OTAS LIVE

Supporting Events and Professionals at Every Stage

OTAS Insight, production and site safety. Article

Overhead banners and arches at winter markets

A banner truss over the way in to a seasonal market came down in the wind. What happened, what UK guidance says, and a wind plan for every item over your crowd



An entrance arch over the way in, where the crowd is densest. OTAS style image, generated from real photography. Not a record of a specific event.

Operational **Tactical** **Strategic**

OTAS Insight v2.0 · 9 November 2026 · Correct as of 9 November 2026

OTAS Live Ltd.

SUMMARY

Your arch is a structure, not a sign. Give it a wind limit and a person who can close the route.

2

visitors were hit when a metal truss carrying a banner over the way in came down, police said [1]

1

of them has died. On 6 November police said the 72 year old visitor who was critically injured had died [11]

60%

of a structure's maximum wind load, the first action point one UK city council park guide asks for. The second is 80% [15]

List every banner, arch and span over a public route, ask the supplier for its wind limits with the banner on, and name who closes the route when the wind rises.

By OTAS Insights. Edited by Kris Dailly. Correct as of 9 November 2026.



An entrance arch over the way in, where the crowd is densest. OTAS style image, generated from real photography. Not a record of a specific event.

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01
Read this first

Sources: 22 public sources opened on 9 November 2026. They are two police releases, two SWR reports, the Rhein-Zeitung, a regional news site and a dpa report (in German, OTAS translation), the Purple Guide, HSE event and crowd guidance, the Institution of Structural Engineers, a UK city council park event guide, the Met Office and legislation.gov.uk. We do not name the town, the event or anyone involved. Each fact carries its source number. Everything without a source number is OTAS guidance for event organisers and venue teams.

On the afternoon of Friday 23 October 2026, a metal truss carrying a banner over the way in to an autumn market in a small German town came down, police said probably in a gust of wind [1]. Two visitors were hit. One was seriously injured. The other was critically injured and flown to hospital by rescue helicopter after a resuscitation attempt [1][2]. On 6 November police said that he had died, and that the other visitor had left hospital [11]. The national weather service had warned of storm gusts of 60 to 75 km/h for the uplands in the region [2]. Criminal police are still investigating [11]. Winter markets in the UK are going up now, and most have a banner or arch over the way in. That is where the crowd is densest, and these items are often treated as signs rather than structures.

> **In short:** **treat every banner, arch and span over a crowd route as a structure. Know its wind limit with the banner on, measure the wind close to it, and give one named person the authority to close the route under it.**

Five things to take away

01	**Two visitors were hit when a truss with a banner over the access path came down. Police said probably in a gust of wind [1]. One of them, a 72 year old man, has since died [11].**
02	**Early police reports said scaffolding. Police later said it was a truss with an advertising banner [2].**
03	**The weather service had warned of storm gusts of 60 to 75 km/h for the uplands and other areas in two states [2]. That was a regional warning, not a reading at the market.**
04	**The Purple Guide says wind "should be monitored using an anemometer" and action taken "if there is any risk of them being blown over" [5].**
05	**HSE lists "Collapse of a temporary structure" among crowd hazards [7].**
06	**One UK city council asks every event in its park for a wind management plan. The plan gives the maximum wind speed for each structure. It also sets action at 60% and 80% of the maximum wind load capacity [15].**

ACTION

Read the case, then share the actions with your team.



02

What happened at the way in

Two police releases and five news reports, read on 9 November 2026, set out the incident. We do not name the town or the event. Where the reports differ, we say so [1][2][3][4][11][12][13].

The route closed well back from the arch, with the banner rolled up. OTAS style image, generated from real photography. Not a record of a specific event.

The incident

When	Friday 23 October 2026, at around 16:30 local time, which is 15:30 UK time [1].
Where	Over an access path from a side street to the central square of the market [1]. A regional paper said the truss served as “a kind of entrance portal” to the event (OTAS translation) [4].
What	A metal truss with a banner attached came down, “probably due to a gust of wind”, police said (OTAS translation) [1]. A regional news site called it an advertising truss belonging to a fairground trader, put up over a passage [12].
The weather	The national weather service had warned of storm gusts of 60 to 75 km/h for the uplands and other areas in Rhineland-Palatinate and Hesse [2].

Injured

Two visitors	Two visitors were injured. One was seriously injured. The other was critically injured and flown by rescue helicopter [1].
Resuscitation	The public broadcaster reported that he was flown to hospital “after a resuscitation attempt” (OTAS translation) [2].
The rumours	“Contrary to early rumours on social media”, no further people were injured, police said (OTAS translation) [1].
Since	On 6 November police said the 72 year old visitor had died, and the second visitor, aged 58, had left hospital [11]. A dpa report carried by the FAZ said the same [13].

The response

Police	Criminal police are investigating. The truss was seized as evidence [1]. On 6 November police said they could give no further details on the investigation [11].
The organiser	Set up a crisis team at once and ended the Friday evening [1]. The drone show was cancelled [2].
Welfare	Witnesses and affected visitors were supported by emergency pastoral care [1]. Psychological support was offered [2].
The next day	The market went on as normal on the Saturday, and runs to the Monday [2][3].

	What happened
That day	Storm gust warning of 60 to 75 km/h for the uplands in two states [2]
About 15:30 UK time	A truss with a banner over the way in comes down, probably in a gust [1]
That evening	Crisis team set up, the evening ended and the drone show cancelled [1][2]
21:05 UK time	Police follow up release says no further people were injured [1]
Saturday 24 October	The market goes on as normal [3]
6 November	Police say the 72 year old visitor has died [11]

Table 1. The incident in six rows, from the police releases [1][11] and the public broadcaster [2] [3]. UK times are BST.

ACTION

Walk your way in with your site manager and list every item that spans the route.

03

Where the reports agree, and where they differ

A police release and three news reports, written within three days. Read them side by side before you draw a lesson [1][2][3][4].

Point	What the reports say
Structure	Early police reports said scaffolding. Police later said a truss with a banner [1][2]. We say a metal truss carrying a banner
Position	Over an access path, police said [1]. “A kind of entrance portal”, a regional paper said [4]. Both fit. We say over the way in
Cause	“Probably” a gust of wind, police said [1]. The investigation is open. We do not state a cause
Wind	A regional storm gust warning of 60 to 75 km/h [2]. Not a reading at the market
Injured	Two visitors. Police corrected social media rumours of more [1]. One “in danger of life” on 24 October [3]

Table 2. How the reports compare, read on 2 November 2026.

ACTION

When you debrief an incident, write down where your own accounts differ before you settle on one story.

04
Using Met Office warnings

A warning is a prompt to read, not a decision. The quotes are the Met Office [9]. The lessons are OTAS professional practice.

What the Met Office says [9]

Colours	Warnings are “yellow, amber or red” on “a combination of both the impact the weather may have and the likelihood”.
Reading	“Yellow and Amber warnings represent a range of impact levels and likelihoods. This means it is important to read each warning”.
The change	As of October 2026, the impact matrix shown in its warnings video “has slightly changed”.

How to use it (OTAS practice)

- Monitor the forecast and warnings before and during the event [6][9]. Check them each morning and each afternoon (OTAS practice).
- Read the impact and likelihood box, not just the colour [9].
- Once any warning is in force, read the anemometer every 15 minutes (OTAS practice).
- A warning is regional. Your thresholds come from your own readings at the structure.

ACTION

Add a morning and afternoon forecast check to your market day log.



05

Why entrances carry the most risk

Three risks meet at an entrance arch. The facts below come from the sources. The lessons are OTAS guidance.

Ballast and fixings at the foot of a truss, checked every day. OTAS style image, generated from real photography. Not a record of a specific event.

The wind plan for an overhead item

1	2	3	4	5
Check the forecast	**Measure the wind**	**Route cleared, banner off**	**Close the route and divert**	**Inspect before reopening**

The first threshold is the step most teams never set. Taking the banner off early removes the sail. OTAS professional practice, drawing on the Purple Guide [5][6] and the Met Office [9].

The crowd is densest

The way in is where people bunch and queue. In this case the truss stood over an access path into the central square [1]. The Purple Guide says crowd planning starts with how people access the event and move around the site [21].

People are right underneath

A fall over a route lands on people, not on an empty field. Two visitors were hit [1].

A banner catches the wind

A banner turns a light frame into a sail. OTAS professional practice: treat any banner, mesh or sign on a frame as a wind loaded structure.

It is filed as a sign

Arches and banners are often treated as signs rather than structures, so they can miss the structures register. HSE lists “Collapse of a temporary structure” among crowd hazards [7].

A yellow warning hides detail

Met Office warnings combine impact and likelihood, so “it is important to read each warning” [9]. Words like gale on the Beaufort scale describe wind force, not your limit [16]. Set thresholds in measured speeds.

ACTION

Ask your supplier whether each item's design wind speed allows for the banner on it.

06

A banner turns a frame into a sail

OTAS professional practice. A method, not a set of figures. Your supplier and a competent engineer give the numbers.

What changes with a banner

Wind load	A banner fills the gaps in an open truss and catches the wind. Treat any banner, mesh or sign on a frame as a wind loaded structure.
The design	Check whether the supplier's design allows for the banner, mesh or sign actually fitted.
Mesh and slots	Use banners with wind slots or mesh where the design allows.
The first move	Taking the banner off or rolling it removes the sail. Clear the route under it first, then make it your first threshold action.

ACTION

Ask your supplier for the design wind speed with and without the banner fitted.

07

Five questions to ask your supplier this week

OTAS professional practice. Ask in writing and keep the answers with the register.

The questions

1. The design	Does the design for this item allow for the banner, mesh or sign we are fitting?
2. The wind limits	What is the operating wind speed with the banner on, and the action speed?
3. The fixing	What ballast or fixing does it need, and how should we check it each day?
4. The handover	Will you give us a signed handover inspection report for this item? The Purple Guide expects one for larger structures [5].
5. The call out	Who is on call to inspect it again after high winds or a vehicle strike?

ACTION

Send these five questions to every structure supplier on your market.

08
The structures register

One line for every overhead item. OTAS professional practice.

Field	What to record
Item	Arch, banner truss, gantry or festoon span
Location	The route it spans
Supplier	Company and on call contact
Design wind speed	Operating and action speeds, with the banner on
Ballast or fixing	The method, and the daily check
Handover	Date and who signed it

Table 4. A structures register line. OTAS professional practice.

ACTION

Add every overhead item to your register before the market opens.

09
Wind monitoring and thresholds

The Purple Guide names the method [5]. The timings and actions are OTAS professional practice. The wind speeds for each item come from its supplier.

Condition	What happens
Normal	Anemometer [5] read at height, close to the item, every 30 minutes (OTAS practice)
Warning issued	Readings every 15 minutes
First threshold	Route under it cleared and coned, then banner off or rolled by competent crew
Action threshold	Route under it closed, crowd diverted
Over the limit	Item lowered or removed

Table 5. A threshold ladder for overhead items. OTAS professional practice.

ACTION

Write the threshold ladder for each item on your control room board.

10

After an incident: scene, welfare and messages

What happened in this case is sourced. The lessons are OTAS professional practice.

What happened here

The scene	The truss was seized as evidence [1].
Welfare	Witnesses were supported by emergency pastoral care [1]. Psychological support was offered [2].
The rumours	Police had to correct rumours of more casualties on social media [1].
The decision	The organiser set up a crisis team at once and ended the evening [1].

What to do (OTAS practice)

- Once casualties are cared for and the area is made safe, preserve the structure and the scene for investigation. Do not tidy up.
- Welfare support for witnesses and staff, not only for the injured.
- A holding statement ready to post, so facts move faster than rumours.
- Reopen only after the scene is released and every other overhead item is checked.

ACTION

Write a holding statement for a structure incident and keep it with your emergency plan.

11
Roles for overhead items

Four roles, each with one named person on every market day. OTAS professional practice.

Role	What they own
Site manager	The register and the daily checks
Weather lead	Readings, the forecast and the threshold calls
Safety officer	Closing routes and authorising reopening
Supplier contact	On call to inspect again

Table 6. Roles for overhead items. OTAS professional practice.

ACTION

Put a name against each role on your market day briefing sheet.

12
What to do at each level

Operational

Know the signs

Radio it

Help cone and divert

Know the signs. If the banner strains, the ballast moves or people climb the frame, radio it. Keep people moving under the arch, not queuing. Help cone and divert when the call comes.

Tactical

Read the wind

Close the route

Run the daily checks

Own the readings and the thresholds. The weather lead reads the wind and the forecast. The safety officer closes the route and authorises reopening. The site manager runs the daily checks.

Strategic

Register every item

Wind limits in contracts

A second way in

Make overhead items part of the structures register and the budget. Ask for wind limits with the banner on in every supplier contract. Plan and sign an alternative way in before opening.

ACTION

Pick one action at your level and do it before your market opens.

13
A checklist for overhead items

OTAS professional practice unless a source is shown.

Before opening

- Every overhead item on the structures register.
- Operating and action wind speeds from the supplier, with the banner on.
- A signed handover for every item [5].
- An alternative entrance route planned and signed.

Each market day

- Ballast and fixings checked, and checked again after any vehicle strike.
- Forecast and warnings monitored before and during the event [6][9], and checked each morning and afternoon (OTAS practice).
- Anemometer readings logged at height, close to the item [5].

When the wind rises

- Route under it cleared, then banner off or rolled, at the first threshold.
- Exclusion zone at fall height plus a margin.
- The named person closes the route and diverts the crowd.

ACTION

Print this checklist for your next site meeting.

14
What we do not know yet

- Why the truss came down. Police said probably a gust of wind, and the investigation is open [1] [11]. A regional news site said it is not yet settled whether the wind or something else caused it [12].
- The wind speed at the market. The warning covered the uplands and other areas in two states [2]. It was not a reading at the site.
- The make, size and fixing of the truss, and whether it had a wind limit or a handover.
- Whether anyone will face charges. Police gave no further details on 6 November [11].

ACTION

We will update this Insight if more reliable information is published.

15

Coming up: the winter market season

Winter markets in the UK are going up now, through the windiest months of the year. Most have a banner or arch over the way in. The Met Office says that as of October 2026 the impact matrix shown in its warnings video “has slightly changed” [9]. Read the new matrix before your first market day, and brief your weather lead on it.

ACTION

If you need support with a structures register or a wind plan for your market, reach out to us to see how we can support you.

Questions

Is a banner arch a structure or a sign?

Treat it as a structure. OTAS professional practice: any truss, arch, gantry or span over a public route is a temporary demountable structure and belongs on the structures register. HSE lists “Collapse of a temporary structure” among crowd hazards [7].

What wind speed should we close at?

There is no single number in the guidance we read. It depends on the design of the item with its banner on. Ask the supplier for the operating wind speed with cladding and the action speed, and set your thresholds from those.

Do we really need an anemometer?

The Purple Guide says “Wind conditions should be monitored using an anemometer (wind speed device)” [5]. OTAS professional practice: take readings at height and close to the structure, not from a phone forecast.

Do small arches need a handover?

The Purple Guide says that for larger structures the supplier “should provide a signed handover inspection report” [5]. OTAS professional practice: get one for every overhead item regardless of size, plus a daily visual check record.

Is a yellow warning safe to ignore?

No. The Met Office says yellow and amber warnings “represent a range of impact levels and likelihoods” and that “it is important to read each warning” [9]. Read the impact and likelihood,

not just the colour.

A trader put up the arch. Is it still our problem?

HSE says that while some parts of crowd safety can be given to contractors, you keep overall responsibility for the safety of the public [19]. Employers must assess the risks to people affected by their work [18], and must not expose the public to risks, so far as is reasonably practicable [17]. Put every trader's overhead item on your register. That is a summary, not legal advice.

Can an inspector stop us?

Under section 22 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, an inspector can serve a prohibition notice where activities involve “a risk of serious personal injury” [10]. That is a summary, not legal advice.

If the wind rose at your way in tonight, who would close the route under the arch?

ACTION

Send us your question and we will add the answer to the next update.

Sources

Web sources opened 9 November 2026 and labelled with their publisher. German sources in OTAS translation. Some source web addresses include the town or event name. We do not use those

names in the text.

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2. **SWR Aktuell, public broadcaster, metal frame falls over at an autumn market, in German, 24 October 2026** swr.de
3. **SWR Aktuell, public broadcaster, autumn market goes on after a serious accident, in German, 24 October 2026** swr.de
4. **Rhein-Zeitung, how the town and district responded to the accident, in German, 25 October 2026 (subscription, opening only read)** rhein-zeitung.de
5. **The Purple Guide, temporary demountable structures, chapter summary, 26 January 2026** thepurpleguide.co.uk
6. **The Purple Guide, weather, chapter summary, 26 January 2026** thepurpleguide.co.uk
7. **HSE, crowd management, assess crowd safety risks and identify hazards** hse.gov.uk
8. **HSE, event safety, temporary demountable structures** hse.gov.uk
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11. **Police headquarters, Koblenz, follow up release, the 72 year old visitor has died, Presseportal, in German, 6 November 2026** presseportal.de
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14. **The Institution of Structural Engineers, Temporary demountable structures: guidance on procurement, design and use, fourth edition, 1 May 2017** istructe.org
15. **Bute Park event guide, Cardiff Council, temporary demountable structures, first published 4 February 2020** bute-park.com
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18. **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, regulation 3, risk assessment** legislation.gov.uk
19. **HSE, set clear roles and responsibilities, updated 4 April 2025** hse.gov.uk
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21. **The Purple Guide, crowd management** thepurpleguide.co.uk
22. **HSE, event safety, put crowd controls in place** hse.gov.uk

Related OTAS Insights

These are links to other OTAS Insights pieces, not to any OTAS Live product or service.

Signed off yesterday, failed today: temporary seating on show day
When a rumour moves faster than your stewards

Law: this Insight summarises parts of the law in Great Britain, and UK guidance, as published on legislation.gov.uk and by HSE and the Met Office. Northern Ireland has its own equivalent law. It is not legal advice. Ask your council and your structure supplier what applies to your event, and take advice.

Interest: OTAS Live Ltd, which publishes OTAS Insights, sells event operations services, handbooks and training related to this topic.

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ACTION

Check the sources before you quote them, and tell us if any link has changed.

OVER TO YOU

If the wind rose at your way in tonight, who would close the route under the arch?

If you need support with a structures register or a wind plan for your market, reach out to us to see how we can support you.

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