

IOSH Branch Meeting

Stop Bashing the Contractor

November 2018



FAIRHURST

Contractor Management – Events and CDM

- CDM only became statutory to the industry following the 2015 regs. ACoP removed its exclusion.
- This along with major events in the UK such as London 2012, Glasgow 2014 has generated increased H&S standards in the events industry
- 3 years on, the safety culture is improving but there is still work to be done in certain areas – particularly around duty holder R&Rs
- Event Staging team are often Client, PC and PD
- Limited number of contractors that can provide services, therefore competition between contractors is not high
 - Often the client NEEDS the contractor, their contractor retains a lot of power

Main challenges for clients and contractors

- Weather
- The “Show Must Go On”
- The ambitions of events
- Budgets decreasing which in turn decreases build and de-rig periods – pressure on contractors
- Multiple events at the same time (summer and winter)
 - Limitations on equipment and
 - Trained and skilled labour

Weather

- Positive and negative implications of extreme weather, unfortunately mainly negative
- The weather is becoming more extreme (wind, rain, warm weather)
- Temporary Demountable Structures have limitations which are now being reached by weather extremes
- Design wind loads
 - The variables (ground make up, ages of competent parts, wind direction, exposure to the wind – tunnel effects)
- Who takes the blame for failures – easy to blame the contractor who built the structure but both client and contractor have responsibilities – client and PD chose the location of the infrastructure.

The “Show Must Go On”

- Long days leading up to the event – fatigue
- Moving away from “Rock and Roll” attitude, the process around CDM have helped this
- Contractors use this to “beat” the safety argument when the pressure is on to meet deadlines
 - “Do you want the event to go ahead”
 - Event time and date needs to be met
 - Risk of contractor “walking off the job”

The ambitions of events

- “The Best Ever”
 - The new title every event strives for
- Pushing the boundaries of safety and entertainment
 - Drive for sales and social media outputs (a “number games” for sponsors)
 - Client pushing contractors as a result
- “Fun Police” when activities are curtailed
 - Far from the aim but there are boundaries
- But first to be used as criticism when a something goes wrong
- The value of safety is not always realised
 - Reputational risk if any event has an incident
 - E.g. Strathclyde Park, Alton Towers
 - visitors number greatly reduced following their incidents

Summary

- Still work to be done to get Events industry under the same mind set and standards (to a certain extent) as construction in relation to safety
- Easy to blame the contractor as “they build it”.
- The design team/PD have may a greater effect than some would wish to consider – or understand
- Are roles diluted due to the event promoter being Client, PC and PD
- PD role not fully considered when accidents happen – particularly in the events industry where knowledge of CDM and the duty holder roles needs great education
- How has the client vetted and audited the contractor to ensure adequacy for the role