



Vehicles and crowds at winter markets what the official guidance says

Site traffic, vehicle security barriers, crowd flow, road closures and Martyn's Law, in general terms

OTAS Insight SC-002 | Tactical • Strategic

Correct as of 20 October 2026 | United Kingdom | Not security or legal advice | otas.live/insights/



The short version: plan vehicles and crowds together

Two risks

One traffic plan

- Site traffic: a safety risk (HSE)
- Hostile vehicles: a security risk
- They meet at the same gates and routes
- Plan them together

Barriers and flow

Design around people

- About 10% lower: straight bollard line
- More if angled, two-way or bigger
- Avoid corners and junctions
- Keep queues and kiosks away
- Design first, then operations

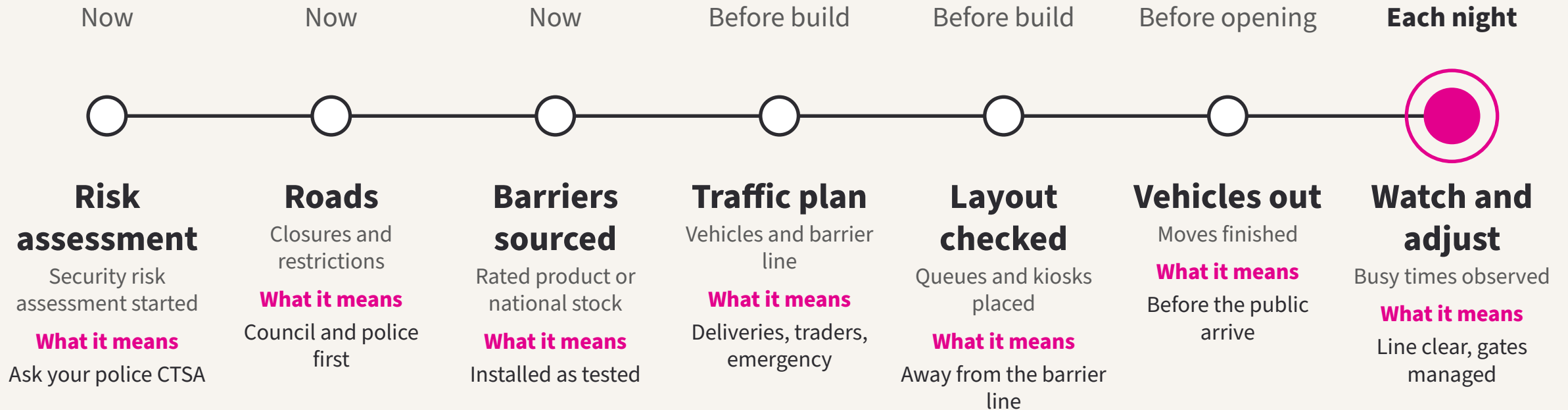
Roads and the law

Ask early

- Road orders: the traffic authority
- Traffic on the highway: the police
- Martyn's Law duties do not apply this winter

Threat level SEVERE since 30 April 2026. A national judgement, not a warning about any event. General information, not security advice.

From now to opening night: 7 steps in order



Planning order drawn from NPSA, ProtectUK and HSE guidance. Not an official timeline. Start road and barrier conversations early.

Keeping people and vehicles apart: what HSE asks

01 • Separate

People and vehicles

Keep them apart

One-way routes where possible

02 • Reversing

Keep it to a minimum

Plan routes to avoid it

Use banksmen where needed

03 • Timing

Work vehicles

Finish tasks in public areas

Before the audience is admitted

04 • Routes

Trade and service

Route outside public areas

Where possible

05 • Emergency

Access kept clear

Plan entry and exit

For emergency vehicles

06 • Plan

Traffic management plan

Covers all of the above

Marshals trained and briefed

HSE: organisers are responsible for managing the risks from transport on site. Do not let unauthorised people drive.

Hostile vehicle mitigation in plain terms

- **What it is** A protective security discipline that reduces the risks from vehicle borne threats.
- **What it rests on** Security risk assessment, security planning, design and risk-based measures.
- **More than barriers** Deterrent communications, awareness, response planning, operational security and traffic management too.
- **Range of options** From total traffic exclusion to temporary portable barriers. A risk-based choice for each site.
- **Standards** Measures should meet appropriate standards for impact, design and installation.
- **Keep it general** Keep attack methods and site measures out of public communications.

Where to get advice

Police CTSA first contact for security advice

ProtectUK free guidance

NPSA barrier and flow guidance

Local authority roads and licensing

The point

Barriers are one part of a plan, not the plan.

Where barriers go, and what changes around them



NPSA: test the layout and monitor its effect on flow once it is in place.

About 10%: the flow to lose through a straight bollard line

10%

lower flow and throughput: what NPSA recommends planning for through a straight line of slim bollards, walked through head-on in one direction, at busier densities.

Cups and bottles. Items left on top of bollards slow the flow further.

Sitting. People sitting on low bollards slow it too.

Staff at the line. Staff standing at the barriers reduce flow.

Gathering groups. Groups just before the line can matter more than the barriers.

Below about 0.4 people per square metre, barriers are not likely to make much difference. Angled lines, two-way flow, gates: treat as obstacles. Expect more.

On the night: keeping the barrier line working

- **Keep the line clear** No sitting on barriers and nothing left on top.
- **Keep people moving** Stop groups gathering just in front of the line.
- **Watch the queues** Keep entry and stall queues away from live traffic and the kerb edge.
- **Gates** Vehicles through only when authorised. The public wait behind the barriers.
- **After dark** Report any barrier that is hard to see.
- **Report** Anything that worries you, straight away.

Whose job it is

Managers plan the layout. Stewards keep it working on the night.

What to expect at briefing

- Your post
- Which gate vehicles use
- Who authorises a vehicle
- Who you report to
- Unsure? Ask before the public arrive.

In danger? Use the site emergency procedure and call the emergency services.

Tactical: what site and operations managers put in place

01

One traffic plan

Deliveries, traders, service, emergency and the barrier line

Keep: traffic management plan

02

Vehicles out before opening

Finish vehicle moves in public areas first

Keep: build schedule

03

Clear barrier lines

No stalls, queues, seating or gathering groups

Keep: marked-up site layout plan

04

Gates that do not queue

Open only when needed. Public held behind barriers

Keep: gate procedure

05

Queues away from traffic

Away from live traffic and the kerb edge

Keep: queue plan

06

Watch and adjust

Busy times observed, layout changed if needed

Keep: daily check note

Two levels here: Tactical for market, site and operations managers, Strategic for organisers, councils and directors.

Strategic: what organisers, councils and directors decide

Decision	What it looks like	Evidence to keep
Risk-based approach	Security risk assessment, with police CTSA advice	Dated assessment
Roads	Closures and restrictions agreed with the council and police, early	Orders and emails
Barrier source	Rated to a recognised standard, installed as tested, or the National Barrier Asset	Supplier evidence
Plans that fit	Barrier design, operations and emergency plans aligned	Plan versions
Neighbours	Residents and businesses engaged early	Notices and minutes
Budget	Barriers as a recurring cost, or a longer-term scheme	Budget line
Martyn's Law	Ticketed parts checked against the qualifying event test	Advice note
Public messaging	No attack methods or site measures in public communications	Approved copy

Not a complete list. Follow the advice you receive for your site.

What we don't know yet: 6 open points

01 • Date

Start date for the Martyn's Law duties

The SIA expects spring 2027

Now: plan for next winter

02 • Guidance

Mixed free and ticketed sites

How the test will apply in practice

Now: take advice

03 • Availability

National Barrier Asset

Lead times are not published

Now: ask early

04 • Evidence

Flow figures

Mainly from sports venues

Now: watch your own site

05 • Nations

Northern Ireland roads

Not covered in this pack

Now: ask the local authorities

06 • Threat

Threat level

Can change at any time

Now: check MI5 before opening

Open on 20 October 2026. Check the official sources before acting.



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and Professionals
at every stage

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Key sources: NPSA, ProtectUK, HSE, Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, Martyn's Law, SIA

Spotted an error? Tell us and we will correct it. General information, not security or legal advice. Correct as of 20 October 2026.

Work with OTAS

Planning a winter market, parade or outdoor event this season?

Request a call with OTAS to discuss how we can help

Briefing card • about 1 minute

“Tonight vehicles and people are kept apart. Keep the line of barriers clear: no one sits on them, nothing is left on top, and people do not gather right in front of them.

If a queue starts to form near the road or the barrier line, tell your supervisor. Vehicles only come through when authorised, and the public wait behind the barriers.

Your post: _____ **Vehicle gate:** _____

Report to: _____ **Authorises vehicles:** _____

If you see anything that worries you, report it straight away.
Any questions?”

Before opening: the checklist, by level

Tactical one traffic plan, vehicles out before opening, barrier lines clear, gates that do not queue, queues away from traffic.

Strategic risk assessment and CTSA advice, early road talks, rated barriers or the national stock, plans that fit together.

Read at every steward briefing. Fill in the blanks first.