

Physical Security at Special Events

The Role of Security Agencies in the Development of a Secure and Safe Environment

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Abstract—How much Physical Security is needed? What is the likelihood that your event will be a target of a terrorist attack? How much do you want to inconvenience your patrons/guests? How much money is in your security budget? These are some of the hard questions that need to be answered when considering what type of security measures you need to implement for your particular situation.

Every event is different and has its' unique set of circumstances. However the same sets of questions need to be asked. The answers will guide you in the kinds of security measures to employ.

Sound security principles and concepts will be discussed to underscore why certain things are done a certain way. Understanding what security issues to mitigate will help shape what security measures are needed. Security agencies have a direct role in the development of a secure and safe environment.

By knowing what is needed and why it's needed, a smart choice can be made of the security options available on today's market. This will not only save money but will help ensure the security threats have been adequately countered.

There is a plethora of security measures to choose from. These range from the smallest electronic sensors to actually changing the physical landscape of the surrounding environment. This paper will explore the basic choices available to security professionals.

Keywords—physical security

I. INTRODUCTION

It's never too early to start planning, just make sure your security measures are flexible to counter any new threat that may develop and incorporate any new technologies that may become available. It's also always good to develop relationships of security professionals before and not during the event.

An effective security plan is a multi-layered approach involving many technologies and many agencies. Enlisting the support of various Security Agencies in the development of the overall security plan will prove to be a tremendous asset to secure and safe environment.

All security is a compromise. Yes I said it, it's all a compromise. Even if you have unlimited funds and access to unlimited resources a decision has to be made as to how much security will be dedicated to the event and how much you want to inconvenience the people in attendance. The only 100% way to guarantee no bad things will happen is not to hold the event. Short of that you must weigh the possibility against the probability.

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II. THE HEART OF THE MATTER

A. Possibility verses Probability

To assess the possibility of a security breach verses the probability, an informed decision has to be made. This is where the support of all the various Security Agencies come into play. This is also why networking with them is so highly important. No one man is an island. No one agency is all encompassing. Everyone has something to contribute and bring to the "security" table.

Factors that must be considered in your security plan include intelligence, venue location, attendees, budget, available resources, manpower, command structure, and technical capabilities. That's a lot of factors in a lot of areas. In my 22 year career as a US Federal Agent, being involved in over 100 National Special Security Events, I cannot think of one instance where there were not multiple agencies involved with the security arrangements.

B. Areas That Need to be Addressed

Intelligence – What is the current threat? What's the threat level? Forewarned is forearmed. This cannot be understated or exaggerated. Local conditions will dictate this.

Venue - The physical location. What needs to be secured? Vulnerability points? Entrance/Egress points need to be identified and secured. This is also at times referred as fortifying or "hardening" the venue.

Attendees – Who will be expected to attend? Targeted audience....general public.....VIPs? How much do you want to inconvenience them?

Budget – How much money do you have allocated for security at this event? Unfortunately, as stated earlier, all security is a compromise. How much security can you afford? What is possible verses what is probable? Again, the only 100% sure way to guarantee not having a security breach is not to host the event.

Available Resources – What assets do you already have? What do you need? Who else can help with security arrangements? Leverage resources... IISSM, ASIS, Other Security Agencies, Law Enforcement Agencies.

Manpower – Uniformed personnel act as a deterrent. Show of force. Makes people think twice about doing harm. Provides sense of security to people in attendance. Security agencies can provide uniformed security guards for your event.

Command Station - Center for command and control. Organized structure of who is in charge and clear delegation of duties. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are understood and are being followed by all security personnel.

Remember plan for WHEN it happens not IF it happens. As the saying goes, "Plan for the worst and hope for the best".

Technologies - Multi-level approach. Use different technologies to counter different threats. Different security agencies can provide different specialized equipment. Again, use the resources you have available.

C. Various Technologies

Lighting. Probably the single most deterrent there is. A well lit area discourages criminals from doing bad things. Good lighting also fosters a good sense of security by making a statement that the area is cared for, well maintained, and not neglected. Of course, since one technology is never exclusively relied upon, good lighting will also make for better video images for your security camera system.

Video. Security camera systems have advanced tremendously in the past few years. It seems every few months a new feature is developed. Security camera systems definitely serve as a force multiplier. They enable a few individuals to visually keep tabs over a tremendous area. This is all done inside the Command Station at the venue. Depending on your budget, facial recognition software can also be employed to augment your security plan.

X-ray Scanning. The use of x-ray technology can assist with screening individuals, vehicles, equipment, deliveries, entering the venue. This is definitely quicker and usually more reliable than hand searches.

CBNE Countermeasures. Technology in this area should be employed. The historical threat and the immediate threat level will determine how it should be used. If you would like to know more about what technologies are available, please see me afterward my presentation. I would be more than happy to discuss it with you.

Access and Egress points. These points must be identified, kept to a minimum, and secured. Your security plan should seal off points that are not conducive and only keep the ones that work for you.

Physical Barriers. Physical barriers provide the first line of defense to physically protect the venue. As mentioned earlier this is one form of hardening your location. Temporary physical barriers are often used at the entrance/exit points. This technology has come a long way too. There are many types of temporary barriers to choose from offered by many different vendors.

Physical Landscape. Depending on your circumstances, altering the immediate physical landscape can also be included in the overall security plan. This is sometimes referred to as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).

Standoff Distances. These distances are usually referred to when dealing with the threat of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). Obviously a larger threat would require a larger standoff distance. Local conditions will determine this. These distances need to be factored into your overall security plan. Again, if you would like to know more about this, please see me afterward my presentation.

Detection Sensors. These are usually small electronic sensors that are usually employed to detect motion/movement. They can be installed to alert personnel when a secure area has been accessed. However, there are sensors made to detect almost anything you want detected. It just comes down to what your threats are and how much money is in your budget.

III. SUMMARY

In conclusion, there are many factors to consider in developing a security plan for a venue during a special event. The good news is there are also many resources available to assist with the planning as well as the implementation. Security is a multi-level, multi-technology, and multi-agency matter.

One publication I recommend is the American Society of Industrial Security (ASIS) Facilities Physical Security Measures Guideline (ASIS GDL FPSM-2009). Another good source of information I recommend are the various Certificate Courses in Security offered through the International Institute of Security & Safety Management (IISSM).

Understanding what security issues to mitigate will help shape what security measures are needed. Security agencies have a direct role in the development of a secure and safe environment. By knowing what is needed and why it's needed, a smart choice can be made of the security options available on today's market. This will not only save money but will help ensure the security threats have been adequately countered.