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Middle East and North Africa Leisure & Attractions Council

LET'S TALK SAFETY – DECEMBER 2022

EFFECTIVE SECURITY CROWD CONTROL PROCEDURES AND SOLUTIONS FOR EVENTS

Written by: Victor Pelsmaeker,
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Events mean huge turnouts, and managing big groups of people effectively is crucial if you want to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone. Event businesses must turn to professional security crowd control services to manage big crowds and ensure event attendees' safety.

Mr. Victor Pelsmaeker, Senior Safety Engineer at **TÜV NORD** in the Amusement and Leisure Division - a safety Expert having worked at major parks all over the world – writes in length about Security Management (how it starts and works), Crowd Control, developing a crowd Control Plan, its elements and some crowd management tips which are essential for the safety and security of guests at events.



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Where it all starts with – Security Management



Crowd Control as a pillar of Security Management

How does it all start?

It starts with an adequate **Security Risk Assessment (SRA)**. We may think that our security precautions are more than adequate to meet our needs. We might even be tempted to think that we don't need SRA.

But when SRA is executed well, it acts as a light source revealing threats and vulnerabilities that were not recognised before. It is not possible to determine and plan measures to be secure if we don't recognise the 'threat'. Therefore, SRA is an integral part of a company's risk management process. A security assessment identifies, analyses and implements key security controls.

In particular SRA identifies risks that surround crowds. If these risks are known, adequate responses and procedures can be planned and implemented.



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How does SRA work?

Consider these factors when performing SRA:

- Identify security risks
- Analyse and evaluate the security risks. This will help in understanding areas of business that are open to threats or attacks of a physical or non-physical nature (cyber).
- Prioritise the security risks in order of risks and seriousness
- Establish a plan/procedure to eliminate or minimise risks
- Implement the security plan. This is done in consultation with other departments and stakeholders. Considerations and budgetary constraints must be agreed upon.

What is Crowd Control?



Crowd control means protecting life and property. Behaviour of people in the crowd could change drastically and dramatically. There could be multiple causes for the change of behaviour. Without crowd control the success of an event could be at risk. Paying customers could get annoyed, problems might arise and the event might fail. Wisdom is to get the crowds to do what is required for safety and security without creating bottlenecks.



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Developing a Crowd Control Management Plan

The larger a gathering during an event, the more important crowd control becomes. Every event requires some form or level of crowd management to ensure the safety of people and the success of an event. If event visitors are not communicated where to find certain necessities and when no plans are in place, bottlenecks will occur, and people may become unruly.

Inadequate crowd control could cause injuries and other problems, or even worsen situations and emergencies. These developments can never be resolved in real time, especially when the crowd is large. The development of a crowd control plan will help us in managing such undesired situations.

What is a Crowd Control Plan - CCP?

Any time a large group of people gather, there is potential for emergencies to occur. Unfortunately, injuries and even deaths have occurred at major events in the past. That is why it is of great importance that event organisers, operators and attendants understand the risks involved with large gatherings and the importance of CCP.

Consider these factors at the start of the planning process:

- Event type
- Facility design and location attributes
- Expected crowds
- Safety and security concerns
- Parking, entries and exits
- Ticketing, restrooms and merchandise outlets
- Necessary training
- Effective tools and practices





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A half-baked plan might not work if an emergency occurs. At the same time during an event a plan should also be flexible enough to adapt to developing conditions. If every part of the event is properly planned and accounted for, protocols are implemented, and workers have been trained properly, the event should go smoothly.

Elements of a Crowd Control Plan

- **Know your Crowd**

Knowing the state of mind of the crowd will help in deciding which crowd control products to use at the event.

- **Entrance & Exits**

Events have lots of entrances or exits. In case of an amusement park or water park, visitors are spending much time standing at the entrance line. The entrance to a ride, restaurant, store or even the toilet, etc.

- **Signage and Safety Communications**

People need clear and proper information. Signage is one way to inform them what could be and is expected at a facility. A Crowd Control Plan will consider these facts.

Emergency Plans – EP

During an event there might be a moment that attention of visitors must be drawn to announcements from the event management. The Emergency Plan must indicate how information of an urgent nature could be communicated to public. Parking areas are part of an event area and need to be considered too. Some ways to attract the attention of the public include:

- Using signage to control crowds
- Through trained staff members to control crowds
- Use of intercom to control crowds
- Use of an app or SMS messaging to affect crowd behaviour



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Know the Crowd Control Process

This is a very important part of a Crowd Management Plan.

- Every person working in the event shall know what to do when an emergency occurs.
- How will emergency personnel access the event grounds?
- What is the chain of command in case of an emergency?
- What is the exit procedure for public attending the event?
- How will directions be communicated to team members and visitors?

Crowd Management Tips

- Offer ample access to drinks that are non-alcoholic.
- Minimise the number of access points. Ascertain that maximum occupancy requirements to maintain safe and legal event are adhered to. By minimising access points the event could be made secure for all.
- It is useful and maybe necessary to have visitation capability by security personnel of visitors. Again, this depends on the kind of people the crowd is made up of.
- Organise staff and give everyone a clear role. A soft-start meeting can be a great opportunity to get to know SOPs (standard operating procedures) for various situations.
- Make sure security personnel is well trained.
- Encourage guests to report suspicious or threatening situations.
- Keep ticket lines orderly. Encourage guests to reserve and register on time.



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