

## Women's Safety Audits

### Safety audits

Safety audits specifically focus on the prevention of sexual harassment and all forms of assault by increasing women's safety in public places and at public events.

### Safety

In the context of an audit, 'safety' refers to personal safety – specifically, how safe a person *is* and how safe they *feel* in any given environment.

### Process

A safety audit is a process that involves walking through a physical environment, evaluating how safe it feels, identifying ways to make the space safer, and effecting those changes. It often involves surveys or self assessment by attendees during an event.

### Benefits

The benefits of a safety audit:

- Helps organisers understand how different people experience their environments.
- Often results in measurable changes that improve safety for all attendees.
- Encourages individuals to take part in shaping their environment and events.
- Increased feeling of safety among attendees.

### Considerations

Things to consider in conducting an audit

- Lighting level
- Clear signage – navigation of area + emergency contact point
- Audibility of calls for help
- Security/police presence
- Strategies to deal with unsafe behaviour
- Entrapment sites – escape routes and obstacles
- Appearance – vandalism etc.

### Steps for the Audit

A Safety Audit can take various forms. In the instance of an ACT Government event, the following steps are recommended:

## **Pre-event**

- Event coordinator, or other specified person, walks through and audits the site to identify potential issues.
- Event coordinator, or other specified person, develops and implements strategies to address any identified / potential issues.

## **During the Event**

The preferred method would be dependent on available resources; agencies may choose to adopt a variety of methods to collect information.

- Survey female attendees at event to determine their feeling of safety.
- Self-assessments by female attendees at clearly signed designated areas and / or availability of an on-line assessment process.

Some questions for the assessment

Would I feel safe here if I:

- was alone?
- was with children?
- had a disability?
- was an elderly person?
- was part of a racial minority?
- was a newcomer? was an aboriginal person?
- was walking?

## **Post-event**

- Collect the information and analyse results.
- Post-event evaluation and review – review outcomes and develop strategies to address issues of safety identified from the survey / assessments.

Detailed information on conducting a safety audit can be obtained from the following online resources.

<http://www.metrac.org/programs/safety/downloads/metrac.safety.audit.pdf>

[http://www.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/7381\\_86263\\_WICI.pdf](http://www.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/7381_86263_WICI.pdf)