

# Arizona State University

## The *Matrix* Planning Guide

This Guide is a tool that will enable you to identify and mitigate risk. You will find an example of how to use the matrix on the following pages. When planning your event, please follow the steps to ensure that you have accurately assessed the risks involved with your events and have taken proactive steps to minimize these risks. For questions on using the matrix, please consult your advisor and/or the SORC staff located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Memorial Union.


The next page is designed to give you a graphical representation of how to use the matrix to plan, identify, and mitigate the risks associated with holding an event. Please refer to it when following the step outlined below. For assistance, we have provided an example event for which we go through each step of the process. Let's get started...

Student Risk Management  
Arizona State University  
Fall 2006

**EVENT:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE OF EVENT** \_\_\_\_\_ **PLANNING DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STEP ONE:** List All Event Activities

Activity




Activities include all aspects of your event

**STEP TWO:** Identify the Risks Associated with each Activity

(Some of the risks were identified from PREFF worksheet on the Event Planning Guide)


Associated Risks



Some examples of things to consider:  
 External - Weather, criminal acts  
 Specific to Organization - Contact sports, weapons, climbing  
 Common Risks - Traveling, crowd control, alcohol, and hazing

**STEP THREE:** Use the Matrix to Assess your Activities, without Using any Methods to Manage your Risks

	Probability Something Will go wrong			
Severity	A	B	C	D
I	5	5	4	3
II	5	4	3	2
III	4	3	2	1
IV	3	2	1	1




Determine your initial score by finding the intersection with the highest score. The lower the score, the lower your risk.

**STEP FOUR:** Brainstorm Methods to Manage Risks. See if you

Method to Manage

can Reduce the Probability that Something Will Go Wrong.

**STEP FIVE:** Return to the Matrix to Re-Assess, using the Methods to Manage Risks.



Determine your initial score by finding the intersection with the highest score. The lower the score, the lower your risk.

**STEP SIX:** Determine Whether or Not Conduct Event and/or Modify/Eliminate Activities

**STEP SEVEN:** Assessment of Event

## **Example Event:**

Student Leaders from a variety of organizations on campus are traveling to a leadership conference in Denver, Colorado.

### **Step One: List all the activities and details associated with this event.**

This step allows you to identify all the activities and details associated with your event. Depending on the event, this list may or may not be as extensive. However, the more information that you provide, the easier it will be to plan the event. Activities include all aspects of your event. For our example the following activities have been identified. Can you think of any more that are not listed?

- 25 students are going
- Group leaving on Thursday
- Conference begins Thursday evening
- Conference runs through Sunday afternoon
- Group returning Sunday night

### **Step Two: Identify the Risks Associated with each Activity**

For this step you identify the risks associated with each activity that you wrote down for the previous step. Identifying the risks will enable you to determine the feasibility of the activity. You will want to identify all possible risks associated with the activity no matter how small you may think the risk is. The more thorough your list, the easier it will be to mitigate the risk in further steps. With our example, we have identified the following risks. Are there any more to consider?

- Road hazards affiliated with travel in general, i.e. flat tire, mechanical trouble, getting lost
- Road hazards affiliated with weather, winter travel, icy roads, snow Drivers not experienced with driving in winter travel conditions
- Approximate travel time is 14 hours, potential risk of drowsy driver

Some examples of other risks to consider are:

External risks - Weather, criminal acts

Risks Specific to Organization- Contact sports, weapons, climbing

Common Risks- Traveling, crowd control, alcohol, and hazing

**Step Three: Use the Matrix to Assess your Activities, without Using any Methods to Manage your Risks**

		Probability Something Will Go Wrong			
		Probability			
Severity	Seriousness	A	B	C	D
	I	5	5	4	3
	II	5	4	3	2
	III	4	3	2	1
	IV	3	2	1	1

The matrix above is designed for you to identify the seriousness and probability of the risks happening. You will use the risks listed in Step Two. In order to understand how to use the matrix, please read below.

*Look at your activities and try to assess if any of the following risks may be a result of the risk.*

Seriousness of Risk

- I. May result in death
- II. May cause severe injury, major property damage, significant financial loss, and/or result in negative publicity for the organization and/or institution
- III. May cause minor injury, illness, property damage, financial loss and/or could result in negative publicity for the organization and/or institution
- IV. Hazard presents a minimal threat to safety, health and well-being of participants

*Reflect on the potential for a perceived or potential risk to be realized.*

Probability that Something will Go Wrong

- A) Likely to occur immediately or in a short period of time, expected to occur frequently
- B) Probably will occur in time
- C) May occur in time
- D) Unlikely to occur

Now let us apply this to the trip example. Using the matrix, we can identify that the first activity, the overarching theme of travel.

**Probability Something Will Go Wrong**

		Probability			
Severity	Seriousness	A	B	C	D
	<b>I</b>	5	5	4	3
	<b>II</b>	5	4	3	2
	<b>III</b>	4	3	2	1
	<b>IV</b>	3	2	1	1

Determine your initial score by finding the intersection with the highest score. The lower the score, the lower your risk. This intersection identified is by traveling, there is a high seriousness of risk with death involved, I. It is intersected with a probability that it may occur, C.

So in our current matrix, this event would be a high risk activity.

**Probability Something Will Go Wrong**

		Probability			
Severity	Seriousness	A	B	C	D
	<b>I</b>	5	5	4	3
	<b>II</b>	5	4	3	2
	<b>III</b>	4	3	2	1
	<b>IV</b>	3	2	1	1

Things to Think About:

- How will this activity benefit our organization? Our university?
- How does this activity fit with the mission/values of our organization? Of the University?
- Are there ways that we can still engage in this activity and reduce the risk associated with the activity?
- Can we consult other resources (other student groups, advisors, SORC staff, etc.) for assistance?

## Step Four - Brainstorm Methods to Manage Risks, See if you can Reduce the Probability that Something will go Wrong

Brainstorming methods to manage risk is an important aspect to planning your event. By brainstorming, you will use the risks identified and that are associated with your event and try to mitigate them by taking proactive measures. For our travel example, here are some ways that we have identified to mitigate risk. Can you think of others?

- Carry communication devices, walkie talkies or cell phones for on-road communication (make sure power source and range of use adequate)
- Go over travel route with all traveling to ensure everyone knows the way
- Develop and write down a plan for what will happen if separated, (i.e. pull into nearest rest stop, convenience store, gas station, NOT OFF ONTO SHOULDER)
- Check weather forecast as expected road conditions with highway patrol or via web based weather info source
- More than one driver per vehicle available and registered to drive
- *WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO TO MINIMIZE PROBABILITY OF RISKS?*

## Step Five – Go Back to the Matrix

By going back to the matrix after you have identified methods to manage risk, this will allow you to determine if you can reduce the initial score you gave an activity. The lower the score, the lower the risk. Determine your final score, by applying your event to the matrix, with the strategies in place to reduce your risks.

In our example, using the methods we brainstormed in step four, we are able to reduce the risk from a 4 to a 3.

**Probability Something Will Go Wrong**

		Probability			
Seriousness		A	B	C	D
Severity	I	5	5	4	3
	II	5	4	3	2
	III	4	3	2	1
	IV	3	2	1	1

## **Step Six - Determine Whether or Not to Conduct Event and/or Modify/Eliminate Activities**

When all is said and done, ultimately you are going to have to decide if your event is worth the risk. Don't forget to reflect on your mission and values, as well as the mission and values of the University.

## **Step Seven – Assessment of the Event**

Once the event has concluded, it is important to assess the event and activities. The review will identify areas that were successful, areas for needing improvement, and areas that may not have been addressed in planning the event. The review will also help if you decide to plan the same or similar event in the future. Furthermore, if another organization is planning a similar event, you will be able to provide the organization with your assessment, if requested, that will help the other organization plan its own event.

The assessment is crucial for your organization when preparing an end of the year report for the new officers in your organization. This will allow for a more detailed officer transition to the next year. You can find some assessment questions located on the last page of the Event Planning Guide.