

SiGeKo in trade-fair and event builds: underrated duty, real opportunity

CMY Brand Solutions – Whitepaper

Bureaucracy or key to success?

Ask project leads in architecture and trade-fair/event builds about their biggest stressors and you'll hear the same list: tight schedules, many trades working in parallel, and safety requirements that "suddenly" take centre stage. One term pops up regularly-usually with a sigh: **SiGeKo** (Sicherheits- und Gesundheitsschutzkoordination, i.e., safety and health coordination). Many treat it as a nuisance that only adds paperwork. In reality, used properly, SiGeKo is a lever for efficiency, safety and legal certainty.

Legal framework: not optional, but mandatory

The rules are clear. In Germany, the **Construction Site Ordinance (BauStellV)** requires clients to appoint a coordinator for safety and health on any site with multiple trades. This is reinforced by **DGUV** rules (German Social Accident Insurance) and the **Occupational Safety Act (ArbSchG)**. Ignoring this is no minor issue:

- Fines up to several tens of thousands of euros are possible.
- In case of accidents, clients or project leads can be held personally liable.
- Insurers may refuse to pay if no SiGeKo was appointed.

Common mistakes in architecture, trade-fair and event builds

Why do projects still stumble on safety? Mostly for banal reasons:

- **No clear coordination:** each subcontractor works in a silo; nobody tracks overall hazards.
- **Missing safety briefings:** external staff arrive on site unaware of specific risks.
- **Conflicting plans:** escape routes, rigging structures and stage builds aren't aligned.
- **Parallel work without agreement:** one team works at height while another works below—accident risk guaranteed.

These errors don't just create danger; they also cause delays, site stoppages and extra cost.

The upside of doing SiGeKo right

Implemented properly, SiGeKo unlocks real value:

- **Efficiency:** clear processes prevent trades from blocking each other.
- **Fewer stoppages:** safety and organisation reduce the chance of authority intervention.
- **Productivity:** removing hazards upfront lets teams focus and move faster.
- **Trust:** clients and visitors see that safety is taken seriously—an image factor you shouldn't underestimate.

In short: **safety is efficiency.**

The specialist planner as SiGeKo

Appointing an experienced **technical planner** as SiGeKo is a major advantage. They know the trades, understand their risks and can judge conflicts realistically. For example:

- A planner recognises that rigging trusses are not only structural but also safety-critical because they can obstruct escape routes.
- They know that BMA (fire detection) and AV systems can clash both technically and in safety terms.
- They propose measures that work **in practice**, not just on paper.

This turns SiGeKo from "form-filling" into **moderation and safety architecture** for the project.

Practical guide: five steps to effective SiGeKo

- **Early involvement:** the coordinator must be on board from the start-not shortly before build.
- **Documentation and plans:** safety and health plans (SiGe plans) are mandatory and must be understandable.
- **Regular walk-throughs:** you only spot many problems on site.
- **Immediate communication:** deviations must be flagged and fixed right away.
- **Shared responsibility:** every contractor shares responsibility-the coordinator consolidates, but does not absolve anyone.

Case study: a smooth trade-fair build

An automotive group built a multi-storey trade-fair stand. In past years, the build phase often saw heavy conflicts between trades, and safety concerns had even triggered a site stop.

With a consistently applied SiGeKo this time-clear briefings, daily safety rounds, immediate coordination—the result was: **zero accidents, no delays, on-time opening**. The project lead later called it “the most relaxed trade-fair we’ve had in years.”

From obligation to opportunity

SiGeKo isn’t a bureaucratic hurdle-it’s a strategic tool. Used correctly, it reduces risk, accelerates workflows and provides legal certainty.

Especially in architecture and trade-fair/event builds with tight timelines: those who coordinate safety **save time, money and nerves**-and they achieve the only outcome that really matters: a project delivered **on time, safely and successfully**.