

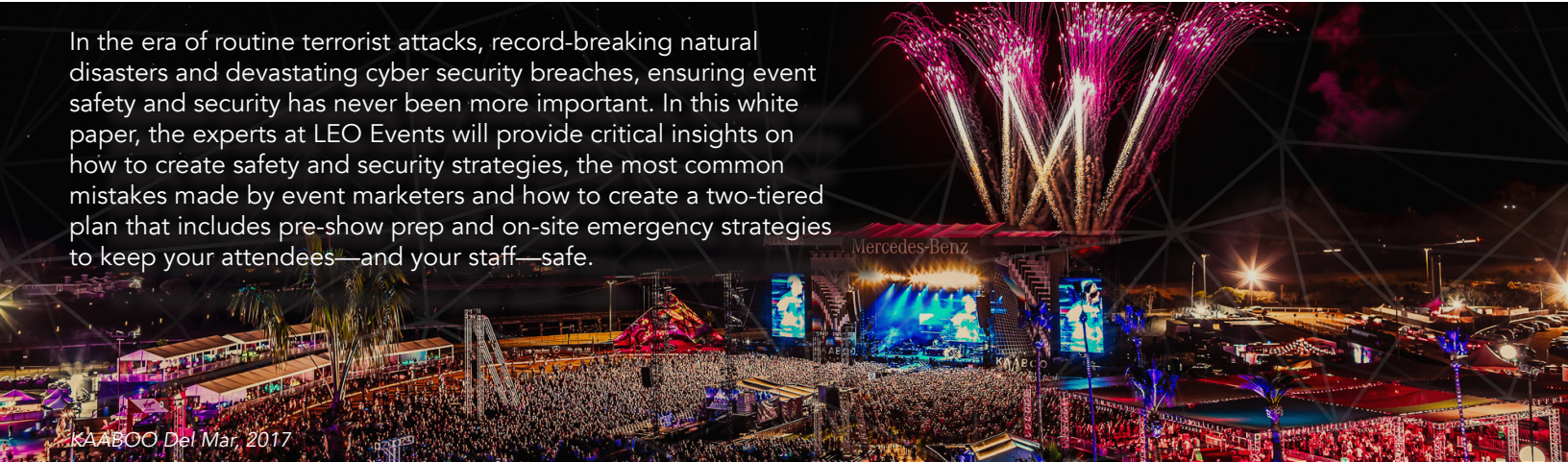
# EVENT SAFETY AND SECURITY UPDATE

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## How to Create an Effective Emergency Mitigation and Damage Prevention Plan

In the era of routine terrorist attacks, record-breaking natural disasters and devastating cyber security breaches, ensuring event safety and security has never been more important. In this white paper, the experts at LEO Events will provide critical insights on how to create safety and security strategies, the most common mistakes made by event marketers and how to create a two-tiered plan that includes pre-show prep and on-site emergency strategies to keep your attendees—and your staff—safe.



### FIVE WAYS TO PROTECT YOUR EVENT

Fact is, there's no such thing as a foolproof event safety plan. There are, however, a number of actions event professionals can take to protect their attendees, their staff and their organization's reputation from external threats. Here's a look at five topline ways to keep events safe.

#### 1. Safeguard All Events Equally

Regardless of the crowd size, location or nature of the event, your safety strategy should remain the same. Accidents can happen anywhere, anytime, and a solid safety plan should reflect that. Long-time LEO Events client ExxonMobil takes the approach whether it's working an oilrig in the middle of the ocean or hosting a VIP hotel experience.

"If we're at a private event and they see someone walking across the lobby and reading a smartphone, they will stop them and say, 'That's not safe. You may be answering emails or sending texts, but you need to stand still while you do it,'" says David Kenyon, SVP of Production for LEO Events, and Project Manager for ExxonMobil. "If they have an accident somewhere out on an oilrig, it's usually a very serious situation, but they feel like someone tripping and falling in a hotel lobby is just as important from a safety perspective."

#### 2. Get Insured

There are countless options when it comes to purchasing event insurance, and which ones you opt for will depend on the location, nature and size of the event. Knowing exactly how to document an injury, for example, or to what extent an event cancellation policy can be leveraged, will help protect your assets and reduce the cost of damages in the event of an incident.

Having an insurance representative on-site is also an effective tactic. At large-scale events like music festivals, LEO often ensures ahead of time that an agent from its insurance office is available for the duration of the event. If an issue like an event cancellation does arise, that individual will have dealt with the matter firsthand, ensuring the account of the episode is accurate and proper protocol is followed.

"Once the policy is bound, the work's not over. Collecting additional insureds and waivers of subrogation from venues, vendors and partners

is a step that's often skipped," says Kent Underwood, co-founder of LEO Events. "However, it really does matter in the case of cancellation, or other incidents derailing the event."

#### 3. Prepare for Medical Emergencies

From heart attacks, to broken limbs, medical emergencies will arise at events. The key is to help prevent and be prepared for these scenarios ahead of time.

Providing complimentary water service to attendees at outdoor summer events to prevent dehydration, for instance, has become a standard industry practice. And, sometimes you have to break a few rules. In the midst of a heat wave at a recent indoor event, LEO Events allowed attendees to enter the venue an hour early simply to get them out of the blazing sun. And at a rock concert in Texas, the team brought in the local fire department to cool attendees off by literally hosing them down.

For music festivals, LEO often hires "rock docs" that are familiar with the most common types of medical emergencies found at concerts, like exhaustion and severe sunburns. Bottom line: having medical experts on hand can significantly reduce the severity of illness or injury suffered on-site.

#### 4. Secure Your Data

Many organizations assume that anonymity and short-term event timelines mean that digital threats are minimal. However, from bandwidth theft, viruses on attendees' Wi-Fi, to remote controlled lighting systems and even corporate espionage, this is often taken too lightly.

"We develop our own, separate networks for production, attendees and press each with its own rules, tracking and bandwidth restrictions," says Kenyon. "This limits exposure to each of the key parts of any event."

"For corporations, a great amount of personal and business information is held in secure online folders. This may include credit card information, home and business addresses, financial records or forecasts," says Kenyon. "While some key personnel may need to maintain access to this information, ensuring it's private and 'unhackable' is always first priority."

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## 5. Stay Ahead of the Storm

Event pros should always be aware of potential weather-related dangers in the vicinity of their event, whether it's a passing thunderstorm or a Category 5 hurricane. If a threat is identified, tracking the storm with a variety of tools is absolutely critical. "It's really about making the call far enough ahead of time," says LEO Events Technical Director, Jim Dorroh. "We are tied directly into the National Weather System. And, we start monitoring the first minute of load-in—should there be a lightning strike within seven miles of our site, everyone is called indoors."

Case in point: At an outdoor experience, the team at LEO made the tough call to cancel the event based on storm reports they had been tracking for hours.

"People were practically combative because they were waiting for the headline act but they didn't feel a raindrop or see a lightning bolt yet," says Dorroh. "But 25 minutes later when the storm hit, they understood why we took the action that we did."

## THE FIVE MOST COMMON EVENT SAFETY PITFALLS

Just like everyone else, event professionals can make mistakes. Unfortunately, there is no worse time to make them than during an emergency. Planning for and handling on-site incidents is no easy task, but understanding common pitfalls can go a long way in keeping your event safe and secure. Here are the five biggest mistakes organizers make when it comes to event safety—and how to avoid them.

### 1. Improper Communication

Clear communication is an integral component of any event, especially when it comes to keeping sponsors and partners updated in light of an incident. But all too often, event organizers neglect to provide their partners with pertinent details, instead offering them the same level of information the public receives. The last thing you want is for a news outlet to ask a corporate partner about the incident without arming them with accurate and adequate information.

"You have to make sure the events themselves have a different line of communication with the corporate partners [than with attendees]," says Underwood. "If someone is taking the time and money to place their image on an event, whether it's public or private, that messaging has to be different if there are concerns or incidents that happen."

### 2. Lack of a Safety Plan

It might seem outrageous that in this day and age there are event professionals who neglect to solidify a safety plan before executing an event, but it happens more than you'd think. Organizers often become overwhelmed by the thought of securing a plan for an endless list of potential threats, and instead of tackling the task, avoid it altogether—a reckless move that could put attendees and event staff in danger. The solution? Keep it simple.

"A recent survey from PCMA suggests that nearly 30 percent of event professionals don't create a safety plan at all," says Jenifer Trinder, meeting planner at LEO Events. "Something event planners and even internal stakeholders need to keep in mind is that we're not asking you to write a 10-page essay, but you do need, at the very least, an outline of what to do in light of certain emergency situations."

### 3. Panicking

It's the first rule of thumb in any emergency: Don't. Panic. But the reality is, that's much easier said than done. Event pros are only human, after all. Unfortunately, losing your cool in the throes of an incident can make the situation far more complicated. Even if you're having an internal meltdown, outwardly staying calm and collected can make all the difference between a minor setback and a serious incident.

"It's really important that all of your planners, greeters and auxiliary support teams keep their cool," says Trinder. "When there is an emergency, you're going to have all of your panicked attendees coming to you. They start talking and all of a sudden you've got this huge mob mentality like, 'Oh my gosh, I heard there's a tornado in the area.' So, it's important to have a calm demeanor, shut down the panic as gently as you can and say, 'This is what you need to do.'"



### 4. Early Evacuation

In the midst of an emergency or perceived threat, evacuating attendees may seem like the safest course of action, but that's not always the case. In fact, clearing out a large-scale event can create more problems than the initial concern presented. To that end, having procedures in place to evaluate whether or not an event should be evacuated is vital. If a bomb threat is called in to a 5,000-person conference, for instance, the first line of defense is through the local police department, who can investigate the call and then opt to bring in K9 or bomb units if necessary. Ditto for weather concerns. "The first reaction isn't to evacuate everyone," says Underwood. "That's often the worst thing you can do. The first line in our safety plans includes 'shelter-in-place' locations. Everyone knows the protocol of getting attendees to these locations."

### 5. Alienating Attendees

No question, there's a fine line between safeguarding your event and keeping attendees comfortable. But, make your safety protocol too intense, and you risk alienating attendees. It's a scenario LEO Events grappled with at a recent large-scale event.

"We felt that in hosting people to our site, it was imperative to make sure they felt like they were welcome and coming into a safe environment," says Underwood. "Exercising what's called 'Proportional Response,' we conducted security checks, but didn't go to the extent where attendees felt like they were boarding an airplane. We've taken great pains to not do that."



# THE FIVE-STEP PRE-SHOW PLAN

Now that you know the top five ways to protect your event and the five most common event safety pitfalls to avoid, it's time to implement a reliable pre-show plan that eliminates foreseeable hazards and thoroughly prepares your staff for the main event. There are a number of ways to do it, but here, we take a look at the five fundamental steps to a rock-solid pre-show plan.



Jim Dorroh, Technical Director, LEO Events

## 1. Train Your Staff

It might sound like a no-brainer, but training your staff to handle a broad range of safety-related scenarios is a critical component of a pre-show plan. Giving the team a chance to handle a variety of circumstances through role-play is an effective way to help them practice for the real deal.

"Even if you know the plan, you still need to practice and have some phrases you can use so that you're able to handle folks when they come up and ask you a ton of questions and you're in the throes of things," says Kevin Brewer, co-founder at LEO Events.

## 2. Safeguard the Venue

The main event is on the horizon and everything is in order—but your job isn't done just yet. Amid the chaos of vendors, contractors and other event staff entering and exiting the venue in the days leading up to an event, it's all too easy for the wrong person to sneak in and wreak havoc. To avoid that scenario, LEO often does a pre-event lockdown of all of its assets and enforces a strict inspection process on anyone coming in or out of the building, including enlisting bomb-sniffing dogs.

"We use a particular type of canine called a 'Vapor Wake Dog,' which helps us raise the impact of detection while remaining less invasive on the patrons and event itself," says Underwood. "From a precautionary standpoint, we're willing to make that investment because it pays off if nothing happens to your event."

## 3. Communicate With Outside Resources

For large meetings and conferences, ensure that you have direct communication with the convention center's security team. And if you don't have a pre-existing relationship with local emergency personnel, it's important to secure one and keep them informed of the details of your event.

For large-scale public events, establishing communication with the local police and fire department is crucial, especially when it comes to determining the protocol for an active shooter scenario.

"Building public safety relationships in advance of your event is critical to getting the results and backing that is needed, and especially in active shooter and mass casualty situations" says Underwood.

Local agencies will often indicate that they have a safety plan without divulging the specifics, but ensuring that your staff has all the pertinent details regarding the proper protocol will eliminate complications if the scenario unfolds. LEO often hosts and organizes tabletop exercises as another important tool to engage the necessary officials in advance. These drills provide a forum to have high-level discussions with stakeholders to better prepare and familiarize your staff with the chain of command.

"There's no better way to prepare your staff for emergency situations than to manage through the crisis as if it were actually occurring," says Underwood.

## 4. Define Staff Roles

Event organizers tend to wear many hats, but it's crucial that staffers understand their specific roles and the chain of command prior to an event.

"Defining roles is one of the key elements to advanced planning," says Brewer. "The best thing about having a safety plan in place beforehand is that everyone knows what to do when an emergency happens. We're not trying to figure it out on-site or trying to figure out what's going on right in the thick of something. As an example, during an evacuation, the call to expect 'peak outbound traffic immediately' will go out on radio. Does everyone know where they are expected to be? Do they know what they're supposed to be doing? It's vital that they do."

LEO client, AutoZone, is the gold standard when it comes to pre-event and on-site preparedness.

"We assemble a core team of individuals that represents all pertinent departments—Security, Data Security, Communications, Legal, HR and our events agency, LEO—to define roles and responsibilities in case emergencies arise," says Ray Pohlman, Vice President at AutoZone. "A grid is sent out that details exactly what actions each lead will take in each possible scenario."

## 5. Develop an Outline

It doesn't have to stipulate every nitty gritty detail, but establishing a potential action plan is one of the most critical steps you can take to ensure a safe and secure event.

"You can have a very generic plan," says Trinder. "So, if two weeks out, we see there's a hurricane coming, we're going to do X, Y and Z. And then you only have to refer to that if it actually happens. Then for your attendees, there are a lot of things you need to have in place that all of your planners and stakeholders need to be aware of. And that could be something as simple as travel disruption—delays, weather, whatever it may be—what's the plan for that? What are we telling attendees about how to react to that, and how are we reacting to that as planners? We try to think through some of those things and have a plan for them."

## THE FIVE-STEP AT-SHOW PLAN

Despite all of the effort you've put into prepping for your event, the work isn't over until the event is. Maintaining control of an event is as much about preparation as it is about adhering to a robust on-site plan of action. Stay on the ball with this five-step at-show plan.

### 1. Implement an Effective Credentialing System

Less is more when it comes to developing a credentialing system. Oftentimes, the more complicated the system, the less effective it is. If a part-time staffer is tripped up by the process, everyone loses. That said, it's also critical that the credentialing procedure you implement is thorough. You should identify the areas you want to secure and then establish a system around those places using zones or key indicators. Technologies, such as Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) or Proximity Smart Cards, use chip-embedded credentials to verify access to certain points and have become industry best practice. Another key to success is gathering the proper variable data points—photo, name, company, credential ID number—on the front end to provide an extra layer of security.

The last, and most significant, piece of your system is having an adequate, advance approval process. "If your team doesn't buy in and acquire all the necessary variable data points accurately, you may run into issues," says Underwood.



### 2. Execute Safety Briefings

A little refresher can go a long way, and team safety briefings are an effective way to review your safety protocol and keep everyone on the same page. At many events, LEO holds a team safety briefing led by a safety officer every morning before staffers take to their individual posts; this step is integral during load-in and load-out periods.

"Just that little refresher every single morning really does show in the bottom line," says Underwood. "There is hard data that shows it's effective and we've found it really does prevent accidents."

### 3. Set up a Command Post

Like many in the industry, LEO creates unified command posts for its larger events that operate similarly to situation rooms. Representatives could include police, fire departments and EMS,

along with LEO's head of security and members of the operations staff. Establishing the event chain of command and lines of communication helps set the tone of the event, and there's no such thing as too many resources when it comes to event safety. Having all these representatives in the same room, ensures any safety- or security-related information is funneled through the same channel, same chain of command, and that the appropriate action is taken as quickly as possible if an incident occurs.

It should also serve as the main artery for all event-related communications. "It could be as simple as a call for trash service in a crowded food and beverage area, but that information being sent to the command center and then being dispatched to the correct team, is addressed immediately and may prevent a slip and fall," says Underwood. "That's the goal of the unified command post; to gather and disperse factual information as fast as possible."

### 4. Never Let Your Guard Down

You might be tempted to let your guard down once things get underway—but don't. Events and attendees are in a constant state of flux, meaning you and your staff need to be alert around the clock.

And, this may include additional reinforcements. LEO Events has worked with the U.S. Secret Service numerous times, and most notably with the National Civil Rights Museum. If you're working with global leaders or government officials, this extra support is warranted.

### 5. Keep Everyone Informed

Whether it's a minor schedule change or a more serious incident, keeping attendees and vendors abreast of what's happening at your event is imperative to maintaining safety and security. There are several ways to make it happen, but the most recent trend points to leveraging an event app as a means of communication.

With today's technology, we have ways of sorting exactly who gets what message. One group may require different information than the rest of the groups, so a push notification would go out to only them. And through beacon technology, we can message only people in a localized area within a venue, say, to inform them that a mixer has begun in a nearby room."

The sharing of up-to-date details through social channels is equally important. "For public events, it's imperative that communication through social media be timely, authentic and as transparent as possible," adds Brewer. "If you are forthcoming with the issues, the public is more forgiving; they want to know what's going on."

Setting up a hashtag for attendees is another useful tactic for meetings and private events. It's an approach LEO takes to ensure its clients and attendees have a reliable resource at their fingertips to communicate back to the event organizer with questions or safety concerns.

## THE LEO EVENTS DIFFERENCE

LEO Events is a privately held, global events agency dedicated to creating unique experiences for our partners and clients. We believe that our command of the cutting-edge tools of our industry makes us potent collaborators, and this synergy permeates every event LEO executes, whether it's a high-profile private meeting or a 40,000-person music festival – two of our specialties. Building on years of know-how, LEO Events provides what our clients want most: production performance delivered where and when it counts, "out-of-the-box" thinking grounded in budget parameters, and the experience and meticulous planning needed to accomplish our clients' greatest goals and objectives.