



# Event Risk Management and Safety

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industry, for those who work in symbolic interaction, is about the packaging of a collective memory and associating it with (a) specific place(s) in time or space. From the symbolic interaction perspective, crises are interpreted in a symbolic and symbiotic manner.

An example of this symbolism is in the presence or nonpresence of a police/security force at an event site. In many event venues, a police/security presence may serve the industry as a “psychological” security blanket and a way to avoid crises. Visitors report that they feel more comfortable when they know that an area is well patrolled. In contrast, however, too many police officers in a particular location may send the message that there is a good reason to be afraid, that the officers are there as a result of a crisis, or that the area is dangerous.

Because most people connect a uniformed officer to a range of meanings, the tourism center that chooses to have a security force present must create a setting in which these security personnel symbolize hospitality rather than restraint, service over protection, and security over threat. When security departments produce negative images, they can become part of the risk crisis. For example, negative media reports about Los Angeles and Mexico City have added additional challenges to the tourism industries in those cities. The recent example of New York City police officers doing nothing while more than fifty women were molested in Central Park during the Puerto Rico Day parade has been reported throughout the world. In that case, due to poor risk management and assessment, a major crisis developed for both the city’s tourism community and its police force.

The opposite can also be true. In some communities, local security forces have succeeded in becoming symbolic icons, representing not just the use of force but also a cultural attraction. In those cases, the police force is not only a deterrent to crime but also an important icon of that society. Consider, for example, the positive images evoked by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the British bobbies.

The aforementioned classical sociological theories form the framework for this book. You, as an event risk manager, must be aware of the following:

1. Events are a **volunteeristic activity**. As such, the industry must resell itself on a consistent basis. The theoretical consequences of this proposition are many. For example:

- a. Guests need not come to a particular place or return to that place. An event, then, always involves a sense of marketing. To survive, the professional must assume that brand loyalty or even desire to buy can never be taken for granted.
  - b. Most guests expect a safe and secure environment. The one exception to this rule is the allocentric adventure market where people seek danger. For example, consider the rise of storm chasers or those who specifically choose to visit a war zone. Even among highly allocentric travelers, danger can be divided into expected dangers (i.e., dangers factored into the trip) and random violence (i.e., dangers that are produced in a violent manner and not considered part of the experience). The large majority of guests, however, assume that a place is safe and secure.
2. Most guests do not distinguish between the concepts of safety and security. The poisoning of food and an act of terrorism often have the same consequences. This dedifferentiation between the terms again holds a number of consequences for the industry. For example:
  - a. The farther the person is from a crisis, the worse that crisis seems and the longer the crisis lasts in the outsider's memory.
  - b. Guests tend to be more ignorant of local conditions than those who live in a locale. Thus, fear and rumor have greater consequences than does reality. Facts are those that seem plausible rather than those that are empirically provable.
  - c. Potential visitors are often highly unsophisticated when it comes to geography. Due to geographic ignorance, fear, and media hype, a crisis in one part of a nation may affect that entire nation's tourism and even tourism throughout that region. For example, consider the drop in event attendance and general tourism throughout the eastern Mediterranean during NATO's Kosovo action.
  - d. Event guests do not distinguish between one part of an industry and another. Thus, if a crisis occurs in a locale's food-handling sector, the negative publicity may produce fallout in that locale's lodging industry, attractions, and so forth. Other than a few worldwide

attractions, such as the Eiffel Tower and the Taj Mahal, most tourists, especially on first visits, come to a locale and not to a site.

3. There is no one formula to describe all guests. What may be a crisis for one person may not be a crisis for another person. Classical psychographic tourism theory tends to divide visitors along various continuums. For example, we can adapt the Plog model to event risk management and divide guests along the allocentric-psychographic continuum. This typology shows the amount of risk that a person is willing to take. Another typology is that of the inner- and outer-directed event guest. In this continuum, guests are situated according to their motivations to attend an event: Did they attend this event to impress others or merely to please themselves? In all cases, the term special events covers a number of people who view different events as indications of a crisis or lack of crisis. Figure 1.3 distinguishes allocentric from psychocentric event participants.

During the last century, all forms of event participation have grown from an activity of the well-to-do to a part of everyday life. Leisure, parasitic in nature, was once the idle time of the rich. In the mid-twentieth century, leisure became a product for the working person, and once it became producible en masse, it became an integral part of local economies.

Allocentric Event Guest	Psychocentric Event Guest
Rock concert guest	Theater attendee
Ropes course participant	Conference participant
White-water rafter	Visitor to a museum

**Figure 1-3**  
Allocentric and Psychocentric Event Participants

better, let us examine the place where an “event” is to occur. It is the risk manager who must decide if the quantity of doors is important. The risk manager will examine the site for issues of security and safety. How many entrances/exits should the site have? How many entrances are too many? What is the relationship between the number of exits needed in case of fire and the number of entrances needed as regards crowd control? If the quantity is important, then this piece of information becomes part of the overall database; if the quantity is not important, then we are dealing with a nonuseful fact. Think how important this simple judgment call is at a major jewelry show, computer show, or clothing show. At these trade fairs, there is a great deal of merchandise available to the public. For the show to be a success, the buyers must be able to handle the goods shown at the fair, yet pilferage is a major problem at such events and can cost well into the millions of dollars.

In order, then, to determine which facts are important, we must develop risk theories and scenarios. We will need to ask questions such as the following:

- **How many people will be in attendance?** In event risk management, size matters. Knowing how many people are attending an event establishes perimeters and forecasts staffing levels.
- **What types of events take place in the venue?** Take the time to study the history of the venue. If this is normally a venue for sports events, what special problems will a political event pose for you? What sports facilities can be converted and used for another purpose?
- **What type of person will attend the event?** Demographics tell us a lot about the type of risk that may be prevalent at this event. Will this event attract jewelry thieves? Are the attendees liable to become rambunctious or is this a group that has a low tolerance level for frustration? The more you know about the type(s) of person(s) you will have at the event, the easier it is to develop a risk plan.
- **How frequently do events take place in a particular facility?** Is the site used only occasionally for a special event or large gathering or is this a site that has employees who are event oriented? What event facilities, such as communications centers, does the site have?

1. Conduct a good security analysis of the event site both before and after the event. What are your weaknesses, where are you most vulnerable? Before the event, the risk manager attempts to locate risks and develop a plan to deal with these risks. The postinspection is the critique. After the event, the event risk manager should ask questions such as: What other risks were there? What was missed? What actions might have been taken?
2. Develop a good working relationship between local security professionals and the various components of the local tourism, hospitality, and events industry. Do they know you: the risk manager? Will local public safety agencies be of help? To whom can you, as the event risk manager, turn, should you need help. These are the political questions that can make a major difference in the success or failure of an event's total risk management plan.
3. Make certain that all event stakeholders know who you are and for what each risk manager is responsible. The more other staff and volunteers understand your role and what you do, the better the chances that they will become willing team members in helping you to manage the risks at your event.
4. Develop security pamphlets/signs and other communications that explain to guests, staff, and volunteers key information as listed below and make sure that the signs are readable to all of those who are attending and working at the event. English language signs are not helpful if the attendee does not read English and you may prefer to use international graphical symbols.
  - Best evacuation routes to take
  - Exit signs
  - People and things to avoid
  - First-aid signs
  - Warning signs
  - Parking signs
  - Emergency access phones and numbers
  - Information kiosks
5. Develop a media plan to:
  - Increase safety and security awareness
  - Be prepared in case damage control is needed
6. Coordinate event risk management efforts with the local community as to:
  - Controlled hours and traffic flow
  - Advance notice of events
  - Consultation prior to event
  - Limitations and division of labor and resources
  - Policy vis à vis out-of-towners
  - Visitor information sources

**Figure 2-13**

Guide to Conducting the Event Risk Management Process

<b>Inspect</b>	<b>Liaison</b>
Quality of water/food	Local health officials
Loose carpeting or other underfoot hazards	Site engineers, maintenance crews, sanitation crews
Safety of building	Safety inspectors
Loose rocks and obstacles on paths	Grounds department
Quality of lighting	Electrical personnel
Quality of public sanitation services	Health sanitation, waste management services
Debris around the site	Janitorial sanitation services
Condition of warning systems	Fire and police departments
Condition of communications systems	Federal Communication Commission, telephone communications consultants

**Figure 5-4**  
Risk Prevention Checklist

achievements. Fire permitted humans to cook food and to live in less temperate climates. On the negative side, once fire could be transported, it also became an instrument of war. Fire carried (and still carries) multiple risks. Once started, it is almost unstoppable and forms the basis of one of the most deadly weapons known to humanity.

such as stages are even more precarious. Make sure that all electrical components are checked daily. Take the time to inspect the construction of the stage. Are there cracks that were not there the day before? Is sagging occurring? Do handrails appear loose? When not in use, have all the electrical plugs been disconnected?

Event risk managers should ask these questions whenever a stage is involved:

- Are flammable materials being used?
- Are there areas that may cause a slip, a fall, or tripping?
- Where are garbage and other wastes stored?
- Where are tools stored?
- Is the stage strong enough to support the weight of both the props and the actors/speakers/guests/band?
- Do the stage and stairs have rails?
- Are the edges of the stairs clearly marked with glow-in-the-dark tape?
- Are the edges of the stage clearly marked with glow-in-the-dark tape?
- Is the space under the stage secure to prevent or reduce access by persons who could be injured?

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## GUEST HEALTH AND SAFETY SELF-EVALUATION CHECKLIST

### I. General Considerations

1. Who is the management representative responsible for health and safety?
2. Is there a labor/management Health and Safety Committee?  
 Yes     No     N/A
3. Is there an evaluation procedure for new materials, productions, and special effects?  
 Yes     No     N/A
4. Are there material safety data sheets on products and chemicals in use?  
 Yes     No     N/A
5. Is there right-to-know training for all employees?  
 Yes     No     N/A
6. Are there special procedures for the health and safety of child actors?  
 Yes     No     N/A



## II. Fire Safety

1. Are there written emergency procedures?  
 Yes     No     N/A
2. Are fire drills routinely scheduled?  
 Yes     No     N/A
3. Are the emergency exits clearly marked accessible?  
 Yes     No     N/A
4. Is the sprinkler system functional?  
 Yes     No     N/A
5. Are there appropriate fire extinguishers?  
 Yes     No     N/A
6. Are the fire extinguishers in good condition and checked regularly?  
 Yes     No     N/A
7. Is there adequate training for their use?  
 Yes     No     N/A
8. Is there a working fire alarm system?  
 Yes     No     N/A
9. Are there working smoke alarms?  
 Yes     No     N/A
10. Are there appropriate fireproof curtains, props, sets, and costumes as required?  
 Yes     No     N/A
11. Are there fireguards or firefighters present at each performance?  
 Yes     No     N/A

## III. Venue Conditions

### A. Stage Conditions

1. Is rigging safely secured?  
 Yes     No     N/A
2. Are props safely secured?  
 Yes     No     N/A
3. Are lights safely secured?  
 Yes     No     N/A
4. Are trap doors and pits adequately marked?  
 Yes     No     N/A
5. Are the grooves in the floor clearly marked?  
 Yes     No     N/A

6. Are electrical outlets recessed?  
 Yes     No     N/A
7. Is electrical wiring secured to floors and walls?  
 Yes     No     N/A
8. Are electrical cords clearly marked?  
 Yes     No     N/A
9. Are elevations clearly marked and safe?  
 Yes     No     N/A
10. Are raked stages used and safe?  
 Yes     No     N/A
11. Do stage floors have adequate resiliency?  
 Yes     No     N/A
12. Are the stage floors dry and cleared of slippery materials?  
 Yes     No     N/A
13. Are the stage floors free of splinters, nails, or worn-out floorboards?  
 Yes     No     N/A

### B. Lighting

1. Are the stage lights properly focused, angled, and located?  
 Yes     No     N/A
2. Is there adequate lighting backstage?  
 Yes     No     N/A
3. Do lasers meet Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requirements?  
 Yes     No     N/A
4. Is black-light output low in ultraviolet radiation?  
 Yes     No     N/A
5. Are there adequate precautions for strobe lights?  
 Yes     No     N/A

### C. Stairways

1. Are the treads and backstage stairs maintained in good condition?  
 Yes     No     N/A
2. Are the stairwells properly lit?  
 Yes     No     N/A
3. Are the alleyways clear of litter and obstacles?  
 Yes     No     N/A

**D. Environmental Conditions**

1. Is the temperature comfortable?  
 Yes     No     N/A
2. Are costumes modified appropriately for extremes of temperature?  
 Yes     No     N/A
3. Is the humidity level optimal?  
 Yes     No     N/A
4. Is there sufficient airflow with adequate intake of clean outside air?  
 Yes     No     N/A
5. Is the stage area free of drafts?  
 Yes     No     N/A
6. Is the air free of contaminants?  
 Yes     No     N/A

**IV. Stage Conditions****A. Stage Traffic**

1. Are entrances and exits well choreographed and rehearsed?  
 Yes     No     N/A
2. Are on-stage movements well choreographed and rehearsed?  
 Yes     No     N/A

**B. Stunts/Stage Combat**

1. Are there written procedures?  
 Yes     No     N/A
2. Are stunts and combat carefully choreographed and planned by qualified personnel?  
 Yes     No     N/A
3. Is there adequate training and rehearsal time?  
 Yes     No     N/A
4. Are there padded landing areas for jumps over 6 feet?  
 Yes     No     N/A

**C. Firearms and Weapons**

1. Is there a qualified person in charge of all firearms and weapons?  
 Yes     No     N/A
2. Are there appropriate licenses?  
 Yes     No     N/A

3. Is there secure storage for firearms and weapons when not in use?  
 Yes     No     N/A
4. Is there adequate training and procedures for those using firearms?  
 Yes     No     N/A
5. Are the firearms and weapons routinely inspected?  
 Yes     No     N/A

#### D. Special Effects (Fogs, Fire, Smoke, Etc.)

1. Is there a fire permit when required?  
 Yes     No     N/A
2. Is there hearing protection for noise (e.g., firearms or explosions)?  
 Yes     No     N/A
3. Are materials chosen for optimal safety?  
 Yes     No     N/A
4. Are protective fire gels for skin and hair used in fire scenes?  
 Yes     No     N/A
5. Is sand and artificial snow free of contaminants?  
 Yes     No     N/A

#### V. Miscellaneous

##### A. First Aid/Medical Procedures

1. Are there approved first aid kits available?  
 Yes     No     N/A
2. Are there emergency medical procedures?  
 Yes     No     N/A
3. Is there a list of local physicians and medical facilities?  
 Yes     No     N/A

##### B. Makeup

1. Are there individual makeup kits for each performer?  
 Yes     No     N/A
2. Are ingredients listed on makeup?  
 Yes     No     N/A
3. Is there appropriate ventilation for aerosols (e.g., hairsprays)?  
 Yes     No     N/A

**C. Travel and Tours**

1. Is there advance inspection of stage, dressing rooms, etc.?  
 Yes     No     N/A
2. Is there adequate rest time between arrival at a location and practice/performance?  
 Yes     No     N/A
3. Are buses and trucks inspected?  
 Yes     No     N/A
4. Are there reasonable standards for accommodations?  
 Yes     No     N/A
5. Is there available sanitary drinking water in the dressing rooms?  
 Yes     No     N/A

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## Pyrotechnic Safety

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Each year in the U.S. around the Fourth of July holiday, the media report that hundreds of people have been injured because they have mishandled pyrotechnic devices. Many events use pyrotechnic materials to provide spectacular effects. Because these devices are designed to burn and explode, they add an element of risk to the safety of the performers, the stage crew, and the audience. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that in 1999 approximately 7,000 people suffered some form of pyrotechnic injury, ranging from minor burns to blindness. Even when handled properly, there is always an element of risk involved.

These devices are no longer used simply to celebrate national holidays around the world. Events such as the dawn of the new millennium, entertainment spectacles, political rallies, and festivals all use pyrotechnic devices to add a sense of excitement and drama to the “show.”

Event risk managers should make certain that the pyrotechnics used have been purchased from reliable companies. The risk manager will want to ensure that the pyrotechnic is clearly labeled and that it has not been stored for longer periods of time than recommended by the manufacturer. These devices should never be used