

# Special events...whose event is it?

By Carlene Brown

**“Whose event, is it?”** This is an important question to ask as it will determine how members manage the special event process. If the event is the member’s event, the member has insurance through WCIA. One misconception is, just because you are the financial sponsor for the event, it does not necessarily make it your event.

If you are transferring the risk to another organization, it is recommended to fully divorce yourself from the event, allowing the other entity to host the event. It is always best practice to have an agreement in place, and the agreement should state that all vendors need to carry the appropriate insurance and list the city/agency as an additional insured. The agreement should also require the entity that is managing the event to collect all this information.

ADM.21 in the WCIA Liability Resource Manual provides the latest indemnification and insurance requirements language that can be used by members. ADM 21 contains a variety of template language for contracts. The manual is located on the [WCIA website](#).

If the member is partnering the event, including, but not limited to, sharing resources and/or activities with another entity, a written agreement should also be created outlining each party’s duties and responsibilities for use and maintenance. The agreement should define the “premises” and clearly indicate which entity is responsible for legal liability during the event and use of premises. It is very important to make sure that the member and the entity you are partnering with has the appropriate staff to conduct the event or the event may need to be cancelled.

All events (except for those protected by the First and Fourteenth Amendments of the US Constitution) must meet minimum insurance requirements. It is important to make sure that the member knows the full details of the event activities to make sure the risk is covered and the amount of insurance the member is requiring is sufficient. WCIA recommends special consideration be given to special events that will attract capacity crowds of participants/visitors or that involve high risk activities such as pyrotechnic displays, service of alcohol, or activities taking place on, in, or near bodies of water.

Typically for events, WCIA recommends a minimum of \$1 million per occurrence, \$2 million general aggregate in Commercial General Liability insurance. However, depending on the activities and risks associated with the activities, WCIA may recommend additional amounts of insurance. For example, when a member allows fireworks as part of a special event, the member should contract with a licensed and reputable pyrotechnic operator, with an agreement

that includes, but is not limited to, \$3-5 million per occurrence in Commercial General Liability Insurance and a \$6-10 million general aggregate. Requiring greater limits of liability insurance (CGL and Liquor Liability) may be appropriate if the event has increased risk exposures, which might include a higher risk location, multiple beer/wine gardens at a single event, live music, and/or an anticipated large number of attendees.

WCIA has a Special Event Tool Kit which has an abundance of information including adopting and enforcing a formal permit process covering event types, permit requirements, facility use agreements, and much more. The [Special Event Tool Kit](#) is also located on the WCIA website.

For non-member operated events, Event Insurance may be available through GatherGuard which can be accessed by the event organizer or vendor on the [WCIA website](#). GatherGuard automatically names the member as an additional insured and includes host liquor coverage. For events involving alcohol, Liquor Liability insurance with a minimum of \$1 million per occurrence is required if you are in the business of manufacturing, distributing, selling, serving, or furnishing alcoholic beverages. GatherGuard is just one option; vendors and organizers may elect to secure event insurance through other brokers and insurers.

Your assigned WCIA Risk Management Representative can also provide with guidance in determining the appropriate insurance coverage requirements to minimize potential risks.