

# Centre security demands a collaborative approach

In a time when security-related issues and incidents are making the headlines on a regular basis, centres have been revisiting both their own emergency preparedness protocols and the changes that are needed in their interactions with third parties such as communities and clients in an effort to ensure events are as secure as possible.

A recent survey of AIPC member centres throughout the world has shown increased security concerns amongst well over half of centre managers, with even higher levels of concern identified on the part of clients. In view of this, more than 80 per cent of centres indicated they had reviewed existing procedures and response teams, with over half taking further specific actions including new staff training, enhancement of security-related technology, re-engagement with governmental agencies and implementation of new procedures and protocols.

## New procedures

But there's more to it than that. First, while virtually all centres maintain detailed emergency procedures that address security as a key component, these procedures necessarily involve an active interface with local emergency response agencies responsible

to ensure a well-integrated reaction to any incident that may occur. This means it's never just a matter for internal policies, but one that must link closely with the rest of the host community. The result is a requirement for an even higher level of coordination than in the past and, in some cases, the development or enhancement of entirely new relationships.

## Stakeholder roles

But centre clients have a key role to play as well. New centre protocols often require risk assessments on an individual event basis, for the simple reason that each event has different characteristics and audiences that may dramatically affect the form that risk may take.

For example, certain events may attract attention or even active protest simply because of the nature of their subject matter or of the people who will be attending. These are factors that only the organiser can identify with any precision, but they must be communicated early, and in detail, if the centre and host community are to shape an appropriate security management plan.

There are also lots of variations in terms of the tolerance of organisations and their delegates for the visibility of security measures. While some may

welcome such visibility as a clear sign that good security is in place, others may feel that too much profile actually spoils the experience and detracts from the kind of atmosphere most conducive to achieving the goals and outcomes attendees are looking for.

Finally, there is a whole new area of reputation management and business recovery that needs to be considered in destinations that either have, or are seen as having, potential for security-related incidents. In a time of growing sensitivity toward such incidents, many clients will simply avoid anywhere they or their clients see as being risky.

Responding to this is again a process requiring communication and cooperation not just with potential clients, but with other agencies and destination stakeholders. ■



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**Integrated response**  
Closer links with emergency services are crucial