Event safety matrix

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The Risk map will help you and your co-instructors be aware of major risks and have some processes in place to manage them. Loquiz is providing companies with the tools to run events, so here is our due diligence – an approach that you can use to build your own Risk map for an activity.

We are talking about the risks in a wider meaning – everything that can affect your event and are not just the participants`health risks. To put it simply – the risks that things do not work out as planned.

Basic risk management consists of three steps:

1. risk mapping (what can happen?)
2. risk assessment (what is the likelihood of it happening and what are the consequences?)
3. risk management (what do we do to prevent it from happening and to reduce the consequences?)

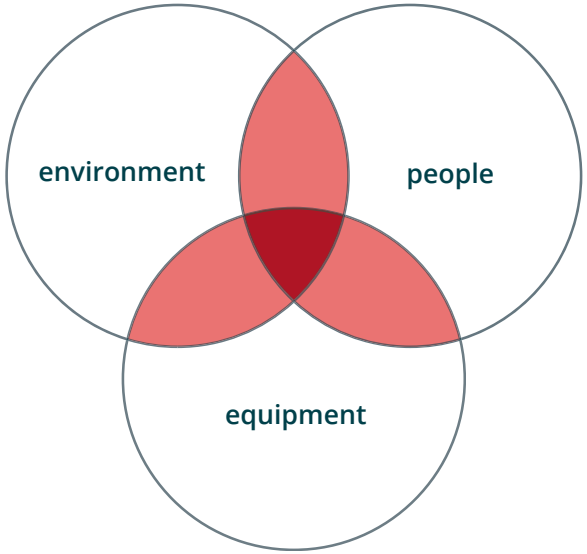
All the steps are integrated into one risk map, so print out or fill it up online.

I Mapping threats.

Start with mapping the threats. Threats are something that pose risk for the outcome of your event and they can mainly come from three sources:

- environment (physical objects like lakes, mountains; weather like rain, snow, temperature; traffic, etc.) ,
- people (participants` actions and other persons (like thieves in some areas) and
- equipment (in our case tablets mainly, but you may use additional equipment like bikes, ropes etc).

Biggest threats are very often the combination of those three.



It might be a good idea to map general and location/group specific threats separately. So you have one list for the activity anywhere it is run (like the batteries of tablets running empty etc.) and then specific for the area (like if there is a lake or a river). Also you can make an additional Risk map for a group if the group is special (like kids etc.).

Risk map for . . . .

Threat (what affects us?)	Result/ Severity	Risk/ Probability	Risk management (what do we do to control that?)	Remaining risk (color mapping)

There are several processes for mapping threats.

- Expert opinion – you and your team are experts so you can map from the experience. This is a very efficient approach when you have already some experience with the matter and the aim is to document this experience to make it more systematic. It usually focuses on things that have actually happened, so all the threats are somewhat likely. The drawback here is that the view might be limited.
- Brainstorm approach – thinking what could possibly happen. This is less efficient because you will usually get a long list of stuff that could happen but will probably not happen within your lifetime (like an asteroid hitting the city where you are running your event). But you might catch more unlikely threats that way.

Usually the combination of both works well.

II Assessing risks.

Prepare the list of threats before you start assessing them. Some threats are more likely to happen, some have very serious outcomes.

Assign the likelihood and severity of each hazard (take a look at the matrix to see one possible scale). A good idea is to color the outcome as well – just color the two cells according to the color in the matrix, so you know later what to focus on.

How do you know what value to give to each hazard?
General risk management matrixes have very often high/medium/low approach. We have tried to explain clearly what every value actually means from the event`s point of view. So this gives you two scales:

1. likelihood –happens in every event up to never occurred
2. severity – affects one team up to affects a person`s health.

You see the severity here is skewed – everything that can threaten the life or health is extremely severe in our table. Feel free to use the matrix as a base or modify it according to your needs. The bottom line here is that you have some kind of descriptive meaning behind every value so you can be consistent with all the hazards and also that the mapping is meaningful later.

III Managing risks.

Now we know what can happen and how often and with what results it can happen. We know what to focus on to reduce the risks to the acceptable level.

If you have color coded your risk assessment, look at your map. The focus is usually the following:

1. **Black is a showstopper**. If there is a black this needs to be dealt with before the event can be run. Otherwise it will not be carried out.
2. **Red is critical**. If there is red then there needs to be a process and a deadline in place to fix it. Also the process of the action for an instructor if it occurs. If this cannot be fixed in short term then the service is discontinued.
3. **Yellow needs managing.** Usually steps to make it occur less often and make the outcome less severe. So there needs to be a process for all the yellows.
4. **Green is something that usually needs communication** so people (instructors and players) will be aware of them. Also very often absolutely outrageous ideas fall into a green sector, so some threats might be eliminated from the list.
5. **White is accepted** and dealt on spot if it should appear.

In short – write down an action to every threat that is still valid and important.

LIKELIHOOD – how likely is it for this to occur	CONSEQUENCES - what is the severity of the outcome in case the event occurs			
	MINOR –technical issues affecting one or few teams	**SERIOUS** -technical issues affecting all teams i.e. an event	**CRITICAL** – issues affecting the whole event	**CATASTROPHIC** – if this occurs then it affects health
FREQUENT – occurs almost in every event sometimes many times				
PROBABLE -more than half of the events				
OCCASIONAL – frequent instructors have experienced it				
REMOTE – maybe happens once in a year				
IMPROBABLE – has happened once				
INCREDIBLE - never happened				

Theoretically all your actions will fall into one of 4 categories:

1. **Elimination** (sometimes called avoidance). Risks can be eliminated only by stopping any activities that pose that risk. It might be part of your event or full event. Obviously you will eliminate all the rewards as well, so this is radical. However it is extremely useful when planning new services – this will give you insight if you should implement the service in the first place.

2. **Transfer**. Traditionally risks can be transferred to insurance agencies. Usually event companies carry liability insurance of some kind. If you are using subcontractors, then you are actually transferring some of the risks and risk management to them. It is widespread to transfer some risks to participants by liability waivers.

3. **Reduction**. This is where most of the work is done. You reduce the severity of bad weather by bringing rain ponchos. You reduce the outcome of device failure by bringing additional device. Majority of your actions will be in this category.

4. **Acceptance.** When carrying out an event you are accepting all the remaining risks associated with it. Even if you do nothing about them you are still managing them by accepting those willingly or unwillingly.

IV Remaining risk.

Even if you reduce the risks with your actions you are accepting the remaining risk. The question is if you know what the remaining risks are that exist after all the steps are taken and if you have a process to deal with should they still occur.
So, final step is to take your risk management into account and map the remaining risk. Are we doing enough to prevent this from happening? Are we equipped and prepared to deal with it if it should occur?

Your stress level might vary, but I try to make sure that there are all greens and whites in the remaining risk column. This is the minimal acceptable level for me.

Make it a working document so that instructors would actually sign it before running the event so they know what to expect. Keep it live. New data can be added if it comes to your knowledge. You as a service provider are expected to understand the nature of the events you run. This is the tool that lets you map and communicate it.