

# SAFELY DOES IT

By Mark Breen

## 17 OVERLOOKED WAYS WEATHER CAN AFFECT YOUR EVENT

I think it's fair to say that, as event organisers, we don't always consider the effect that weather can have on our events.

We're good at considering the weather when we're running an outdoor event as it's quite obvious how the weather may affect us. What can be less obvious however is the effect the weather can have on ALL events, including indoor ones.

I've worked with a range of clients on a variety of events where I've raised the weather as an important consideration during the planning phase only to be met with blank stares, challenges and even the occasional laugh. None of the above bother me as it's part of my job to work with clients so that they understand why we consider these things. If I'm effective in doing that, then that client will likely always consider the weather in future, whether I'm involved in their event or not.

### Running the Risk

In discussing the effects of the weather with clients and stakeholders I often use the same scenario

by way of illustration of some of the more obvious effects the weather can have. I describe an indoor concert event with a headline act popular among teenagers. We discuss those teenagers that queue for 6 hours outside the venue to ensure they get up near the stage once the doors open. We then discuss how the situation changes if the weather is (a) extremely hot or (b) extremely wet.

It generally requires little further input on my part for us all to establish the risks and issues arising out of the situation. Chief among those risks identified is always the resulting wet floor inside the venue in

the wet weather scenario along with the likelihood those teenagers towards the top of the queue will want to run to get their spot at the front of the stage. That running is a much bigger risk on a wet floor.

Discussions similar to the above and more have informed the accompanying infographic entitled '17 Overlooked Ways Weather Can Affect Your Event'.

This is not an exhaustive list, but these are the ones I encounter most often. Let's take a closer look at some of them.

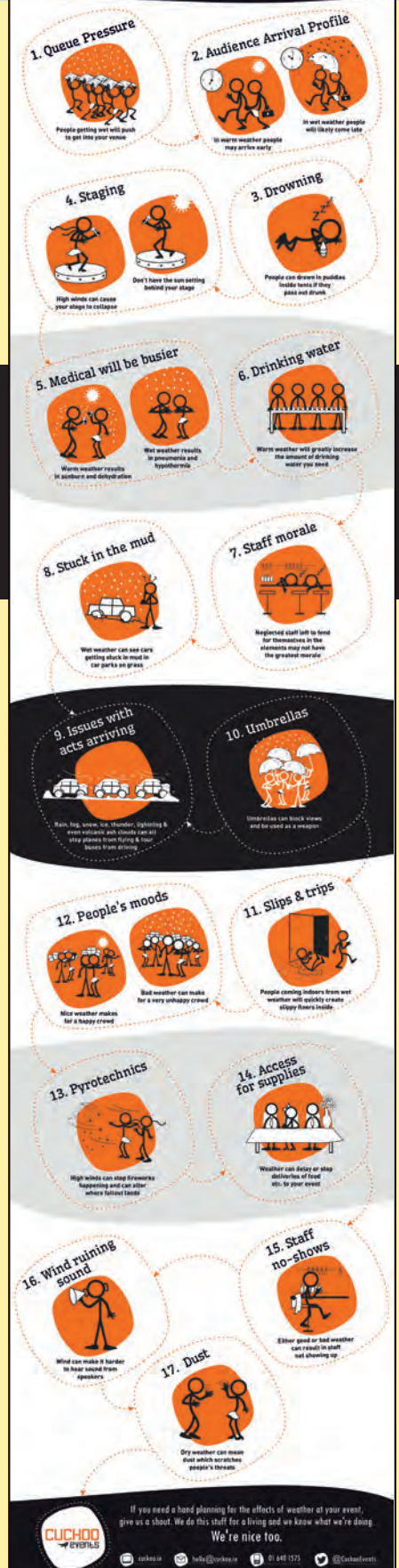
### The Sun

Sunny and warm weather can significantly impact on your event. In the example outlined above, those queuing outside may suffer from sunburn, heat stroke and more. They may need fluids. From a duty of care perspective, you may want to provide them with water and / or shelter. Remember – they're only there because of your event.

The sun can also affect the positioning of the stage if your event is outdoors. I've seen events where the sun is setting behind the stage. This can make for a very pretty photo opportunity but it can also greatly impact your attendees' enjoyment if they're looking straight into the sun while trying to enjoy what's on stage.

Another common issue arising out of good, sunny weather is that of staff not turning up for work. This can often be the case with occasional, part time staff in particular. Being down staff in key areas like behind the bars, security etc., can have a significant impact on your event and your attendees' experiences.

## 17 Overlooked Ways Weather Can Affect Your Event



Your medical resources can find themselves under pressure as a consequence of warm weather too. Dehydration, sunburn and exhaustion are typical issues resulting from warm weather. Dealing with these, usually minor issues, can be a significant drain on your medical cover.

You can never have enough water or access to water at most events. This becomes all the more important when the weather is particularly warm.

### The Rain

Wet weather puts people in a bad mood. Bad moods can lead to a wide range of knock-on effects at events.

Rain can mean that your attendees will turn up later than you'd like or, potentially, earlier than you'd like in order to avoid the chance they'll have to queue outside in the rain. This can affect your plans in a variety of ways.

With rain can come cold and this can cause your attendees to be cold and contract pneumonia and /

or hypothermia. This can be especially likely in outdoor sports events and multi-day festivals.

Umbrellas tend to feature in wet weather and these can block people's views as well as have the potential to be used as weapons.

### The Wind

In extreme circumstances, the wind can result in temporary structures being compromised and potentially collapsing. Wind speeds and effects need to be monitored closely.

On the less extreme end of the spectrum, the wind can wreak havoc with the sound at events, even indoor ones. I worked on an event that was housed in a large warehouse and the wind hitting the building caused a loud noise internally, which made the audio engineers' lives quite difficult.

High or swirling winds can create serious problems for pyrotechnic shows too. Professional pyro operators calculate where the fireworks fallout will land and this can be affected by wind. Worst case scenario, it can mean the cancellation of pyro shows for safety reasons.

### The Bottom Line

This infographic includes 17 overlooked ways weather can affect your events but I'm sure there are more. What I'm hoping to achieve here is to maybe help us, as event organisers, be more cognisant of some of these potential issues.

Many of these effects are in themselves safety issues or can quickly lead to knock-on safety issues. These are universal,

experienced the world over, and can be powerful. Let's all keep them in mind.

**Mark Breen** is Co-Founder & Senior Partner of Cuckoo Events based in Dublin, Ireland. He is an award-winning event Safety Officer and one of the most experienced and qualified event safety practitioners in Ireland. He has worked at the London 2012 Olympics as well as on some of Ireland's largest outdoor events. He writes and speaks regularly on all things event-related, particularly event safety. He is a Graduate Member of the Marketing Institute of Ireland and holds a Postgraduate Diploma in PR & Events. He has specialist qualifications in Spectator Safety Management as well as Crowd Science. He is also soon to begin an MSc in Crowd Safety & Risk Analysis. Mark and the Team at Cuckoo are passionate about helping people run safer events and devote a lot of time to doing so. Mark is very active on Twitter @mark\_breen and @Cuckoo-Events. The multiple award-winning Cuckoo Events website can be found at [cuckoo.ie](http://cuckoo.ie)