RISK REDUCTION GUIDE
FOR STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Hosting events for your organization and the campus community comes with a lot of responsibility. The health and safety of all involved should always be the primary concern. This guide provides a step-by-step process to assist in creating a comprehensive risk reduction plan. A proactive approach to risk management enables student organizations to create safe environments for everyone involved.

WHAT IS RISK REDUCTION?

Risk reduction is the process of identifying potential harms and negative outcomes from a particular activity, event, or situation - and implementing measures to reduce the chances of harm and negative outcomes. It is a proactive approach that benefits the organization, its members, and community.

WHY IS RISK REDUCTION IMPORTANT?

Student organizations, student members, and advisors aren't exempt from litigation. As a student organization, it is understood that you will do everything in your power to prevent harm or injury from occurring to anyone involved. By taking the time to train on safety, provide proper supervision for activities, and making others aware of potential risk, you can distance yourself and the organization from negligence. Thus, please remember to take your duties seriously. When it comes to hosting events and activities, you can never be too careful.

The University does not expect perfection when hosting events/activities; however, student organizations are expected to reduce as much risk as possible for all members and guests.

GETTING HELP

If you have any questions about organizational risk, we are here to help! Contact Student Involvement or Greek Life.

THE PROCESS

Creating a student organization risk reduction plan involves considering various aspects to ensure the health and safety of all involved. The process below provides a practical framework for developing a thorough risk reduction plan for student organizations.

EVALUATE

BRAINSTORM

RISK
REDUCTION
PROCESS

COMMUNICATE

IDENTIFY

PLAN

BRAINSTORM

IDENTIFY

PLAN

COMMUNICATE

EVALUATE

STEP ONE: **BRAINSTORM**

Think through your organization's events/activities and identify potential risk areas. Some things to keep in mind:

- Determine the best strategy for your organization to identify the potential risks.
- Thoroughly assess all sources of risk, such as environmental conditions, participant behaviors, logistical challenges, policy expectations, and any other relevant factors that could lead to a negative outcome.
- List all risks, whether they are probable or not.
- Consider each risk from various stakeholder perspectives (officer, participant, etc.).

If you're familiar with the event/activity, consider what has happened in the past. If it's new, you can do your own research (online or by speaking to other organizations that have done similar events).

You will want to consider the different categories, such as sporting events, social events with alcohol, new member activities, or events that require transportation, to name a few. From there, you should consider the various activities participants might engage in for each.

EXAMPLE

MEMBERSHIP RETREAT

- Team building ropes course
- Hiking the perimeter trail
- Bonfire and s'mores
- Overnight camp

When brainstorming potential negative outcomes, you should list all possible risks, even if they have a low probability of happening. No matter the event or activity, consider the following to help identify risks:

Location & venue
Environment
Compliance

Communication & awareness
Responding to issues
Liability

HELPFUL TIPS:

Reference your organization's annual calendar or event history on Engage to help identify all events/activities that should be included in the planning process.

Multiple members from your organization should be involved in creating the risk reduction plan. This helps ensure group buy-in. Even if you are familiar with the event/activity, the risk of overlooking something can be mitigated when additional people are involved.
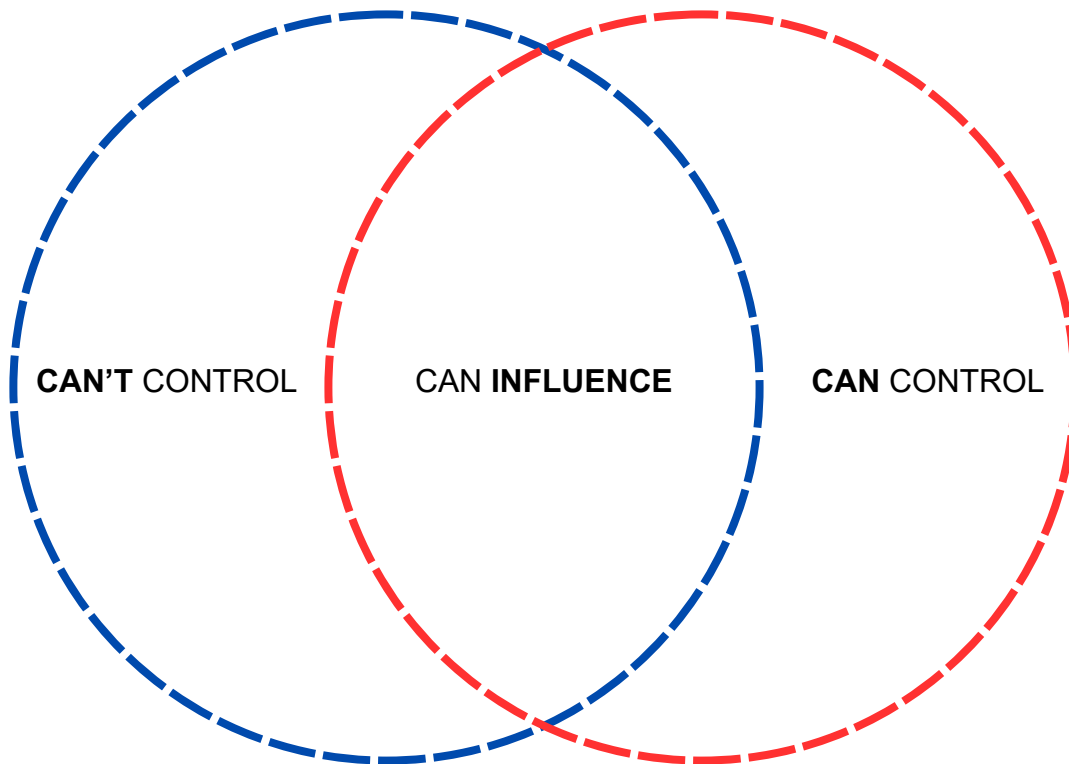
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STEP TWO: **IDENTIFY**

DURING THIS PHASE, YOU NEED TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

WHAT CAN I CONTROL?

WHAT CAN I INFLUENCE?

EXAMPLE

Your organization is hosting a bonfire, and the event will be BYOB. You and other officers have identified an increased likelihood of burn injuries as a potential risk due to alcohol.

CAN'T CONTROL   CAN **INFLUENCE**   **CAN** CONTROL

STEP THREE: **PLAN**

For each possible negative outcome you identified in the brainstorming phase, consider the following:

1   What strategies can be implemented that aim to prevent or reduce the identified risks? Be specific.

2   Who will be responsible for each strategy? Do they have the tools and resources they need to be successful?

3   What training, discussions, or roles and responsibilities need to be developed/take place?

4   What are the behavior expectations for everyone involved (officers, members, guests, etc.)?

5   How will you confront behavior that does not align with established expectations during the event/activity?

6   How will members be held accountable for violating established expectations after the event/activity?

STEP FOUR: **COMMUNICATE**

How will the plan be communicated to all members?

What about guests?

How will everyone involved know what is expected of them?

THIS COULD LOOK LIKE

MEMBERS	GUESTS
Email all planning to attend (e.g., alumni parents and families, etc.) Working with event co-hosts to ensure their members clearly understand expectations. Ensuring event monitors are prepared to reiterate expectations throughout the event.	Provide specifics on Engage in the event description. Visible signage throughout the venue/location (entrance, restroom, common area, etc.). Provide a custom message for all members to share with their guests/friend groups.

HELPFUL TIP

To ensure information is fully understood, communicate it multiple times, using various methods (e.g., verbally, email, reminders via group message, etc.).

STEP FIVE: **EVAULUATE**

Soon after your event, sit down with the members responsible for each strategy, event monitors, officers, etc., to review what went well and what can be improved. Make sure you consider what went well and what needs improvement and document it for the future. If an incident occurred, think through whether anything could have been in place to prevent it from happening.