



Planned Special Events

Survey and Report

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Foreword by H. Steven Blum

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Working with professionals from diverse backgrounds who share the commitment to protect and serve their communities is always an honor. This report was a collaborative effort and highlights the responses from an Executive Briefing as well as a nationwide online survey. Many professionals came together either physically or virtually to provide insight and suggestions. Bringing that thought leadership together was possible only with the hard work and determination of many people, for whom I am very grateful.

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Leading this effort was Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, USA (Retired), whose ideas and suggestions changed the DomPrep Executive Briefing model. He facilitated the discussion where key issues were addressed and on which the survey and report are based.

A warm thank you also goes to Glen Rudner, Laurel Radow, David Squires, Richard Williams, and Anthony Beverina, who led the panel discussion at the Executive Briefing. Appreciation also goes to the Security Analysis and Risk Management Association's (SARMA) Kerry Thomas who provided structure to the survey, and to Stewart Branam and the staff at Washington Nationals Park who hosted the July event.

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Last, but certainly not least, thank you to the more than 200 DomPrep readers, who each provided valuable feedback that led to this insightful report. Because of the growing interconnectedness of modern society, the need to carefully plan and integrate efforts is more valuable than ever. It is gratifying that DomPrep can serve as a catalyst for facilitating this type of dialogue and interaction. It is with that intention that I hope you find this report to be helpful.

Martin D. Masiuk
Publisher of DomPrep

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FOREWORD

Every day across the United States, special events – both large and small – are planned and executed. Large-scale special events involving thousands of participants require special attention and coordination at all levels of government – local, state, and national. To address the topic of planned special events, DomesticPreparedness.com hosted an Executive Briefing at the Washington Nationals Park in Washington, D.C., on 16 July 2012.

Hosting the DomPrep Executive Briefing at a venue that is home to special events 365 days a year provided an excellent backdrop. The diversity of attendees – local, state, and national representatives from both the public and private sectors – represented how a successful event should be planned. A whole community approach involves all stakeholders at all stages of the planning process.

No one level of government or jurisdiction has the capabilities and capacity needed for most special events. As such, collaborative efforts and communication are necessary for putting all the pieces of the puzzle together – some bring tools, some bring expertise, and some bring people.

Planning each event should begin with identifying potential risks – the knowns and the unknowns, the vulnerabilities and the gaps. Then it is important to ensure that the right people with the right credentials are included. Volunteers play an important role in many special events, but they must be effectively managed to avoid hindering the efforts. Following predetermined standards and proper training ahead of time will help coordinate efforts within and between jurisdictions. Building relationships with the surrounding jurisdictions is paramount because moving thousands of people into and out of a venue affects much more than the venue itself. Finally, communicating with the public can be a challenge – the message itself and who delivers it are everything.

The following analysis reflects the opinions of DomPrep Executive Briefing attendees and responses of DomPrep readers from the most recent DomPrep survey on planned special events. This collaborative effort offers useful information for planning future events. Such planning efforts may not be great right now, but they are better than they were ten years ago and will be even better ten years from now if planners and operations personnel build on the past lessons learned, the relationships formed, and the communications established.

H. Steven Blum
Lieutenant General USA (Ret.)

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SUMMARY

On 16 July 2012, DomPrep hosted an Executive Briefing on Special Event Planning. To set the tone, the event was held in Washington, D.C., at Washington Nationals Park – home to baseball games and other special events 365 days a year. The facilitator, Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, USA (Ret.), led an engaging discussion on topics such as planned events drawing international attention, National Special Security Events (NSSE), military events, 4th of July celebrations, sporting events, presidential and VIP visits, as well as incidents such as pandemics, hurricanes, and earthquakes.

Select DomPrep40 Advisors and professionals from various sectors of the preparedness community probed the topic of special event security and created a survey that was sent to DomPrep’s audience of emergency planners, responders, and receivers. This report discusses the following key findings:

- I. Regardless of the size of a jurisdiction, the history of past events, and how well the planners know their jurisdiction, there is still a need to develop some form of risk assessment when preparing for planned or unplanned events.
- II. Credentialing and vetting procedures vary, so developing relationships early and gathering critical information will facilitate the process and reduce delays when integrating volunteers.
- III. Standards and training are sometimes dependent on one another – without standards, training is likely to vary between and even within jurisdictions but, without proper training, it is difficult to enforce any type of standard.
- IV. Moving people into and out of a venue for a large-scale special event has a radial effect on the surrounding area that requires effective communication with neighboring jurisdictions and ensuring that information is shared with the boots on the ground.
- V. Sharing information with the public must be done quickly and by the right spokesperson to counteract misinformation that will likely spread rapidly through traditional and social media channels.

The five key topics addressed in this report are: risk analysis, credentialing and volunteers, standards and training, transportation and movement of people, and communications and social media. Special events are held in large and small communities – at the local, regional, and national levels. The survey results and input from the July Executive Briefing were compiled to help emergency planners, responders, and receivers better plan for and execute future events.

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I. RISK ANALYSIS

Successful event planning, people moving, and communication all require comprehensive pre-event risk analysis. Although the risk process can be quite lengthy, the templates and standards must be simple. It was suggested at the July Executive Briefing that 1-2 pages of simple, easy-to-follow standards, possibly with a PowerPoint presentation, be used to convey contingency plans to each key player – thus turning something analytical into something operational. As Captain Richard Williams, director of field operations at the Maryland Office of Emergency Management, described it, “Hit on a few highlights, know what is happening, where things are, add repeatability, but don’t turn it into something scientific or analytic, so the person on the street can actually use it as a tool.”

Constructing a Risk Assessment

Joseph Broz, senior fellow at the NORC at the University of Chicago, pointed out that there is also a legal dimension to the standard and duty of care. Therefore, it is imperative that a standard be formulated for every event being planned. “Emergency management planners will be held to that standard. The written standards help meet the unwritten standards.”

Although every event is different, lessons from past events can be used as a starting point. Such analysis can narrow the gap between what could be done and what is currently being done. Anthony Beverina, president at Digital Sandbox, stated that, “In general, organizations in public safety are not doing the most effective job of leveraging information that is available.” Combining data gathered from after-action reports with information provided through social media channels would help show where additional problems may occur and also help create a living analysis.

An emergency management plan has to be reviewed and data from previous events added to create a better plan for future events. Glen Rudner, independent consultant and trainer, used this method when he assisted in the planning for the National Boy Scout Jamboree (every four years) at Fort AP Hill in Virginia, where the local population would explode to 120,000 for about two-and-a-half weeks. Hazards such as wooded swamps, open fields, poisonous snakes, fireworks, and high temperatures had to be considered for onsite exercises for 60,000 young adults plus staff. In addition to common public health and safety concerns, the 2001 event had a defection from a Nigerian boy scout troop and, in 2005, four troop leaders were electrocuted and

300 injured during the first show night. These and other incidents within the event added new data each year to the next planned Jamboree. Rudner described this as having a, “Plan A, B, C, and D, with E on the shelf.”

Survey Results

Although only 6.3 percent of respondents are currently involved in planning a large-scale special event, 84.1 percent have at some time played a supporting role in at least one such event. Part of the planning process often includes identifying risks and threats that can potentially disrupt not only the events themselves, but the surrounding communities as well. The agencies and organizations of most of the respondents do conduct some form of assessment; however, less than half employ a formal or structured process.

Some, however, have opted for a combined approach, depending on the scope of the event and the groups involved in the planning process. Alan Byrd, area emergency management coordinator for North Carolina Emergency Management, explained, “When planning special events in North Carolina, depending on the level of event, we have done both formal and informal risk/threat assessments. For this year’s DNC (Democratic National Convention), we obviously worked closely with the feds to coordinate our planning efforts and did everything formally. When we conduct our special events on a state level, we informally collaborate with our federal partners through existing partnerships, and our assessments are done through existing capabilities.”

Local Challenges: A major obstacle for implementing formal risk and threat assessments that some respondents expressed is resistance to change, or not seeing a need for change at all. Because guidelines, recommendations, policies, and other issues related to special events can vary between and even within jurisdictions, it can be difficult to reach an agreement on a common plan.

At the local level, one respondent stated, “We live in a small county and are aware of our hazards.” Similarly, in the state of Washington, Donna Shipman, training-safety officer at Granger Fire Department, admitted that, “Risk analysis has never entered the picture as we live in such a small town that we have never encountered anything adverse to residents or the community as a whole. We live with blinders on as everything we see or hear about occurs in major cities or overseas.” Another respondent agreed with Shipman, “We have several annual events that we have never had any problems with, so we continue to execute plans

from previous years because we are complacent and confident that nothing has ever gone wrong before, why change it?”

The challenge for local authorities is compounded by the fact that the level of assistance they receive fluctuates from event to event depending on factors such as the homeland security threat level, the persons involved, the visibility of the event, and the procedures used at past events. In some cases, if the local government, town, or community does not ask for help, the higher level authorities, in the words of one respondent, “seem to turn a blind eye to the planning.”

Finding Effective Guidance: There seems to be a disconnect between the level of guidance provided and the level of guidance required. Many respondents (30.5 percent) reported that relevant guidance for employing risk assessments primarily comes from the state or local government rather than the federal government. However, the largest percentage of respondents (31.4 percent) is unsure whether the government efforts at any level are sufficient.

Michael McCord, captain at the University of Texas at Arlington Police Department, stated that, “There is not a lot there to guide the areas and criteria for risk analysis. This would be a good area to standardize and/or establish best practices.” However, one respondent expressed a concern that the federal guidance that currently is available is too rigid and needs to be more flexible and interpretable. Of course, any new guidance will necessitate additional training to implement the new plans and policies.

According to Master Sergeant John Browning from the Texas State Guard, “Forms for assessment serve in the thinking process, but it is the overseeing responsible parties that must supervise the aspects for control and safety. Getting the job done is the major theme at lower levels of the operation and remains the central aspect.” Successfully accomplishing the job requires effective communication and collaboration at all levels.

Terry L. Storer, deputy director at the Logan County (Illinois) Emergency Management Agency and Mac McClellan, director at the Lake County (Michigan) Emergency Management Agency experienced similar road blocks to communication. Storer reported, “As an emergency manager, I was not allowed access to the threat data provided to law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services [EMS]. Specific briefing data was provided to these agencies on thumb drives while emergency management was specifically denied access. This was a ‘sore

point' as we were the lead agency." McClellan agrees that, "Emergency management has a hard time getting information from law enforcement concerning threat assessments when preplanning."

An Ongoing Process: There is still much to be done in the area of risk analysis and some respondents described their process of growth. For example, Bruce Piringer, former director of the Fire and Rescue Training Institute at the University of Missouri-Columbia, shared that, "I initiated using the incident command system to manage large training events in 1991. Initially our risk analysis focused on potential weather problems, but expanded as we gained experience and recognized other threats."

In Massachusetts, Major James A. Murphy, director of the Sheriff's Emergency Management Agency at the Plymouth County Sheriff's Department, is involved in presenting a program on risk, threat, and vulnerability assessments for anyone who may be involved in planning a special event. His expressed concern, of course, is funding for such programs.

In Arizona, Jannine Wilmoth, Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS) coordinator for the Glendale Fire Department, addressed funding concerns by expressing the need to plan early. "It's important to conduct the risk analysis or threat assessment very early in the planning process. It may be possible to address any identified gaps with the use of grant funds; however, the deadlines for applications may limit what can be accomplished."

Certified emergency manager Kay C. Goss, president of World Disaster Management and DomPrep40 Advisor, sums up the need to begin or continue pursuing effective risk assessments. "It is literally magical. Always, regardless of how well emergency managers know their jurisdictions, they are surprised by the results of a thorough risk assessment. It is impossible to guess or imagine the real risks for a jurisdiction, agency, or organization. Also, the process of doing an in-depth assessment brings enhanced ownership of the risks and mitigation solutions for the larger community."

Figure 1:

Have you had the opportunity to plan a large-scale special event?

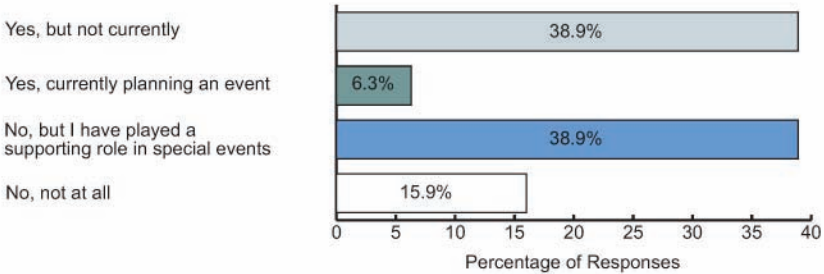


Figure 2:

When planning a special event, does your agency/organization conduct a risk/threat assessment as part of your planning and decision-making process?

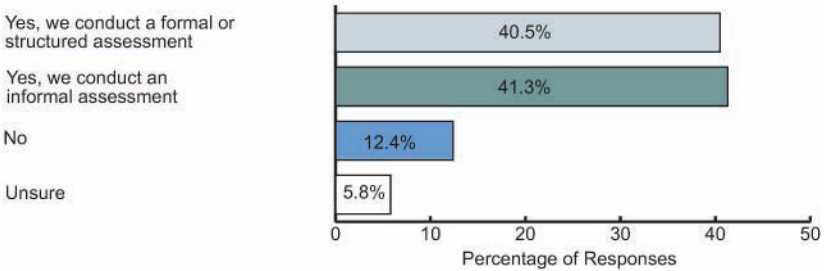
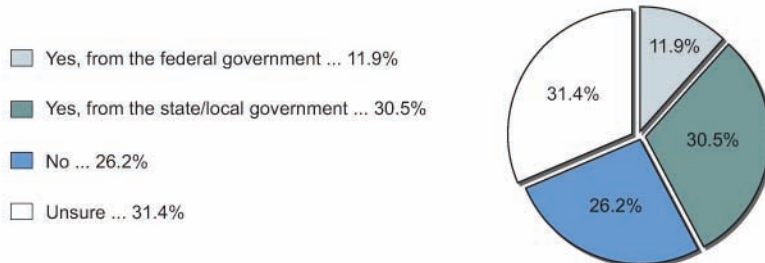


Figure 3:

Are current government efforts sufficient in terms of providing relevant guidance for employing risk analysis techniques to special event security planning?



II. CREDENTIALING AND VOLUNTEERS

Rudner also pointed out that, “The National Response Framework,¹ specifically National Incident Management System,² has suggested a process for the credentialing of personnel responding to both scheduled events and unexpected incidents. Additionally, the public health sector should be part of this coordinated effort. If the planners consider the intent of Presidential Policy Directive 8 and how communities should prepare for special events and incidents, they will recognize the need for sustainment over a period of time and understand that long-term incidents also should be factored in.”

Nicholas Peake, state and local planning chief at Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), mentioned that there have been many facets of a very large array that have kept FEMA members occupied – from sporting events to catastrophic disasters. He stressed the importance of whole community planning and, as jurisdictions, everyone is mutually dependent and mutually supported, “Parochialism cannot exist at a government planning level.” He went on to say that, “No problem is unique, so look to DomPrep, FEMA, and state emergency management agencies to see who else has information that is available that you didn’t know you could use.”

David Squires, lieutenant at the Virginia Beach Police Department, stated that, within his jurisdiction, “Community Emergency Response Teams [CERT] are employed for planning, briefing, and emergency response aspects of special events.” By integrating volunteers with professional public support, his department is able to avoid excessive overtime expenses that are common for special events.

Survey Results

Most respondents (79.9 percent) reported that their jurisdictions have both a plan and the means to receive outside domestic assistance during or after an event. However, the amount of response they normally receive from volunteer organizations varies greatly – from poor turnout when requested to an excess of spontaneous unsolicited volunteers.

Organizing Volunteers: CERT members have been used by many survey respondents to augment security, staff shelters, direct traffic, etc., but there seems to be a discrepancy in credentialing procedures. Some have no vetting process, but are credentialed by the county emergency management agencies, while others undergo thorough law enforcement background checks. This can pose a challenge for planners when a certain level of credentialing is required for a specific event.

In addition to CERT volunteers, Division Chief Michael O’Connell, Health and Safety Division of the Anne Arundel County Fire Department (Maryland), reported that, “Non-affiliated volunteers can register through the County Volunteer Center. Based on the needs of the event and the skill set of the unaffiliated volunteers, some may be invited to affiliate or be credentialed.” Having a volunteer resource center helps streamline the process of selecting volunteers based on credentials, experience, and skill level.

Organizations such as Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) bring together resources from many volunteer groups during times of disaster. However, nearly half of the respondents noted that their jurisdictions are finding ways to incorporate local volunteers into their scheduled events as well as emergency incidents. In North Carolina, there is, “A strong VOAD organization that falls right into our planning and response efforts for special events as well as emergencies,” stated Byrd.

Medical Volunteers: Other organizations such as the Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP) and Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) address credentialing concerns for health and medical professionals. MRC units are normally credentialed at the local level and ESAR-VHP at the state level, but one respondent suggested that the state credentialing for MRC units should be tied to the state ESAR-VHP program.

Credentialing and liability coverage continue to present a stumbling block for securing health volunteers. One respondent stated that, “Hospitals are reluctant to credential and use medical volunteers during a disaster.” In another county, a respondent’s hospital formed an emergency management subcommittee to, “Extend the footprint of the hospital or set up our field treatment tents elsewhere in the county.” In another county, someone else replied that, “In large-scale pre-planned events, we have been lucky to be able to use identifiable groups with pre-credentialed staff. Volunteer credentialing in an episodic event continues to be a challenge in pre-hospital and hospital responses to surge.”

In general, most respondents reported that jurisdictions are dependent on the participating groups to credential their own personnel. When incorporating volunteers into any plan, communication remains a key component for a successful operation. One respondent stated that, “Several local towns have trained CERT teams, but they seem to be used only for the town that trained them. There doesn’t appear to be any type of mutual aid agreement between towns to share the teams.” An established plan of action should include a process for handling volunteers – both solicited and spontaneous – and credentialing for a planned event or emergency.

Figure 4:

Does your jurisdiction have a plan and the means to receive outside assistance during or after an event?

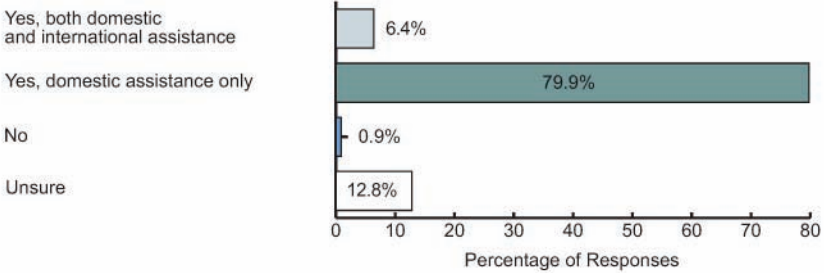
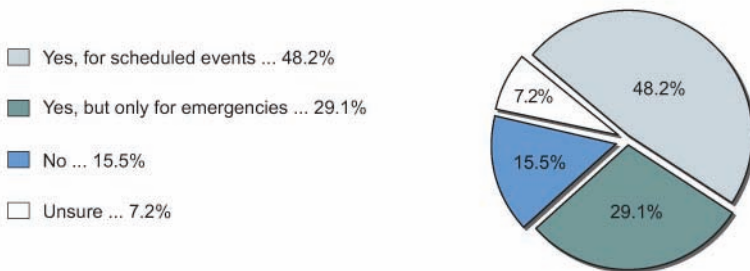


Figure 5:

Are local volunteer resources - e.g., Citizen Corps, Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), the American Red Cross, faith-based organizations - included in your special events plan?



III. STANDARDS AND TRAINING

Another component of effective special event planning is standards and training. When Executive Briefing attendees were asked if they had planned an event that the President of the United States attended, more than half of the people in the room raised their hands. For NSSEs, there was a general high regard for the way in which the Secret Service handled those events. “The hardest part is getting all the players together, but the structure works well,” said Blum. When planning a presidential visit, attendees agreed that the Secret Service is not inflexible and will make accommodations, but automatic planning templates are not sufficient.

As Beth Madaris, major event planning coordinator for the U.S. Capitol Police, pointed out, “The Secret Service has a very good unified command. They are helpful for getting the best solution for whatever the situation.” Rudner agreed that, “Although they may be overwhelming when they get there, they know how to fit into the boxes – as long as they have the data ahead of time, there are not many issues.”

However, ultimate responsibility for emergency planning still falls on the local community. Attendees claimed that the federal government only needs to manage operations when what is in place is not sufficient – Louisiana during and after Hurricane Katrina was the prime example discussed. In addition, although the United States provides response to other countries, there seems to be no infrastructure for reciprocal assistance.

Specific training efforts were discussed by several participants. Stewart Branam, the Washington Nationals Park’s security director, said that many of the stadium officers have gone through CERT training. His security team is doing more with currently available resources and, by establishing relationships well in advance, they are able to bring great value to their security program.

Richard Morman, deputy chief of police at The Ohio State University, shared his experience with helping to develop a best practices video for special event activities, which was funded by the Urban Areas Security Initiative. In addition to establishing best practices, his team has also undergone FEMA training for special event sport management and sports and special event evacuation training.

Survey Results

Of the people responding to the survey, 22.8 percent use generic guidelines for all special events, whereas the majority use standards that are more flexible and can be modified for each event. William H. Austin, homeland security coordinator for Capitol Region Council of Governments (Connecticut) and DomPrep40 Advisor, has had experience with three presidential visits, numerous military and VIP visits, several presidential campaign visits, and numerous festivals, as well as major sports activities such as the Super Bowl. According to him, standards and training, “Always [have] a conflict of some sort, which must be resolved in advance of the response.”

Common Guidelines: Guidelines that have been used for planning efforts by respondents include:

- American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Standards³;
- American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) Standards⁴;
- Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP)⁵;
- FEMA’s Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 201 and the Associated Threat and Hazard Identification Risk Assessment (THIRA) Methodology⁶;
- FEMA’s Management Institute Independent Study Program (e.g., IS-015 Special Events Contingency Planning)⁷;
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Guidelines⁸;
- National Incident Management System Incident Command System (NIMS ICS), Incident Action Plans⁹;
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Special Events Risk Methodology¹⁰;
- U.S. Department of Justice’s (DOJ) “Planning and Managing Security for Major Special Events: Guidelines for Law Enforcement”¹¹;
- U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Regulations¹²;
- U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Federal Highway Administration’s (FHWA) “Managing Travel for Planned Special Events”¹³;
- U.S. Government Printing Office’s Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)¹⁴; and
- U.S. Fire Administration Studies.¹⁵

Responses were divided when asked if current standards and regulations meet the requirements for minimum qualifications of personnel. Some explanation was given in the following response, “This is an area that I feel is woefully lacking. Between time constraints, having dedicated people who know special events and security/safety to drive a training program, as well as funding and mechanisms to pay personnel for training time, it is difficult to implement effective training programs. Without adequate training, there is no way to hold people to any sort of set standards.”

Training Stakeholders: Most respondents expressed that better training and/or technical assistance support is needed for developing and promoting the application of risk analysis for special events planning, but they disagree on whether they should come from federal or state/local sources. Even when training is available, some people and organizations choose not to participate – citing reasons such as lost revenue during training, lack of interest, and trouble coordinating with other groups.

Organizations represented by survey responses were evenly split between using and not using CERT volunteers as training partners. Some organizations encourage their staff to complete CERT training, but other organizations have had difficulty coordinating training efforts or have chosen to discontinue CERT training altogether.

Despite the combination of players, all stakeholders must be involved in the planning process. To efficiently and effectively manage a special event, planners must: determine which if any standards will be used, ensure that participants are all properly trained and prepared, and maintain open communication throughout the entire process.

Figure 6:

Does your jurisdiction have standards and guidelines specifically designed for special events?

Yes, generic guidelines for all special events

Yes, standards that can be modified for each event

No

Unsure

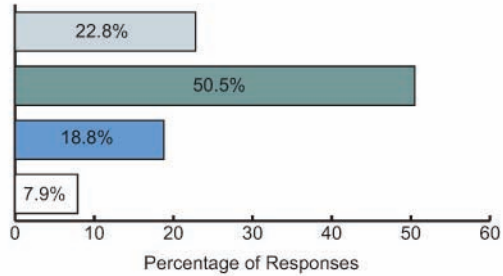


Figure 7:

Do you believe that the current standards (NFPA, ASTM, ANSI, etc.) and regulations (OSHA, CFR, etc.) adequately meet the requirements for minimum qualifications for personnel?

Yes ...35.4%

No ... 22.2%

Do not understand how standards are applied ... 15.2%

Unsure ... 27.2%

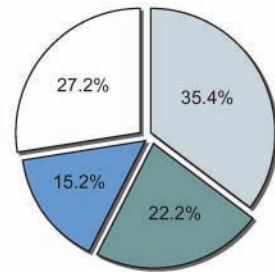


Figure 8:

Do you believe better training and/or technical assistance support is needed for developing and promoting the application of risk analysis for special event planning?

Yes, more is needed from federal sources

Yes, more is needed from local and state sources

No, there is sufficient training and/or assistance in this area

Unsure

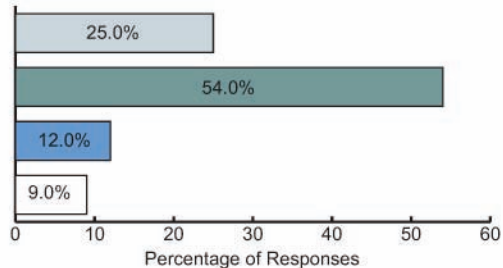


Figure 9:

Have you used any of the following as a guideline for your planning efforts (check all that apply):

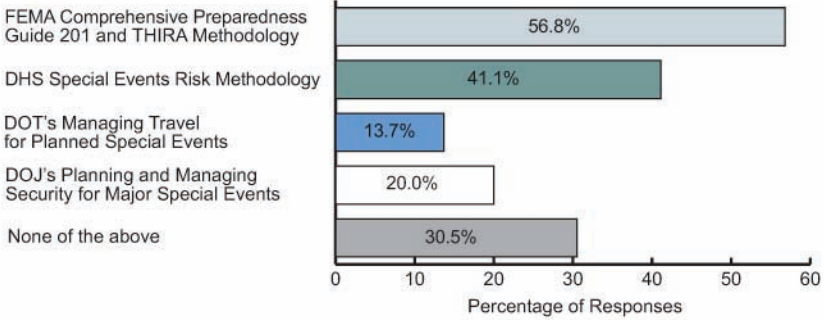
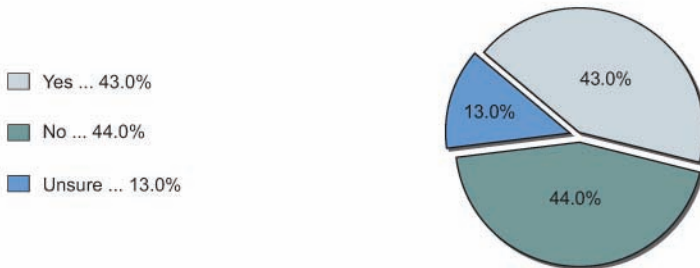


Figure 10:

Does your organization use Community Emergency Response Teams as training partners?



IV. TRANSPORTATION AND MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE

Only one small meeting room at Nationals Park was needed to conduct the July Executive Briefing. However, with 42,800 seats, room for 2,500 standing, and 5,000 employees, the entire stadium is, in effect, a small city when at full capacity. With most of those people arriving by public transportation, the first line of discussion was the challenge of moving people during a sudden evacuation, as well as managing the normal flow of traffic into and out of special event venues.

The Ripple Effect

Because stadium officials recognize that the movement of people has a rippling effect on operations, planning, execution, and additional locations, Branam and other stadium representatives meet with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security once a month to discuss community and environmental concerns. Activities at other area venues, VIP visits, the general population, and the event itself all impact or are impacted by the movement of the masses.

When hosting a special event, employees must be enabled to step in and help the flow of traffic by using effective crowd management concepts and law enforcement. At the same time, the needs of the residents, visitors, and military and government operations must be kept in mind.

A good example provided by Williams was the Sailabration that was held in June 2012, when 47 tall ships and nearly one million visitors representing eight countries converged on Baltimore, Maryland. Needless to say, the air show, sailing vessels, parking and bussing, and spectators all left a very large footprint. Members from Fort McHenry, Camden Yards/Orioles Park, the Coast Guard, the police department, the Maryland Analysis Center, and many more collaborated with the OEM to put the right people in place with the best possible communication.

Incidents Within an Event

One by one, briefing participants provided examples and emphasized traffic problems and concerns surrounding the ability to move people to and from events. Laurel Radow, evacuations/emergencies and planned special events program manager at the FHWA, shared statistics

gathered by the FHWA that focused on arts, entertainment, and leisure events. In the United States alone, at the national level, there is an estimated 24,000 events that each draws a crowd of 10,000 or more people.¹⁶ With billions of dollars in revenue at stake, transportation needs to be brought in as a key player. Sometimes incidents happen on the way to and from a venue, thus putting people on the road when the transit system is affected – e.g., when a bridge is out.

Washington, D.C., and its surrounding areas have the added problems of congestion and jurisdictional control. During an NSSE, having separate distinct jurisdictions with different transportation plans can be a major hurdle. The fact that Virginia and Maryland handle traffic differently than D.C. needs to be considered in an integrated plan ahead of time.

Darrell Darnell, senior associate vice president of safety and security for George Washington University, pointed out that more than 20 percent of D.C. residents do not have cars. This means that an evacuation may be dependent on people walking out of the city, and how Maryland, Virginia, and D.C. handle their bridge traffic is paramount. The bottom line he said is that, “There will never be just one plan – the variations are endless.”

Survey Results

Whether hosting an event at a downtown stadium or on rural farmland, moving people into and out of a large-scale special event can be a challenge at the venue itself, as well as in the surrounding communities. Half of the survey respondents use current employees and personnel and one quarter rely on outside contractors and law enforcement to ensure the smooth movement of people.

Most large-scale events involve people coming from multiple jurisdictions – by crowded six-lane highways and/or single-lane country roads. Even if movement into and out of the venue itself is managed, the surrounding areas also could be affected. As a result, many jurisdictions have an integrated transportation plan with neighboring jurisdictions.

Those plans serve as a guide that should be reevaluated periodically. As one respondent admitted, “We have conducted traffic plans at so many events, we are overconfident in our ability to move people and do not take contingencies into account.” Other concerns that were raised include: shelter management, points of distribution sites, and persons with functional needs.

More than half of the people who responded to the survey have in place a way to either manage costs or manage and recover costs for planned special events. However, for the other people who do not have – or are unsure if they have – something in place, event planners must raise additional questions during the planning process regarding the recovery of financial assets.

To aid in the planning process, various federal government programs exist, including the FHWA’s Planned Special Events/Traffic Incident Management Peer-to-Peer Program, which provides resources to public sector transportation stakeholders. Unfortunately, 60 percent of respondents were unaware of such programs when planning their local special events.

By knowing what resources are available and reaching out to other agencies and jurisdictions, planners can develop mutual aid agreements and receive support to enhance their existing capabilities. As plans are established, that information must be shared at all levels and must filter down to the operational level where those plans are being carried out. Once again, communication is a key component to success.

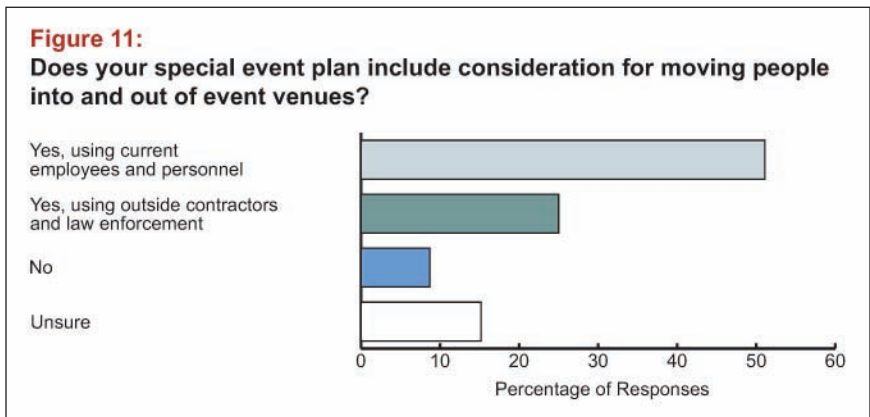


Figure 12:

Do you have an integrated transportation plan with neighboring jurisdictions?

- Yes ... 44.6%
- No ... 38.0%
- Unsure ... 17.4%

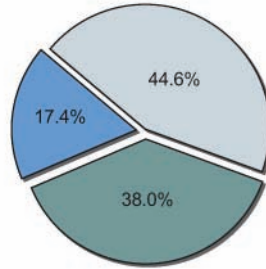


Figure 13:

Do you have in place a way to either manage costs or manage and recover costs for planned special events?

- Yes ... 53.3%
- No ... 26.1%
- Unsure ... 20.6%

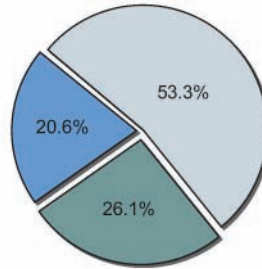


Figure 14:

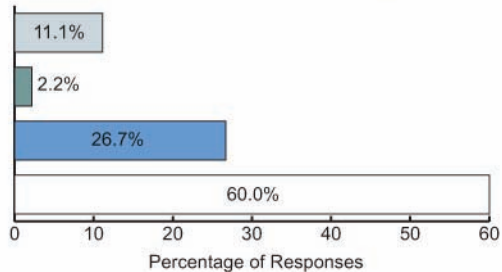
Are you familiar with various federal government programs that are available including the Federal Highway Administration's Planned Special Events/Traffic Incident Management Peer-to-Peer program?

Yes, federal programs have been very helpful

Yes, but federal programs have not been helpful

Yes, but have not had experience with the programs

Unsure



V. COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The July discussion also addressed communication efforts. With experience ranging from planning D.C.'s 4th of July celebrations on the Mall to President Barack Obama's 2009 inauguration, Darnell noted that, "Communication has been the key." Before, during, and after an event, elected officials and key decision makers must be in the room and the public must be informed. Because of the rapidly growing use of social media, Darnell stated, "Social media people are going to do it whether it is part of your plan or not, so it must be part of the plan."

Ideally, proper planning will ensure that everything works as expected. However, even the best planning cannot eliminate all possible problems that could arise. "The 'what ifs' keep widening. Who needs to know it? Minimize the 'what ifs' with communication and cooperation," said Blum.

Frequency and Speed of Communication

Ed Tobias from the Associated Press (AP) emphasized that, "The frequency and speed of communication are imperative during an incident, [and emergency managers] may find themselves competing with news agencies." Press offices like AP have 24-hour, 7-days-a-week desks that do nothing but monitor social media, so daily briefings alone may not be enough. The growing use of social media has opened many more avenues for communication. Although tracking social media content is a good practice, Tobias also reminded everyone that social media goes two ways.

In the event that something does go wrong, a "war room" should be available for the press to receive information that is clear, credible, accurate, timely, and consistent. There was a general consensus at the Executive Briefing that information should be available in less than 25 minutes, even if the news is simply that nothing has changed. However, choosing the messenger can be as great a challenge as the message itself.

Unlike Major League Baseball, where the umpire is the only one who can change or cancel a game, emergency managers and public officials must choose someone who is generally trusted to "call the game" in the public's eye. Kathryn Stack, director at Burson-Marsteller, provided the example of BP oil company's Anthony (Tony) Hayward, who in essence created an even larger disaster in the public's perception

following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010. In contrast, Blum praised the efforts of Governor Haley Barbour following Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Although Mississippi was actually hit harder by the storm than Louisiana, Barbour's handling of the public communication was much more effective in managing the situation.

Reducing Public Concerns – Both Real and Perceived

Regardless of the situation, event, or disaster, there is always a communication component. Gretchen Michael, director of communications at the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR), stressed that communications need to be brought in early. Before an event, it is important to decide: (a) who is going to communicate; (b) what information is going to be relayed; (c) how that information will be delivered; and (d) what the process is for internal/external clearance. In addition, Michael stated that, "It is really important to remember that even though something is not a 'health' event, it may be a 'perceived health' event and should be treated as such." She cited the example of the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster, where people with perceived illnesses inundated the medical facilities.

By using a common operating picture and consistent public messages, representatives from transportation, public works, police, public information offices, fire, emergency medical services, etc. can help reduce such "phantom pains" and general public concerns. Instant feedback in press conferences and social media may be painful at times, but participants agreed that a simple, "I do not know," is better than no communication at all.

Survey Results

As the general population's use of social media increases, so too does that of emergency planners, responders, and receivers. "Media reliance is a changing aspect of civilian information distribution that should be expanded upon to allow access 24/7, much like the 24/7 weather station using the changing technologies available," according to Browning. As reflected in the survey, most organizations use broadcasts and social media as integral parts of their emergency plans for special events. Social media plays an important role in situational awareness.

In addition to an increase in information distribution, there is a risk of disseminating information that has not gone through the

proper channels. For that reason among others, there must be a good understanding of clearances needed in order to release certain information and data. As well as having a good understanding of internal and external clearances, 95.6 percent of respondents have already chosen a spokesperson to address the public during emergencies.

Having someone – for example, a local emergency manager, police chief, or public information officer – chosen ahead of time will facilitate the information sharing process. Delays in addressing the public can lead to misinformation being shared from outside sources. As Lee Trevor, registered nurse and disaster preparedness coordinator for TriStar Summit Medical Center in Tennessee, explained, “It has been my experience in the past 18 years that, in the absence of an ‘official spokesperson’ the media will find a spokesperson for your organization.”

Figure 15:

Are broadcasts and social media integral parts of your emergency plan for special events?

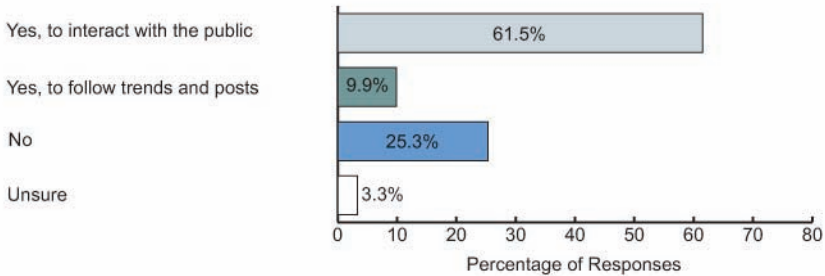


Figure 16:

Do you have a good understanding of clearances needed in order to release information?

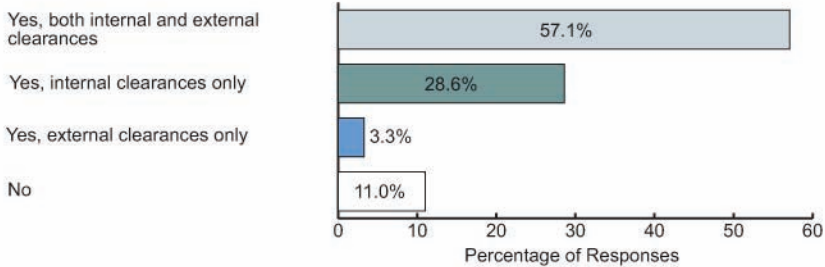
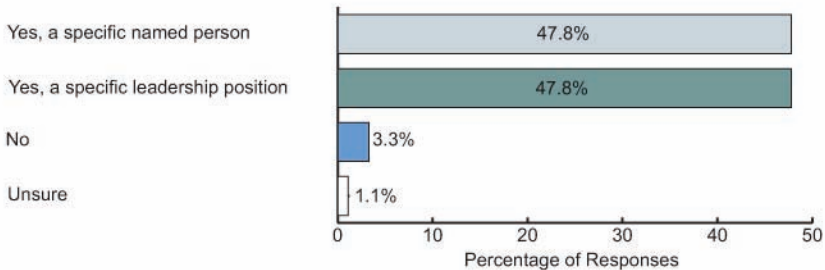


Figure 17:

Has a spokesperson been chosen to address the public during emergencies?



KEY FINDINGS AND ACTION PLAN

This study confirms that there are differing views and procedures when preparing for a planned special event. As events grow, however, the area affected by the event also increases, thus requiring better coordinated efforts with neighboring jurisdictions. Developing an effective action plan will help event planners and other stakeholders during each step of the process – as they assess, plan, train, implement, communicate, and evaluate.

This study has focused on expert opinions from practitioners in a variety of disciplines, sectors, and levels of government. When creating a special event action plan, there are many key points to consider, including but not limited to:

- Performing a risk assessment;
- Credentialing and vetting participants;
- Employing volunteers;
- Engaging nearby communities and others who may be affected;
- Gaining support from other jurisdictions;
- Determining which standards will be used;
- Training staff;
- Moving people;
- Developing cooperative agreements;
- Coordinating efforts;
- Communicating with everyone, from management to operations;
- Choosing a spokesperson;
- Sharing information with the public and staff at all levels;
- Incorporating volunteer organizations; and
- Training and educating all stakeholders.

This study sheds light on the experiences and lessons learned from a variety of special events. As events change and grow, the planning must change and grow with it. By using these lessons, event planners can evaluate and build upon their existing plans to continually improve the outcome of future events.

NOTES

For additional information on:

- ¹ The National Response Framework, visit <http://www.fema.gov/national-response-framework>
- ² The National Incident Management System – Guideline for the Credentialing of Personnel, August 2011, visit http://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nims/nims_cred_guidelines_report.pdf
- ³ ANSI Standards Store, visit <http://webstore.ansi.org>
- ⁴ ASTM standards, visit <http://www.astm.org/Standard/index.shtml>
- ⁵ EMAP, visit <http://www.emaponline.org>
- ⁶ FEMA’s CPG 201 and THIRA methodology, visit <http://www.fema.gov/plan>
- ⁷ FEMA’s Independent Study Program, visit <http://training.fema.gov/is>
- ⁸ NFPA’s codes and standards, visit <http://www.nfpa.org/categoryList.asp?categoryID=124&URL=Codes%20&%20Standards>
- ⁹ NIMS, visit http://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nims/NIMS_core.pdf
- ¹⁰ The U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s risk management and analysis, visit <http://www.dhs.gov/office-risk-management-and-analysis-mission>
- ¹¹ DOJ’s “Planning and Managing Security for Major Special Events: Guidelines for Law Enforcement,” visit http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/Publications/e07071299_web.pdf
- ¹² OSHA Law and Regulations, visit <http://www.osha.gov/law-regs.html>
- ¹³ FHWA’s “Managing Travel for Planned Special Events,” visit <http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwahop07108/index.htm>
- ¹⁴ CFR Annual Editions, visit <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collectionCfr.action?selectedYearFrom=2012&go=Go>
- ¹⁵ U.S. Fire Administration Studies, visit <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/nfa/nfaonline>
- ¹⁶ FHWA’s “Planned Special Events – Economic Role and Congestion Effects,” visit http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwahop08022/fhwa_hop_08_022.pdf

APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX B

Abbreviations

ANSI	American National Standards Institute
ASPR	Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response
ASTM	American Society for Testing and Materials
CERT	Community Emergency Response Teams
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CPG	Comprehensive Preparedness Guide
DoD	U.S. Department of Defense
DOJ	U.S. Department of Justice
DOT	U.S. Department of Transportation
EMA	Emergency Management Agency
EMAP	Emergency Management Accreditation Program
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
ESAR-VHP	Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
ICS	Incident Command System
MMRS	Metropolitan Medical Response System
MRC	Medical Reserve Corps
NEMA	National Emergency Management Association
NFPA	National Fire Protection Administration
NIMS	National Incident Management System
NSSE	National Special Security Event
OEM	Office of Emergency Management
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
THIRA	Threat and Hazard Identification Risk Assessment
VOAD	Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster

APPENDIX C

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And others who asked to not have their names and affiliations disclosed.

Where do you work?

Fire Service	15.0%
Law Enforcement	3.7%
EMS	6.5%
Emergency Management	13.1%
Public Health	15.0%
Hospital (including VA)	13.1%
Federal Government	0.9%
Military	2.8%
State/Local Government	7.5%
Non-Government Organizations	2.8%
Privately Owned Company	4.7%
Publicly Traded Company	3.7%
Academic Institution	7.5%
Student	0.9%
Other	2.8%

What type of position do you hold?

Upper Management	19.6%
Middle Management	31.8%
Operations	17.8%
Technical	6.5%
Training	4.7%
Administration	5.6%
Other	14.0%

There are an estimated 24,000 planned special events at the national level annually that each attract more than 10,000 attendees. The approximately 600 million attendees bring in about \$40 billion of “in-event” revenue and \$4 billion in government revenue, but cost \$1.7-\$3.5 billion in congestion, 93-187 million hours in travel delays, and 64-128 million gallons of excess fuel consumption. FHWA estimates that planned special events have a total economic impact of \$160 billion.

“Planned Special Events – Economic Role and Congestion Effects”
U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration
August 2008

