

Grimsby Morris - Health and Safety Policy



The activity of Morris Dancing has within it a certain level of danger. Performances take place in public places, and it is commonplace for small children to be close by, and they may sometimes be allowed by their parents to run free around the area where the dancing is taking place. Performances also involve dancers hitting sticks together in a traditional fashion, and this can on occasion involve shards of wood being dislocated from the sticks.

These are problems and we recognise them. But we wish to maintain a sense of proportion. We dance in a way that has been a part of English culture for hundreds of years, and we do not feel that the practice of the Morris should be changed because of potential difficulties that might exist. Rather, we adopt a policy of considering all the risks, and taking reasonable steps to minimize them.

We thus take reasonable care while maintaining our aim of continuing the tradition of the Morris and bringing it to the towns and villages of Lincolnshire and beyond, so that others who share our enthusiasm and the enjoyment of the Morris, can witness the continuance of this fine tradition.

It is from this starting point that we have evolved our risk assessment that appears below.

Risk Assessment for Grimsby Morris

During the years Grimsby Morris have performed there have been no serious accidents or near-accidents resulting from their activities.

The activity normally involves a musician, or a group of musicians, and a group of dancers (usually 6 or 8) performing dances on tarmac or similar solid surfaces in the open air, in the traditional Morris manner. On occasion a member or members of the public is/are invited to participate by joining in the dance.

In these activities the hazard (the potential to cause harm) is very limited.

If holding a stick which is hit by other sticks as part of a dance there is a potential for limited injury in terms of a splinter.

There is a very remote chance of a stick missing its target (the opposing stick) and hitting a person about the body, or of breaking and causing injury to an eye.

No one associated with Grimsby Morris has ever come across this happening, but we have to recognise that the hazard exists.

The risk – the likelihood of an event occurring which will allow the hazard to be manifest - is very, very low, certainly occurring less than once in every year.

We do recognize that in some dances, because of the nature of the activities involving sticks, there is a slight chance of a small shaft of wood becoming detached. To meet this possibility when a dance incorporating this risk is performed we do ensure that we are further away from the audience than we are in other dances. The result of such an event in terms of amount of damage and number of people affected by a stick breaking is extremely minimal.

Grimsby Morris always carry first aid equipment or have a person with first aid training on hand.

Children are on occasion invited to participate and activity is adjusted according to the child's height and stature. However, because the entertainment is not essentially one designed for children the members of the side have not been criminally vetted in relation to working with children.

No protective clothing is used by the Grimsby Morris.

No one in the side is expected to have had training on how to behave in relation to a major or minor accident.

All organisations that book the Grimsby Morris are invited to watch the side perform elsewhere. A list of bookings is available on the Grimsby Morris web site. (www.grimsbymorris.org.uk)

No electrical equipment is used at any time by Grimsby Morris. All musical instruments are acoustic and are kept under the control of the individual players at all times.

The noise level generated is always below that recommended in health and safety provisions.

Grimsby Morris have third party insurance through The Morris Ring, and details of this can be obtained from the Bagman.