

Ready: Whenever. Wherever.

Large Event Safety

Large events can be extremely enjoyable, yet threats such as pick-pocketing, hazardous weather, crowd surges, and violence continue to be valid concerns for those attending public events. In December 2015, 47 percent of Americans were worried that they or someone in their family will be a victim of terrorism¹. Despite this feeling, the safety of spectators inside the Stade de France was maintained during the November 2015 Paris attack, and was partly attributed to modern infrastructure and well-trained security staff. Personal awareness and simple planning can further enhance safety should danger arise at a large event.

Safety starts with researching the event: One of the best ways to stay safe at any event is to be prepared. Researching the venue ahead of a large event can help individuals plan their emergency responses. Scenarios to consider include:

- How many people are expected at the event?
- Where are the venue's exits?
- What are the emergency evacuation protocols for the venue?
- What is the contact information for security, first aid and lost property?
- What items are allowed, and what are prohibited?
- How might the day's weather (heat, cold, wind, storms) affect people at the event, or driving to/from the event?
- What safety or security issues have been reported at similar events?

Talk to children about safety: If there are young children in the family, explain to them the necessity of safety. While it's best not to scare them, let them know how important it is for them to stick close to the family and stay away from strangers. Also consider snapping a digital photo of children just before leaving home so there's a proper description on hand in the event they are separated from the family.

Have an outside contact: At least one person not attending the event should be aware of family or friends who are attending.

- Ensure that the outside contact knows who is attending the event – e.g. family members, a group of friends, a couple, an individual.
- Share cell phone numbers among everyone attending and the contact.
- Provide the contact with estimated times of departure, event attendance, and return.

Scan the area: After arriving at the event, do an awareness scan of the surroundings.

- Take note of emergency exits, restrooms and exit routes. Take note of secondary exit points that may be less crowded. Remember that it may be difficult to take advantage of the main exit if an emergency occurs.
- Plan evacuation routes that make the most sense for the physical abilities of those in the group. Stairs, ramps and uneven ground can be especially challenging for some people during an evacuation.
- Become familiar with the venue's layout. Pay attention to the location of medical tents or first-aid stations.
- Establish a meeting location where group members will gather if separated.

Stay aware of other people at all times: Should anyone get the slightest feeling that something may be wrong, it's best to listen to instincts and act fast.

- Keep an eye on the crowd for signs of trouble. When seeing something of this nature, it could be a good time to change locations, and let security know about any concerns. Scenarios to look for include:
 - An abnormal increase in the number of people pouring into the area.
 - A loner who doesn't seem to belong in the area.
 - Performers or audience members encouraging hazardous behavior.
- If the crowd is getting too dense for comfort, change locations before it gets worse.
- Be vigilant about theft possibilities when others may be close enough to reach purses, wallets, cell phones or cameras; and ensure such items are always as secure as possible.
- Travel with a companion when venturing anywhere inside or outside of the venue. This will reduce the likelihood of getting lost or being targeted for theft.

During an evacuation: When an evacuation is necessary, it's important to stay calm. Try following some of these key tips:

- If an emergency does happen, stay calm, head for the nearest exit and listen for official instructions.
- In a crowd, keep feet firmly placed and well-spread, and keep arms close to the chest.
- Don't resist the force of the crowd.
- Do not stop to pick up personal items in dense and moving crowds.
- Avoid falling, and keep those nearby from falling as well.

¹ Gallup Polls, December 2015:
<http://www.gallup.com/poll/187688/americans-worried-terrorism-mass-shootings.aspx>

