



SoundGirls Best Practices Guide

Creating Safe, Respectful & Professional Live Venues, Festivals & Events

**A Resource for Venue Owners, Venue Managers, Festival Directors,
Promoters, Production Companies, Security Teams, Front of House
Staff, Stage Managers, Crew Chiefs, and Event Professionals**

About SoundGirls

SoundGirls is dedicated to supporting and advancing women and gender-diverse people in professional audio through education, mentorship, networking, training, career development, and community.

Since 2013, SoundGirls has worked to increase opportunities throughout live sound, recording arts, broadcast, post-production, theater, corporate AV, festivals, houses of worship, education, and related fields.

This guide reflects our belief that exceptional events begin with exceptional leadership and that creating safe, respectful workplaces benefits everyone—artists, crew, volunteers, vendors, and audiences alike.

Purpose of This Guide

Live events are among the most complex workplaces in any industry.

Whether producing a concert, festival, theater production, corporate event, broadcast, or community performance, success depends on collaboration between hundreds of people working under tight timelines and constantly changing conditions.

Venue managers and event organizers influence not only operational success, but also the culture, safety, and experience of everyone involved.

This guide offers practical recommendations for creating professional, welcoming, and safe environments for staff, artists, contractors, volunteers, vendors, and audiences.

This document is intended as guidance and does not replace local laws, safety regulations, or organizational policies.

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1. Leadership & Professional Responsibility

Every venue has a culture.

That culture is established by leadership.

Managers influence culture by:

- communicating clearly
- treating everyone consistently
- supporting staff
- recognizing good work
- responding professionally to concerns
- modeling respectful behavior

Professionalism begins with leadership.

2. Creating an Inclusive Venue Culture

Everyone entering the venue should feel welcome.

This includes:

- artists
- crew
- volunteers
- vendors
- security
- media
- patrons

Inclusive venues recognize that people come from many different backgrounds, experiences, identities, and abilities.

Professionalism means creating an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

3. Event Planning & Preparation

Successful events begin long before doors open.

Planning should include:

- accessibility review
- emergency planning

- artist hospitality
- security coordination
- transportation
- credential planning
- volunteer training
- weather planning
- communication systems

Preparation reduces risk.

4. Communication

Communication should be:

- timely
- respectful
- accurate
- accessible

Everyone should understand:

- reporting structure
- emergency procedures
- radio protocols
- schedule updates
- artist movements
- public safety information

Clear communication builds confidence.

5. Supporting Women

Women continue to experience barriers throughout live events.

Venue leadership can help by:

- assigning responsibilities based on qualifications
- ensuring women are represented in leadership roles
- responding promptly to harassment
- encouraging mentorship
- recognizing expertise publicly
- eliminating discriminatory practices

Professional respect should be the standard.

6. Supporting Transgender & Gender-Expansive Staff & Artists

Respect begins with everyday interactions.

Best practices include:

- using chosen names
- respecting pronouns
- maintaining confidentiality
- providing gender-neutral restrooms whenever possible
- offering private changing areas
- protecting personal information
- avoiding assumptions regarding room assignments or facilities

Event staff should be prepared to respectfully assist artists, crew members, and patrons.

7. Accessibility for Crew, Artists & Patrons

Accessibility benefits everyone.

Planning should consider:

Physical Accessibility

- ramps
- elevators
- accessible seating
- accessible parking
- accessible restrooms

Communication Accessibility

- captioning
- assistive listening systems
- visual signage
- accessible websites
- alternative formats

Operational Accessibility

- service animal accommodations
- quiet spaces
- sensory considerations
- emergency evacuation planning

Accessibility should be integrated into every event—not added afterward.

8. Volunteers & Temporary Staff

Volunteers are often the public face of an event.

Provide training on:

- customer service
- accessibility
- emergency procedures
- harassment reporting
- communication
- professionalism

Volunteers deserve the same respect and support as paid staff.

9. Security & Patron Safety

Security should prioritize:

- de-escalation
- professionalism
- communication
- accessibility
- trauma-informed responses

Security personnel should receive training regarding:

- harassment
- discrimination
- LGBTQIA+ inclusion
- disability awareness
- conflict resolution

Safety begins with respectful interactions.

10. Mental Health & Well-Being

Live events can be stressful.

Recognize:

- long hours
- fatigue
- emotional labor

- burnout
- high-pressure decision making

Encourage:

- breaks
- hydration
- adequate staffing
- supportive leadership
- access to wellness resources

Healthy teams create better events.

11. Harassment Prevention

Harassment may occur between:

- staff
- volunteers
- artists
- vendors
- patrons

Policies should clearly prohibit:

- sexual harassment
- bullying
- racism
- homophobia
- transphobia
- ableism
- intimidation
- retaliation

Everyone should know how to report concerns safely.

12. Alcohol & Substance Policies

Events frequently involve alcohol.

Best practices include:

- responsible service
- intoxication response procedures
- staff professionalism
- support for sober staff and artists
- clear expectations regarding substance use during work

Professional standards should remain consistent.

13. Artist Hospitality & Dressing Rooms

Artists deserve privacy and respect.

Provide:

- secure dressing rooms
- private changing areas
- clear credential access
- respectful communication
- confidential schedules

Obtain permission before:

- photography
- filming
- backstage tours
- social media posting

Respect artist boundaries.

14. Festivals & Outdoor Events

Outdoor events require additional planning.

Consider:

- extreme weather
- heat illness
- lightning procedures
- overnight security
- camping safety
- sanitation
- lighting
- transportation
- accessibility across uneven terrain

Large events require continuous risk assessment.

15. Emergency Planning

Every venue should have written emergency procedures.

Plans should include:

- evacuation
- severe weather
- active threats
- medical emergencies
- fire
- equipment failure
- crowd management
- lost children
- missing persons

Conduct regular training and tabletop exercises.

Prepared teams respond more effectively.

16. Environmental Sustainability

Live events have environmental impacts.

Consider:

- recycling
- reusable water stations
- efficient power use
- waste reduction
- sustainable transportation
- environmentally responsible vendors

Sustainability strengthens communities and reduces costs over time.

17. Psychological Safety

The strongest event teams are those where people feel comfortable speaking up.

Encourage:

- reporting hazards
- asking questions
- admitting mistakes
- sharing ideas
- respectful disagreement
- collaborative problem solving

Psychological safety improves both safety and performance.

18. Venue Manager's Checklist

Before the Event

- ☐ Review emergency procedures
- ☐ Confirm accessibility accommodations
- ☐ Verify security staffing
- ☐ Train volunteers
- ☐ Review communication plans
- ☐ Inspect venue safety
- ☐ Confirm artist hospitality
- ☐ Test radios
- ☐ Review weather forecast

During the Event

- ☐ Conduct regular safety briefings
- ☐ Monitor accessibility services
- ☐ Address concerns immediately
- ☐ Support volunteers
- ☐ Maintain communication
- ☐ Monitor crowd conditions
- ☐ Check hydration and staff breaks

After the Event

- ☐ Conduct incident review
- ☐ Debrief with staff
- ☐ Collect feedback

- ☐ Review accessibility successes and challenges
- ☐ Update procedures
- ☐ Recognize staff contributions

19. Sample Code of Conduct

This venue is committed to providing a safe, welcoming, and professional environment for everyone.

All staff, volunteers, artists, vendors, contractors, and patrons are expected to treat one another with dignity and respect.

Harassment, discrimination, intimidation, retaliation, violence, or abusive conduct will not be tolerated.

Everyone shares responsibility for creating a positive event experience.

If concerns arise, they should be reported promptly through established procedures.

Professionalism, collaboration, and mutual respect are fundamental to every successful event.

20. Industry Resources

Professional Organizations

- [SoundGirls](#)
- [Event Safety Alliance](#)
- [International Live Events Association \(ILEA\)](#)
- [Live Music Society](#)
- [Women in Live Music](#)
- [Women in Music](#)

Accessibility

- [Audio Accessibility Alliance \(AAA\)](#)
- [RAMPD \(Recording Artists and Music Professionals with Disabilities\)](#)
- [ADA National Network](#)

LGBTQIA+

- [Voluminous Arts](#)

- [Spark the Noise](#)
- [Pride in Music](#)
- [Global Action for Trans Equality \(GATE\)](#)
- [Transgender Europe \(TGEU\)](#)

Mental Health

- [Backline](#)
- [MusiCares](#)

Hearing Health

- [Hearing Health Foundation](#)
- [Tinnitus Quest](#)

Event Safety & Emergency Planning

- [National Center for Spectator Sports Safety and Security \(NCS²\)](#)
- [Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#)

Final Thoughts

Every venue and event has the opportunity to shape the future of our industry. By prioritizing professionalism, accessibility, safety, and respect, venue managers and event organizers create environments where artists can perform, crews can excel, volunteers can contribute confidently, and audiences can fully enjoy the experience.

These best practices are not simply operational recommendations—they are investments in people. When individuals feel safe, valued, and supported, they communicate more effectively, collaborate more openly, and respond more successfully to the challenges inherent in live events.

The goal is not perfection, but continuous improvement. By embracing thoughtful planning, inclusive leadership, and a commitment to learning, we strengthen our organizations, our communities, and the live entertainment industry as a whole.