

The MVUC Event Planners Guide



Building Our Hill of
DREAMS

*A Checklist
for
Committee Chairs or Anyone Else Hosting an Event at MVUC*

October, 2010

Foreword

MVUC is a busy place! Look at the calendar at any time and you will find dozens of activities taking place all over the Hill, all thorough the week. This is a community, and a shared space, all supported by a limited staff and some hearty volunteers. Thinking of others, planning ahead and coordinating in a timely manner is appreciated by everyone.

This guide is intended to assist event sponsors in planning, carrying out, and closing out successful events that everyone – including the organizers – can enjoy. It provides guidelines in the following areas:

- **Initial Planning Considerations**
- **Reservations and Set Up**
- **Weather Planning**
- **Noise and Neighborliness**
- **Suspicious Persons**
- **Clean Up and Close Out**

There are other sources, **all located on the MVUC web site** (under the *Church Life* tab, in the *Governance* section) an event organizer should consult. They include:

The Leaders Guide, for the following information:

- **Use of the Commons**
- **Use of Bulletin Boards**
- **Use of the Kitchens**
- **Fundraisers**
- **Handling Cash**
- **Building Security**
- **Room Reservations and Set Up**
- **A Complete Planning Checklist**

MVUC Policies for the following information:

- **Alcohol Policy**
- **Child Care and Child Safety**
- **Disruptive Behavior**
- **Authorized Fundraising Events**
- **Use of the Grounds**
- **Smoking Policy**

The How Do I... Guide for the following information:

- **How to Hold an Event**
- **How to Schedule Facilities**
- **Security and Access**
- **Publicity**
- **Emergencies**

This Event Sponsor's Guide is produced by the Program Council. Your suggestions are welcome. You may forward them to the Program Council Convener at any time. The Guide will be reviewed and updated no less than annually. It is available on our website, under the GOVERNANCE tab and may be reproduced without permission.

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Initial Planning Considerations

One of your earliest considerations, before reserving facilities is to determine if you want to hold this activity outdoors, indoors, or both? In any case, follow the guidelines in the How Do I... section of the web for making a reservation and **DO SO AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE**.

An outdoor event takes advantage of our beautiful grounds, but does require some additional planning, primarily as follows:

- Ensure your event can work around airplane noise from National Airport. If flyovers are too disruptive for the planned program, move indoors.
- If audio or other electronics are needed, can the chosen area be supported?

When requesting set up, note this requirement and have the staff confirm if outlets or other requirements can be met. **DO NOT** assume that the audio volunteers who support Sunday services are available.

Weather Planning

Weather happens! Every sponsor for an outdoor activity should have an inclement weather plan in place before the event. Weather planning is important; it should be done early and thoroughly.

Outdoor events by definition require an alternate (indoor) plan, meaning longer lead times and the potential for extra set up requirements. This is not hard to do but if it is ignored or done at the last minute, the results will be poor and unnecessary demands will be placed on others. Consider the following approach to get it right from the outset.

1. One person has the responsibility to make the weather call and to communicate it in a timely manner. Lots of people should consult, but responsibility to make the call is fixed and everyone supporting the event knows who that person is.
2. Normally, a two step process may be followed
 - Make an initial call 12-24 in advance. If the forecast is truly dire, the decision is done. Procrastinating will not change the facts.
 - If the forecast is tenuous, the option remains to make a later call, but no less than 4 hours before the event so that notice may be posted and alternative arrangements carried out.
 - If bad weather has a 40% or better forecast, assume the worst.

3. Prepare an announcement in advance and make arrangements:

- With the office staff for phone message
- With the website editor (if the decision is made early enough)
- With someone to post signs in the entrance to the Commons or other areas as appropriate.

All of these need to be prearranged (especially with the staff and the webmaster) and require only a call each to activate.

4. Ensure your Plan B (if it is to move indoors rather than postpone) fits with other use plans for the property i.e., the alternate space is reserved and if possible, set up in advance (avoiding last minute scrambles and confusion) – talk to the staff specifically to see what makes sense for advance or later set ups due to weather.
5. An activity with a lot of moving parts really needs to have someone designated as the primary coordinator onsite prior to and during final set up and through the event and clean up. That person should also have someone agreeable to running errands and tracking down others, so that the principal coordinator can more easily be found as needed. This makes carrying out changes because of the weather or other factors much easier to carry out.

Noise and Neighborliness

We live in a residential neighborhood. Please ensure that you are a good neighbor by being considerate about noise, music, etc, especially outdoors and especially in the late evening. Please report any complaints to the office.

Suspicious Persons

1. Point out the person to someone else, so two people are observing the individual.
2. Politely approach and engage the person, ask if they are new, and if you can be of assistance. A legitimate visitor will welcome the engagement. Someone with the intent of causing trouble is less likely to do so if they know they have been identified as a new face.
3. Do not be confrontational, but take all threats seriously. If the person is uncooperative or unresponsive, call 911 and report your concern; provide as much information as possible. The police are ready to come out on the basis of your concern; no overt threat need be observed. When the police arrive, meet them as early as possible upon arrival, as in the parking lot, and provide an update of the situation.
4. If possible, a note should be delivered to the minister or whoever is conducting the service if a concern arises during a service and the police have been called.
5. If an incident or disruption breaks out, use the portable radios to notify others with the announcement **“Lock down your rooms.”** Give an **“All Clear”** at the appropriate time.
6. There is no standard response for a disruption or dangerous situation. You will have to use your best judgment as to whether it is best to try to evacuate people, encourage them to stay in place, or other action. **BE AWARE OF ALL THE EXITS AVAILABLE TO YOU.** People tend to go to the door they know best – other, safer exit options may exist.
7. Should an incident occur, once the police arrive, someone should be designated to meet additional police or medical emergency personnel as they arrive on scene.
8. If an incident occurs, even something less than an actual confrontation, you are encouraged to fill out an incident report as soon as possible to capture the maximum amount of information. This could be especially helpful in spotting a repeat pattern of someone suspicious coming on site.

Clean Up and Close Out

1. Everything back in place? (*NOTE: Unless asked by the office, furniture does not need to be rearranged, including chairs*)
2. Area clean?
3. Garbage taken out/ recycled?
4. All appliances and lights turned off?
5. All doors secure?
6. Cash secure?
7. Notes made on any items to report to the office (items broken, problem individuals, supplies low, etc.)?
8. Thank you notes for volunteers?
9. After-Event lessons learned notes to share with next sponsor?