



Reviewed March 2025

Oxford Cherwell Brass BandSafe 7: Health and Safety Plan

Health and Safety Guidelines for Bands

This checklist will help all bands 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.

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 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.

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 Safeguarding procedures and Whistle Blowing Policy)
- 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.



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.
- 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.

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. If the parent cannot be contacted or delay in arrival will put the child at risk seek medical attention for them.
- 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. However, in extreme circumstances (such as the emergency vehicle being delayed) the child’s medical status must come first. In unlikely event of this occurring it would be best practice for 2 adults to travel with the child.)

Fire Safety / Emergency procedures

- Access to a telephone is essential at all times, in case of emergency.
- Include fire safety within the risk assessment considering high risk areas and the storage of combustible material and what measures are in place (i.e. Fire Blankets / Extinguishers)
- Fire Extinguishers to be checked annually and included within risk assessment review
- An evacuation procedure considering emergency exits, assembly points and provision for vulnerable members



Completing Risk Assessments

A risk assessment form should be completed taking in to account; the physical environment, the activities that take place, 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, then, 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

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 a person (probably a committee member) that is declared responsible for Health and Safety.

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 or 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.

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 particular heavy objects (such as 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.



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)
 - d. 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.
3. 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.

OCB statement: The Health and Safety Plan points listed above are addressed in the standing risk assessment for regular band activities and, where appropriate, are included in the model risk assessment for events..