Festival Director) 2. Ask the attendee if they could conclude their remarks / cease their disruptive behaviour to allow others to enjoy the Festival 3. Ask the attendee to cease causing disruption or they will be muted and if necessary, removed from the platform. ☐ Attendance at IF Oxford signifies agreement to comply with the Guidance for Attending: https://if-oxford.com/about/attendance-policy/	Low

Child Protection including vulnerable adults Accusations of abuse or complaints relating to children and vulnerable adults	☐ The Festival has a full Safeguarding Vulnerable People policy, which can be found here: Safeguarding Vulnerable People Policy The Festival aims to adopt the highest possible standards and take all reasonable steps in relation to the safety and welfare of the children and vulnerable adults in accordance with The Protection of Children Act 1999. Through implementation of the policy, the Festival seeks to protect children (including young people under the age of 18 years) and vulnerable adults and to keep them safe from harm when in contact with Festival staff and volunteers (whether acting in a paid or unpaid capacity). ☐ One-to-one contact with children and vulnerable adults should be avoided. ☐ In digital events Q&A / chat functions, anyone representing the Festival or its partners should not make suggestive or inappropriate remarks to or about a child or vulnerable adult, even in fun, as this could be misinterpreted ☐ Good practice includes valuing and respecting children and vulnerable adults as individuals and modelling of appropriate conduct which would exclude bullying, aggressive behaviour, racism, sectarianism or sexism	Low
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Events in physical spaces In 2025, approx. 90% of Festival events will take place in pre-booked, managed, indoor and outdoor environments		
Hazard	Control measures	Rating after control measured applied
Virus transmission (COVID-19)	☐ There are currently no Governmental COVID guidelines in place. Should there be a resurgence in COVID, the relevant guidelines be followed. ☐ Visitors will pre-book and numbers of attendees will be strictly limited according to current Government guidelines. ☐ Event coordinators will be informed of audience names in advance, and will check tickets on arrival ☐ As part of the booking confirmation and reminder process, visitors will be advised not to attend if they are feeling unwell or showing symptoms of COVID-19 ☐ Face coverings will be available at events should people wish to use them ☐ Anyone showing symptoms of COVID-19 will be asked to leave ☐ Hand sanitiser will be available at entrances to all events	Low
Equipment set up in advance of the event	☐ Arrangements for access will be made with site custodians / venue managers ☐ Members of the public will be asked to keep their distance ☐ Any equipment that is shared should be sanitised before and after use.	Low
Loading / unloading congestion	☐ Site staff and Festival stewards will monitor unloading areas to ensure no congestion, moving people and cars on if necessary ☐ Cars must park where directed for unloading and display a notice as to how they can be contacted if the vehicle is left unattended while deliveries being made. ☐ Once unloaded, vehicles will be moved to public car parks	Low
Heavy boxes and equipment	☐ Festival staff / volunteer stewards will be briefed in manual handling training and appropriate equipment provided.	Medium

	☐ Department / Faculty staff / event co-ordinators / custodians should have had manual handling training from their institution ☐ Where necessary, professional removers will be contracted to move bulky / heavy items	
Electrical equipment	☐ It is suggested that all exhibitors have electrical equipment PAT tested, with an in-date test sticker, however this is not mandatory. The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 require that any electrical equipment that has the potential to cause injury is maintained in a safe condition. The Regulations do not specify what needs to be done, by whom or how frequently (ie they don't make inspection or testing of electrical appliances a legal requirement, nor do they make it a legal requirement to undertake this annually). ☐ A visual inspection will be conducted before using any electrical equipment	Low
Housekeeping Slips, trips and falls	☐ Before event, conduct a visual check for any physical slip / trip hazards, and alert audience members to any hazards	Low
Accidents Illness / injury	For serious accidents, contact the Emergency Services immediately on 999 giving the exact location of the event. Closest Accident and Emergency Department: John Radcliffe Hospital, Headley Way, Headington, Oxford OX3 9DU. Tel: 01865 220208 / 01865 220209	Low
Fire	For Zone events, emergency exits and muster points will be clearly marked in Exhibitor Packs, provided to all exhibitors in advance of the event. For smaller events, emergency exits and muster points will be verbally pointed out as part of the event introduction. For serious incidents, contact the Emergency Services immediately on 999 giving the exact location of the event	Low
Overcrowding	☐ Venue managers will be informed of the event well in advance – to include date, time and expected numbers ☐ Room capacities will not be exceeded ☐ Pre-booked events: check tickets against booking form at door ☐ Non-ticketed events: use clickers to ensure room capacities are not exceeded. ☐ Operate a first come, first served policy	Low

	Adequate stewards will be provided for the number of people expected	
Disruption	☐ The Festival is a busy environment where people may become agitated for any number of reasons. Event organisers reserve the right to refuse admission or remove people from the event, without refund, for reasons of disruptive behaviour or non-compliance of rules or regulations. ☐ If an individual is behaving in a disruptive manner, a member of Festival staff (or designate) should observe the following procedure: 1. (If appropriate) thank the attendee for their comments (which may be forwarded to the Festival Director) 2. Ask the attendee if they could conclude their remarks / cease their disruptive behaviour to allow others to enjoy the Festival 3. Ask the attendee to cease causing disruption or they will be asked to leave the venue. 4. Inform the attendee that site security or the police will now be contacted. ☐ Festival staff and volunteers should NEVER put themselves at risk of harm and if the situation needs it, the police should be called immediately. ☐ Attendance at IF Oxford signifies agreement to comply with the Guidance for Attending: https://if-oxford.com/about/attendance-policy/	Low
Evacuation	☐ If an evacuation is required, The Festival's EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN will be activated (see below). ☐ All Festival and Departmental staff / Exhibitors will be made aware of each venue's evacuation procedures ☐ In the event of an event taking place in a public space such as a shopping centre, the emergency protocols of that space will be followed.	

Lost children	☐ Visitors will be asked to ensure children under 16 years old are accompanied by an adult / carer at all times. Unaccompanied children will not be admitted into Festival events ☐ Children and vulnerable adults should be accompanied by a responsible adult, teacher, parent, guardian or carer at all times ☐ All volunteers / staff will ensure that they are never left alone with a lost child or vulnerable adult. Any lost child will be brought by at least two members of staff/volunteers to the lost child meeting point ☐ All event organisers will be made aware of the needs of vulnerable groups, see policy below As contact with children and vulnerable adults on a one-to-one basis is minimal at the Festival, DBS disclosure of staff / volunteers is not normally required.	Low
Child Protection including vulnerable adults Accusations of abuse or complaints relating to children and vulnerable adults	☐ The Festival has a full Safeguarding Vulnerable People policy, which can be found here: Safeguarding Vulnerable People Policy The Festival aims to adopt the highest possible standards and take all reasonable steps in relation to the safety and welfare of the children and vulnerable adults in accordance with The Protection of Children Act 1999. Through implementation of the policy, the Festival seeks to protect children (including young people under the age of 18 years) and vulnerable adults and to keep them safe from harm when in contact with Festival staff and volunteers (whether acting in a paid or unpaid capacity). ☐ Physical contact with children and vulnerable adults should be avoided ☐ Do not take a child or vulnerable adult to the toilet ☐ Do not spend time alone with a child or vulnerable adult on his/her own. If you find you are in a situation where you are alone with a child or vulnerable adult, make sure that you can be clearly observed by others ☐ Do not engage in a personal relationship with a child or vulnerable adult ☐ Do not make suggestive or inappropriate remarks to or about a child or vulnerable adult, even in fun, as this could be misinterpreted ☐ Good practice includes valuing and respecting children and vulnerable adults as individuals and modelling of appropriate conduct which would exclude bullying, aggressive behaviour, racism, sectarianism or sexism	Low

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EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

A critical incident may be defined as an unexpected event or events, usually sudden, which involves the experience of significant personal distress to a level which potentially overwhelms normal responses, procedures and coping strategies and which is likely to have large-scale consequences. This may be a major incident in which employees, volunteers and/or members of the public are under serious physical or emotional threat, with fatalities as a potential outcome.

Line of Authority EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

Under serious threat conditions, quick access to information and people is crucial, using a clear Line of Authority understood by all staff and volunteers, which is:

1. **Festival Director** is in charge unless a statutory authority has assumed command (eg. Police, Ambulance or Fire Brigade)
2. **Festival Manager** is immediate deputy in absence of 1.
3. **Chair of Trustees** to deputise in absence of 2.
4. **Trustee** to deputise in absence of 3.
5. **Festival steward acting as a zone leader** to deputise in the unlikely absence of 1,2,3 or 4.

Acting on behalf of the Festival, the Line of Authority (1-5 above) may take advice from local venue or area managers and will make it clear that instructions from the local venue or area manager are to be followed without question.

This Plan notes that the police will be pre-warned about large-scale events (1,000+ people)

This Plan recognises that the Line of Authority may have to act rapidly with or without access to any communications devices.

It is the responsibility of the Line of Authority to:

- establish a basic overview of an emerging incident
- identify and communicate a responsive action plan that prioritises the saving of lives
- prevent escalation of the incident
- enrol the Line of Authority and other suitable individuals to cascade information and provide physical assistance to others
- inform statutory authorities or communications platforms and prepare an incident report as necessary.

Guidance for emergency response EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

If a critical incident is developing consider the following:

- With the full confidence that you may be at the front of the Line of Authority, provide instructions like:
- “This is not a drill”
- “A serious threat is developing.”
- “Do not collect belongings.”
- “Do not use your phone unnecessarily”.

A fire alarm, digital communications infrastructure, a PA system, or mechanical device may assist in drawing rapid attention to the emerging incident.

Note that it may be more appropriate to shout loudly and identify yourself and the emerging threat, or it may be more appropriate to remain discrete and to cascade messages to colleagues in the Line of Authority first.

Example incidents are:

Bomb (or any) Threats - record information (including nature of communication) in clear, accurate and objective language

Suspicious Packages - gather information on the package (delivery details, smells, noises) without touching or moving it

Vehicle used as a weapon - move people out of the predicted and potential pathway of the vehicle; disperse crowd

Gun, knife or any other hand-held weapon - disperse crowd; place suitable objects in the pathway of projectiles

Collapsing building or other heavy infrastructure - disperse crowd far from potential impact area

Fire, hazardous substance or explosion - disperse crowd far from potential impact area

Best practice advice from UK Counter Terrorism Policing is to:

- **Run** to a place of safety (this is a far better option than to surrender or negotiate), which may be into or out of a building
- **Hide** in a safe place with your phone on silent if there is nowhere else to go, barricading yourself in if necessary
- **Tell** the Police using 999 or 112 only when it is safe to do so.

Emergency Services 999 or 112

It is important to establish connection with the Emergency Services as soon as possible as they are best placed to offer advice as a situation unfolds. The venue may or may not be cordoned off by Emergency Services depending on the severity of the incident.