

Location – What Site is Best for the Safety Day?

Depending on the number of participants you plan to reach and the activities you want to include, there may be only a few locations in your community that can accommodate your safety day event. It is important that you decide on a site and book it well in advance of your safety day. Some possible locations include:

- Fairgrounds
- Parks
- Schools or colleges
- Community centers
- Farms

OUR BEST ADVICE – AVOID USING GYMS AND OTHER LARGE COMMUNITY ROOMS. READ ON TO SEE WHY.

To help you select a site, consider the following:

Large Meeting Space

Most safety days have opening and closing sessions. Some also have additional large group sessions for everyone attending. For these sessions, you will need a space large enough to hold the entire group. This space could be inside or outside.

Learning Session Space

You will also need space for each small group learning session. For optimal learning, the participants should be separated from other groups/sessions so that they can't look for and watch their friends, thus distracting them from what the instructor is teaching. Some groups set up sessions outside under trees with plenty of space between sessions. Others use school classrooms or the various buildings at their fairgrounds. As a last resort only, you may have to set-up several learning sessions in a large gym or meeting room. If you do, be sure to set it up so that the participants face the corners and/or walls of the facility so they are not facing each other.

Acoustics

Most people do not realize how big a role acoustics play in the success of a safety day. Think about the noise at a basketball game. Most gyms and sports arenas echo. They were not built for small group learning. Participants learn better when they are not distracted by other sounds. How would you like to try to keep a group's attention when a tractor starts up next to you? How would you like to do a demonstration with a horse when an instructor sounds a smoke alarm for the children to hear? The acoustics in a building or room should be one of the top considerations when selecting a location for your safety day. [With this said, we are well aware that gyms and other sports arenas may be the only option in many communities. If so, consider partitioning off the learning sessions by hanging blankets or using some type of opaque panels.]

Weather

"If you aren't prepared for rain, it will rain." How many times have we heard coordinators say this? Depending on the weather in your area, you might have to contend with rain, snow, heat, or cold. Be prepared. If you do not have a way to move all of safety day activities inside, borrow or rent tents. A safety day is too much work to have it ruined by bad weather.

Other things to Consider

- Are restrooms available or do you need to rent portable restrooms?
- Is the site free from equipment, debris, unsafe buildings, potholes, etc. that could be dangerous? Can you make the site safe?
- Is the location such that the participants could easily wander off? Are strangers able to walk in and mix with the children? If so, you should either select another site, or plan how you can prevent either of these situations.