

MATSO COMMUNITY

Major
American
Trade
Show
Organizers

Takeaways - 29 June 2022 MATSO Meets – Attendee & Event Security

Must-do list for Duty of Care for safety/security of attendee and event:

- Ensure venue threat assessment has been conducted in past 3 years (annually is better).
- If selecting a third-party security company, ensure it is reputable (being certified is a plus).
- Hiring a security consultant is a good practice.
- Engage all key stakeholders that can contribute to the security of the event throughout the process.
- Identify where contingency plans may be needed with the venue and service providers. Each scenario in the security playbook needs a contingency plan.
- Have a checklist of everything expected to conduct a safe event.
- Designate access control points to venue/show floor/any other venues where functions will be held.
- Identify all Physical and Cyber security measures for any areas of concern.
- Designate who has the power to pause or shut down the event if a safety/security threat is identified.
- Train staff on guest services and how to mitigate a threat. Unprofessional behavior/posturing (by a staff person) with the wrong person may trigger a dangerous reaction/threat.
- Identify best current technology method(s) of communication to attendees in case of emergency.
- Outside measures are just as important as inside measures – sometimes a threat can be detected and mitigated before entering a venue/structure.

Other Tips & Takeaways

- The pandemic increased fear, stress, and anxiety contributing to varied levels of insecurity contributing to increased mental health issues. Some mental health issues may manifest in threatening behaviors.

- Facilities are anemic right now – they had to change, reposition, and repurpose to survive the pandemic. This has made them visible targets and the threat actors have noticed.
- Home-grown violent threats are currently especially dangerous.
- A labor shortage does exist – and for those who are working, many have a low skill set and lack of experience. This will come back eventually but will take some time to build.
- Organizers, meeting planners and service contractors have a tremendous amount of responsibility toward the security of their event. They must have a plan and coordinate plans with venue, security teams and city.
- Costs are going up – but organizers must maximize security efficiency in the face of those escalating costs.
- Plans/training should be started as early as possible and include selecting the right staff person to lead, situational awareness training, risk mitigation through guest services and team building exercises (with team and security personnel).
- Security planning is a team effort requiring good communication. Venues have plans but some don't always make it to the organizer/planner.
- Security is not just a box to be checked – it is to be taken seriously.
- Cyber security needs to converge with physical security – most of the time they are separate. If your cyber is hacked, they will have control over your physical.
- The cost of security is not too much – if not prepared, the consequences are much worse.
- Cities are taking a more active role in events happening in their facilities.
- Resources (staff/funding) are needed – not more regulations.
- Vetting and onboarding new employees and giving them ownership/buy-in when planning can mitigate crimes of convenience. HR staff should be involved in the hiring process.