

# New York State Mass Gathering Planning Guide

April 2026



**Department  
of Health**



**Office of  
General Services**



**State  
Police**



**New York State  
Parks, Recreation and  
Historic Preservation**



**NYSEMA**  
*New York State Emergency  
Management Association*



**Homeland Security  
and Emergency Services**

## **Executive Summary**

Mass gatherings across New York State range from local festivals to large-scale sporting and commemorative events that may impact public safety, emergency response systems, public health, transportation, and critical infrastructure. As the operational and threat environment continues to evolve, effective event planning requires coordinated, multi-agency engagement and clear roles and responsibilities.

This Mass Gathering Planning Guide provides a scalable framework to support state, local, private sector, and community partners in planning for and managing events that present complex safety, security, and public health considerations. The guide promotes risk-informed decision-making, integration of public health and environmental health planning, accessible and inclusive practices, and use of the Incident Command System (ICS).

In addition to traditional security risks, planners should consider infrastructure dependencies such as potable water, sanitation, power, communications, extreme weather, and communicable disease prevention. Early coordination, clear communication pathways, and structured after-action review processes are essential to maintaining situational awareness and continuous improvement.

This guide outlines recommended planning considerations and should be adapted based on the size, scope, and risk profile of each event.

## **Overview**

Mass gatherings of all types are held across New York State on a regular basis and include a wide variety of events. There are various definitions of mass gathering events. For the purpose of this guide, a mass gathering is a temporary indoor or outdoor event that concentrates people at a location and may strain local or regional public safety, emergency response, public health, transportation, and/or critical infrastructure systems due to human-caused threats or natural hazards. The size and scope of mass gathering events vary greatly, ranging from small local festivals with a few hundred people to large-scale sporting events or concerts with several thousand attendees. Effective planning requires early coordination across law enforcement, emergency management, fire/EMS, public health, and infrastructure partners to ensure unified situational awareness and response.

Depending on the size of the host jurisdiction, the resources available to support the planning and operations of these events can vary greatly. Additionally, mass gathering events have become increasingly challenging to manage from an emergency preparedness and security perspective. Unpredictable weather, intentional acts of violence, and a variety of technological/accidental hazards can present unique challenges to mass gathering event managers. As such, this Mass Gathering Planning Guide is designed to provide a streamlined, high-level list of planning and operational considerations to those planning for and managing mass gathering events. Anticipated large-scale events, including international sporting events and major commemorative activities, may require enhanced interagency coordination and early engagement with state-level partners.

An emergency may arise at any time before, during, or after a concert or special event. For an event's leadership to appropriately respond, a proper risk assessment and emergency planning must occur before any potential incident. If an emergency occurs at a large-scale concert or entertainment event, to a reasonable extent, the event's leadership must take necessary actions to safeguard the public and event staff and minimize property damage.

## Potential Threats and Hazards

While any incident can create unique concerns to a mass gathering event management team, recent history has shown highly significant impacts from the following threats and hazards:

- Active Assailant (e.g., improvised explosive devices, elevated shooter, Unmanned Aircraft System [UAS], ramming attacks)
- Tornado or Severe Thunderstorm, Strong Winds.
- Flash Flooding, Lightning
- Fire
- Civil Unrest
- Public Health Outbreak (e.g., foodborne illness, respiratory illness surge)
- Extreme Heat or Cold Exposure
- Utility Disruptions (Water, Power, Communications)
- Cybersecurity Incident
- Smoke or Air Quality Impacts
- Hazardous Material Exposure (accidental or intentional)



*Flash Flooding at the Minnesota State Fair 2024*

## Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this guide is to offer a variety of preparedness and security options to consider when planning for a mass gathering event. **It is intended as a framework to help inform planning and operational decisions and should be adjusted based on the scope and size of the event in consideration.** It is designed as a resource both for helping to plan new events and a guide to consider for reoccurring events, as it includes best practices and other considerations based on lessons learned from prior experience and the evolving threat environment. The guide includes several options to consider, but it is ultimately up to the team responsible for planning and managing the event to determine which options are most viable based on the threat environment, available resources, previous experience, and other factors. Additionally, depending on the nature of the event (e.g., professional sporting events), the private sector may play a lead role in helping to plan and finance the operations. Regardless, given the potential public safety implications, local first responders and public safety agencies need to be involved in mass gathering planning as well.

Event managers should coordinate with local building/fire code officials to ensure compliance with building and fire codes and associated requirements. For example, in accordance with International Fire Code (§403.12.2), local building/fire code officials may require a public safety plan if the event could have an adverse impact on public safety services. Relevant official should be included from the initial planning conversation to ensure that all partners are consulted. Additionally, there are New York State regulations that may require compliance as well. Part 18 of the NYS Sanitation Code establishes requirements for public functions expecting to attract more than 5,000 people. Event managers should also coordinate early with the New York State Department of Health (DOH) and local health departments on public health requirements and risk considerations, including potable water safety, sanitation, food service oversight, communicable disease prevention, and health equity/access planning. Finally, use of the Incident Command System (ICS) and the development of Incident Action Plans (IAPs), is a strongly encouraged best practice. Use ICS and IAPs to define roles and responsibilities and improve the planning process. Local emergency managers are a resource to assist with ICS and IAPs and should always be a part of the planning effort.

The status of the event may change before or at any time during an event. During an event, public address announcements, alerts, and social media messages about the event should occur shortly after the decision on an event's status is reached by the event manager. Clear, plain language, specific, actionable, and complete messages are critical to avoid milling or inaction by attendees and vendors. Follow-up or update messages should always be communicated to inform attendees. Guidance for emergency alerts, public address announcements, and social media messages are included in the Appendix D of this guidance.

To add Access and Functional Needs (AFN) into a mass gathering plan, the event manager needs to integrate specific considerations and accommodations across all aspects of emergency management: planning, response, and recovery. The goal is to ensure equal access and services for the whole community including children, older adults, people with disabilities, people with limited English proficiency, or people with limited access to transportation.

AFN considers the broad range of access limitations and individualized supports and services that some individuals may need to ensure equity in emergency and disaster planning and response. It recognizes the needs and limitations that various people may have to prepare for, respond to or recover from emergencies and disasters, including the following:

- individuals with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, and/or pharmacological dependencies,
- individuals who speak a language other than English,
- people from diverse cultures,
- those who are pregnant and/or parenting person(s),
- children and older adults (with or without disabilities),
- people who have limited income and/or lack transportation access.



*Borderland Music Festival, 2025  
Knox Farm State Park, East Aurora, NY*

### **Guide Structure**

The guide is organized into three sections: Pre-Event Planning, Operational Considerations During the Event, and Post-Event Review/After Action Planning. There are also Appendices with additional information about the various rules and regulations associated with mass gathering planning, and links to other useful resources. The document was developed collaboratively by the New York State Emergency Management Association, the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, the New York State Police, the New York State Office of General Services, the New York State Department of Health, and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation.

**Note:** This guide will be reviewed and updated annually (if necessary) based on feedback, lessons learned, and other factors. Feedback, comments, or questions can be made to your DHSES/OEM regional office, the OEM Planning Section at [nysuem.planning@dhSES.ny.gov](mailto:nysuem.planning@dhSES.ny.gov), or to [emergencymanagementpolicy@dhSES.ny.gov](mailto:emergencymanagementpolicy@dhSES.ny.gov) for AFN guidance.

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## **Section I: Pre-Event Planning**

### **Identify and Coordinate with Key Planning Partners**

- ❑ Create a core planning team or steering committee to oversee major decision-making and planning. Consider the use of sub-groups if necessary to focus on specific planning issues.
- ❑ Conduct community engagement by meeting with local disability organizations, advocacy groups, and support networks to understand the specific needs of the populations that might attend.
- ❑ Contact your local Independent Living Center or your ADA Coordinator to conduct an accessibility review of the grounds/facility (*contact [emergencymanagementpolicy@dhses.ny.gov](mailto:emergencymanagementpolicy@dhses.ny.gov) for further inquiries*).
- ❑ Discuss your special event with your regional NYS DHSES - OEM representative or NYS Police - NYSIC representatives for your Counter Terrorism Zone to determine if your event was rated and what its rating is as part of the National Special Events program.
- ❑ Identify key partners (i.e., federal, state, local, private sector, nonprofit) that can contribute to the planning process and provide value to the event management and security to the venue. Ensure coordination with local building/fire code officials, as they too may have public safety planning requirements.
- ❑ Inform and involve community partners in the planning/coordination process (e.g., community organizations, businesses/residents near the venue).
- ❑ Coordinate with local and state public health agencies regarding sanitation, potable water, food safety, communicable disease response, and mass casualty planning requirements.
- ❑ Include local health department and NYS DOH subject matter experts (Environmental Health, EMS, public information, epidemiology as appropriate) in planning meetings when public health risks or regulatory thresholds apply.
- ❑ Obtain contact information for all key partners, including event security; ensure that cell phone information is available, as office numbers are likely not useful during the event.
- ❑ Engage event promoters or sponsors directly and ensure they are involved in all phases of planning.
- ❑ Establish and document an Incident Command System (ICS) structure, including clearly defined roles, decision thresholds, and delegation of authority. (e.g., what triggers will cancel/postpone a performance? Shut rides down? Where will people be evacuated to? Who manages an evacuation and how is that information transmitted to officials and the public?)
- ❑ Identify a process or partner to monitor the weather and other potential hazards.
- ❑ Ensure that relationships are in place with law enforcement to facilitate intelligence and information sharing.
- ❑ Provide event planners and local response agencies with relevant partner contact information and remind them to reach out to county and state partners for support and technical assistance.
- ❑ Keep planning meetings notes and ensure formal documentation of all relevant plans, policies, and procedures.

## **Risk Assessment**

- ❑ Consult with the county emergency management office to discuss key findings from the County Emergency Preparedness Assessment (CEPA) as it can inform planners of the overall risk across a range of hazards and local capabilities.
- ❑ Discuss your special event with your regional NYS Police - NYSIC representatives for your Counter Terrorism Zone to determine if social media monitoring should be considered.
- ❑ Identify the population of the event crowd to anticipate individuals who may need AFN support during an incident.
- ❑ Develop a plan to support AFN needs populations during the event and in the case of an incident.
- ❑ Identify potential vulnerabilities associated with the threat profile.
- ❑ Consider factors that will present unique risks within the event (e.g., concert, celebrity/notable figure attendance, protests, more people than anticipated, etc.).
- ❑ Conduct fire/code inspections in advance of the event to identify and mitigate potential fire hazards.
- ❑ Consider cascading events that could impact the event (internal and external).
- ❑ Engage law enforcement and/or legal counsel to ensure an understanding of any relevant legal/constitutional issues (e.g., first amendment rights) and how arrests, prosecution would be handled for different incidents.
- ❑ Determine in advance what, if any, types of items will be prohibited from being brought into the event or venue; ensure appropriate advance messaging and security screening processes and equipment will be in place.
- ❑ Conduct a thorough survey of the event grounds, routes, facilities for potential vulnerabilities; consider pre-screening venue before opening (ex: explosives detection canine sweep) and in advance of high-profile events (e.g., concerts, dignitary visits, etc.)
- ❑ Assess the venue for safety and logistical needs including capacity, entrance/exits, and potential vulnerabilities to include AFN and ADA compliance.
- ❑ Identify potential personnel risks and appropriately vet employees and/or event volunteers prior to the event.
- ❑ Identify any concurrent events in nearby locations that could impact resource and personnel support to the event.
- ❑ Utilize geographic information systems (GIS) to review and display layers of data and information related to event locations. Identify potential impacts, and spatial relationships between the hazards. Identify soft-spots and vulnerabilities in protective strategies; physically visit these areas.
- ❑ Ensure an understanding of UAS, a.k.a. drone, regulations and potential restrictions and consider the need to limit drone take off/landing at or near the venue (see Appendix B).
- ❑ Evaluate reliance on critical infrastructure systems (e.g., potable water, wastewater, power, telecommunications, transportation) and consider interdependencies between event operations and critical infrastructure systems, and how disruptions could affect public safety or event continuity.
- ❑ Consider potential public health and environmental health impacts associated with identified hazards, including sanitation capacity, potable water reliability, food safety, and extreme weather exposure.

## **Implement Critical Infrastructure Protection and Other Mitigation Measures**

- ❑ Implement infrastructure protection measures to grounds, routes, facilities, etc. based on identified vulnerabilities. Consider the use of large vehicles, bollards, and/or other

mechanisms to limit or block access to key locations (if necessary, based on risk assessment). See Appendix C for an example.

- ❑ Determine appropriate spacing between barriers for wheelchair entrance/exit without compromising any safety concerns.
- ❑ Remove potential infrastructure, personnel (and other) risks and risk enhancers.
- ❑ Explore mitigation measures beyond the event grounds, routes, facilities, etc. Ensure all city/county/state personnel are aware of changes/updates.
- ❑ Develop and test continuity of operations plans.
- ❑ Identify a list of critical infrastructure that could be impacted by an incident during the event.
- ❑ Identify accessible routes of evacuation, include it in evacuation plans, and ensure that these routes remain clear and accessible throughout the event.
- ❑ Review Areas of Refuge to ensure the space is accessible (wheelchair user plus egress space) and communication, where applicable, includes accessible features for deaf, blind, and speech-challenged people.
- ❑ Work with local authorities, hospitals, and emergency services to create a cohesive plan ensuring that all responding agencies understand their roles, including supporting individuals with AFN.
- ❑ Evaluate dependency on potable water, wastewater capacity, and backup power for sanitation and food service operations. Document contingency measures.

### **Identify Personnel and Equipment**

- ❑ Identify any personnel and equipment gaps and consider mutual aid or other processes to optimize response times and mitigation/deterrence of threats/hazards.
- ❑ Contact and leverage your municipality's ADA Coordinator to assist in planning for people with AFN.
- ❑ Determine if there will be a need for any contractors, vendors or commercial vehicles/equipment.
- ❑ Test/evaluate pre-staged equipment to ensure it is working effectively and efficiently.
- ❑ Identify back up equipment and rotation of personnel, particularly for long-duration events and for extreme weather conditions (e.g., multi-day festival with high temperatures).
- ❑ Pre-identify locations that could be utilized as resource and personnel staging areas, if required.
- ❑ Pre-stage equipment and other resources, as necessary.
- ❑ Ensure personnel will have access to water, food and other resources (e.g., wearing weather-appropriate gear), including support services, to function at optimal levels.
- ❑ Determine the need for any type of credentialing for event staff (note: credentialing could be as simple as issued t-shirts at a smaller event or as complex as readable ID cards for larger events).
- ❑ Inventory specialized resources (i.e. transportation and paratransit, motor coaches, ambulances, etc.) and ensure contracts specify compliance with accessibility laws.
- ❑ Dedicate space for individuals with sensory needs and have onsite sensory kits that can be utilized by people who require them.
- ❑ Have in place patron assistance and blind escorts for people who require additional support. Ensure ushers and security are trained in how to disengage wheelchairs, proper etiquette and interaction skills, and how to engage individuals with developmental, mobility, sensory, and cognitive disabilities.

### **Pre-Event Trainings and Exercises and Protocol Reviews**

- ❑ Conduct pre-event exercises (e.g., tabletop, functional, full scale) that assess capabilities and accessibility needs that further identify risks and requirements.
- ❑ Ensure personnel are certified in incident management training that best suits your event (e.g., crowd management, ICS, etc.).
- ❑ Review basic protocols with event staff to ensure familiarity with relevant plans.
- ❑ Evaluate where critical skills and equipment can be best utilized.
- ❑ Train staff and volunteers in suspicious activity reporting (e.g., See Something, Say Something).
- ❑ Train staff in cultural competence, disability awareness, and emergency response for people with AFN ahead of an event.
- ❑ Ensure staff are trained to provide reasonable accommodation during an incident, and that plan is flexible enough to meet diverse, individual needs.
- ❑ Use After-Action Reports (AARs) from exercises and real-world events to review lessons learned and continuously improve preparedness and response efforts.

### **Communications and Information Management Protocols**

- ❑ Thoroughly evaluate communication procedures and equipment; ensure communication interoperability between and across disciplines.
- ❑ Establish executive notification thresholds to ensure timely situational awareness for senior leadership without over-reporting routine operational issues.
- ❑ Ensure several layers of redundant communication lines and test against varying risks (natural, human-caused, technological/accidental).
- ❑ Coordinate with telecom providers for their communications expertise and potential need for unique resources (e.g., Communication on Wheels) depending on the event scope.
- ❑ Determine alerting and communication resources, processes, and protocols. Consider structured groupings based on primary stakeholders, such as internal, external, public and patrons.
- ❑ Develop pre-scripted, plain-language messages to be used via PA, radio, mobile apps and social media for evacuation, shelter-in-place, severe weather, lost child procedures, and medical emergencies.
- ❑ Determine a process for sharing information regarding missing persons, including procedures for who is notified and what actions will be taken.
- ❑ Develop multi-channel alert systems (tv, radio, social media, visual captions, sign language interpretation, etc.) that reach individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, have low vision.
- ❑ Create age-appropriate messaging for children and older adults
- ❑ Utilize plain language messaging and provide information in multiple languages to address Limited English Proficiency (LEP).
- ❑ Establish review/approval pathways for public health messaging with local health department/DOH to ensure consistency, accessibility, and timeliness.
- ❑ Prepare templates for public health advisories (e.g., hydration/heat, boil water, sanitation disruptions, food safety alerts, smoke/air quality protective actions).
- ❑ Understand the authority, process, steps, and limitations to distributing public alerts via the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS). Pre-scripted or sample messages should be developed where possible.

### **Permits and Notification**

- ❑ Throughout the pre-planning process, obtain proper permits to effectively run management and security operations.
- ❑ Ensure compliance with state and local regulations concerning mass gathering event management (see Appendix A).
- ❑ Identify appropriate levels of surge staff and equipment to respond to varying risks.
- ❑ Notify appropriate state partners (e.g., NYS DHSES-OEM, NYS DOH, NYSP) when attendance thresholds, dignitary presence, threat profile, or resource needs warrant state-level coordination.
- ❑ Consider early notification of relevant state agencies when infrastructure or public health impacts are anticipated.
- ❑ Review local codes/regulations pertaining to any unique aspects of the event (e.g. pyrotechnics/fireworks) and ensure compliance with fire/building code requirements.
- ❑ Advance warning should be provided for fireworks/pyrotechnics, flashing lights, and loud noises that affect impacted populations such as people with seizure disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, autism, and service animal handlers.

### **Mass Casualty Plan Review**

- ❑ Review your jurisdiction's mass casualty and/or mass fatality plans with all relevant personnel and adjust based on the scope of the event.
- ❑ Ensure plans are scalable to contend with potentially numerous casualties and fatalities.
- ❑ Ensure locations have been identified to potentially transport or relocate casualty victims.
- ❑ Identify, in advance, potential Mass Casualty Incident (MCI) resources and protocols.
- ❑ Preplan for a potential mass fatality event, securing the area, temporary storage and transfer of remains, and coordination with the county Medical Examiner.
- ❑ Pre-identify family assistance and reunification locations.
- ❑ Identify, in advance, a process to know how many patrons are at the event at any given time.
- ❑ Review NFPA 3000 (see Appendix B) and leverage items within to assist with mass casualty planning.
- ❑ Confirm contracted counselors trained in trauma response, communication with AFN individuals, and relevant translators.

## **Section II: Operational Considerations**

### **Maintain Situational Awareness**

- Establish Incident (Event) Command Post operations and ensure connectivity to emergency operations centers.
- Conduct final run through of operational procedures and preparedness measures at the beginning of the event.
- Schedule appropriate number of briefings throughout the event to maintain situational awareness.
- Provide beginning of shift Just-In-Time training for all volunteers, staff and vendors (where possible) on roles and responsibilities during an emergency incident.
- Leverage existing weather reporting platforms for up-to-date weather. Monitor weather sources in real-time for any quickly changing conditions.
- Monitor for emerging health and environmental indicators (e.g., heat-related illness trends, sanitation issues, water disruptions, or clusters of illness) and escalate through established command channels as appropriate.
- Ensure mechanisms to maintain law enforcement related information and intelligence as necessary (e.g., liaison officer).
- Leverage available Geographic Information Systems (GIS) resources to develop maps/materials and use mapping/location terminology to discuss event operations (e.g., quadrants, zones).
- Monitor social media platforms for situational awareness.
- Maintain the ability to know how many patrons there are at the event at any given time.
- Establish a public health reporting rhythm during operations (e.g., daily or per operational period) capturing EMS trends, GI illness reports, heat illness counts, sanitation issues, and water system status.
- Monitor potable water status and sanitation functionality (handwashing, restrooms, wastewater) and escalate issues through incident command when thresholds are met.
- Monitor crowd to identify groups of individuals who may need additional assistance in an emergency, including but not limited to individuals using wheelchairs, deaf patrons, individuals utilizing accessible areas, and large groups of children.
- Consider the use of technology, such as drones or other UAS to surveil from multiple angles and/or formats.

### **Maintain Incident (Event) Action Plans (IAPs)**

- Consistently document event procedures, incidents, etc. in a pre-determined IAP format.
- Conduct IAP briefings at the beginning of each operational period.
- Ensure the Incident Commander(s) collaborates with partners and agency administrators to develop common IAP objectives and operational priorities.
- Leverage NY Responds to keep NYS DHSES-OEM and other agencies informed of event logistics and the potential need for support.

### **Maintain Lines of Communication**

- Hold periodic equipment tests/checks for all layers of communication.
- Consistently scan IT networks that support communications equipment for potential disruptions.
- Utilize variable message signs and other equipment to bolster alerting before and during events.

- ❑ Leverage media outlets (e.g., radio, television, social media) to discuss event details and potential concerns (e.g., prohibited items, road and facility closures, etc.).
- ❑ Share periodic public reminders, in plain language, during the event in multiple formats and different languages (e.g., emergency exits, See Something, Say Something, etc.).
- ❑ Provide accessible forms of communication and share with partners who may seek nonvisual communication, deaf access, multilingual or universal symbols, and culturally competent materials.

### **Ingress/Egress/Parking**

- ❑ Ensure ingress/egress routes are sufficient to sustain large crowd movements and can be quickly cleared and operationalized; ensure suitable ingress/egress routes for emergency vehicles.
- ❑ Ensure adequate lighting in parking lots and ingress/egress routes.
- ❑ Ensure adequate number of ADA accessible parking spaces (1:25, 1:6 van accessible) and that they are closest to the entrance. It is good practice to have more accessible spaces than the ADA calls for.
- ❑ Identify parking lot evacuation routes and have surge parking staff available for various sized events.
- ❑ Identify alternate transportation routes and contingency plans for road closures.
- ❑ Monitor parking lot for overflow/traffic congestion and other potential challenges.
- ❑ Engage local law enforcement on traffic management procedures for various events (e.g., street festivals, parades, road races).
- ❑ Identify specific lanes of travel to ingress/egress (depending on the nature of the event).
- ❑ Consider cascading effects of traffic ingress and egress at the end of the day or event.
- ❑ Ensure that accessible routes are cleared and accessible for individuals who use assistive technology or require mobility assistance.
- ❑ Be aware of people who require assistance due to mobility disabilities, cognitive limitations, and sensory disabilities.

### **Screening and Security**

- ❑ Based on risk assessment determination, conduct security screening for contraband and enforce admission/readmission restrictions (for some there may be little or no screening), respecting policy exemptions for individuals with AFNs (e.g., medical supplies/adaptive equipment).
- ❑ Ensure proper equipment is available for screening (e.g., metal detectors, hand-wands, etc.) and appropriate personal protective equipment is in place, if necessary (e.g., disposable gloves)
- ❑ Staff at checkpoints should be trained to recognize contraband, signs should be posted and information shared on social media identifying restricted items before attendees arrive.
- ❑ Enforce credentialing policy and procedures.
- ❑ Consider establishing quadrants or zones (i.e., Outer, Middle and Inner Zone) for security purposes.
- ❑ Conduct routine patrols throughout the event to identify potential vulnerabilities and suspicious activity.
- ❑ Follow up on reported suspicious activities or other incidents.
- ❑ Communicate completion of patrol/security checks to incident command post.
- ❑ Use ATVS, bicycles, and UAS to effectively maneuver across large distances.

### **Law Enforcement Operations**

- ❑ Staff the appropriate number of officers based on crowd estimates and ensure a mix of uniformed and non-uniformed police officers.
- ❑ Incorporate undercover officers into venue crowds, as necessary, based on intelligence or other threat assessments.
- ❑ Integrate tactical/SWAT teams into the response process, including as part of a Rescue Task Force with Fire and EMS.
- ❑ Consider the requirements to handle a terrorism-related or civil disturbance event and how to integrate with other law enforcement agencies (State Police, FBI, etc.)
- ❑ Employ the use of mounted police, K-9 teams, overwatch teams, SWAT, Bomb Squad/EOD, Mobile Field Unit (MFU) and other law enforcement assets, if necessary, based on the threat environment.
- ❑ Employ the use of aerial surveillance for enhanced situational awareness.
- ❑ Consider the use of auxiliary police, contract security, and volunteers as a force multiplier and potential deterrent.

### **Fire Rescue/Hazmat Operations**

- ❑ Strategically position fire/hazmat personnel and equipment to respond to various incident types throughout the venue.
- ❑ Consider deploying assets that are best suited for the operational environment (e.g., utility task vehicles with firefighting capability, mobile water tankers for events in remote areas, etc.)
- ❑ Assign officers to inspect grounds and facilities before, during, and after the event.
- ❑ Ensure response teams are integrated with law enforcement and EMS, including as part of a Rescue Task Force.

### **Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Operations**

- ❑ Ensure adequate staffing and available resources based on anticipated crowd size and associated requirements (e.g., NYS Sanitary Code Part 18).
- ❑ Ensure there is a plan for first aid, medical transportation, and hospital coordination.
- ❑ Ensure adequate EMS ambulance coverage, particularly for events that have the potential for a high demand for medical service needs (e.g., extreme temperatures) and include considerations for patrons with AFN (e.g., service animals, language interpretation).
- ❑ Ensure EMS can access entire venue and safely treat/transport individuals.
- ❑ Ensure EMS is integrated into other response team protocols (e.g., Rescue Task Forces).
- ❑ Identify closest medical facilities and their capacity to handle different patient amounts.
- ❑ Brief/train local hospitals and medical facilities on potential evacuation and treatment procedures.
- ❑ Establish first aid stations throughout event venue according to Part 18 Code.
- ❑ Monitor medical treatment locations to identify a medical surge due to a given threat or hazard (heat, food illness, heightened drug and alcohol-use).
- ❑ Coordinate with law enforcement to have designated routes for ambulances.
- ❑ Ensure there is adequate space to care for sick or injured individuals and have adequate signage in multiple languages noting that location.
- ❑ Define process for escalating unusual illness patterns (e.g., clusters of vomiting/diarrhea, heat illness spikes) to public health for investigation and messaging support.

## **Facility Lockdowns and Venue Evacuations**

- Identify and properly mark facilities that can support evacuations or sheltering.
- Ensure local building owners and businesses are aware of the potential need to shelter people and support evacuations. Assess to ensure they are accessible.
- Ensure necessary staff and the local population are trained in lockdown procedures and *Run/Roll, Hide, Fight* tactics.
- Identify relocation/disruption centers to direct attendees to be transported, evacuated away from venue.
- Consider phased evacuation procedures to include individuals who may need assistance wayfinding (e.g., blind, short-statured, limited mobility).
- If an incident occurs, quickly establish family assistance and reunification centers (ideally at pre-identified locations). Have AFN communications and accessible procedures in place/planned.
- Have accessible evacuations plans. Consider people that may need additional assistance to evacuate.

## **Emergency Alerting/Public Information**

- During an incident, quickly and appropriately alerting staff and patrons to take action can minimize potential panic and chaos.
- Unify alerting through the command center to prevent redundant or contradictory messaging.
- Respect the need for accessible alerts.
- Be aware that onsite alerting may impact off-site alerting authorities (e.g., 911 centers).
- Considerations for individuals who speak a language other than English, to include ASL.
- Utilize communication boards and phone apps.
- Establish a Joint Information Center (JIC) to coordinate communications with the public, media, and elected officials, considering cultural communities.
- Coordinate messaging related to health, environmental, or infrastructure impacts with appropriate subject matter experts to ensure accuracy and consistency.
- Leverage social media to share information, as necessary.
- Have an AFN communication plan in place that includes messages in multiple formats and in multiple languages.
- Include an event website and/or public information call center to share information.
- Ensure that the messaging process and steps aligns with national best practices.
- Assess availability of other messaging capabilities (e.g., opt-in), and any potential notifications from the National Weather Service (NWS).

## **Crowd Control**

- Ensure adequate number of trained crowd control managers are available in accordance with fire/building code requirements.
- Manage crowd control during normal operations to keep potential evacuation routes/exits open.
- Where possible, maintain elevator access for wheelchair users or those with mobility disabilities.
- If an incident occurs, position trained personnel to focus strictly on crowd control/movement away from the incident; ensure personnel are provided with proper equipment, such as flares, flashlights and safety vests so they are highly visible.

- ❑ If applicable, use aerial surveillance (e.g., UAS<sup>1</sup>) and other technology to enhance crowd monitoring and communications.
- ❑ Post appropriate signage, available in multiple formats, for the public to locate security, law enforcement, EMS, and other services.
- ❑ Pre-stage additional barriers in advance of events (such as bike racks prior to concerts) to help manage crowds and maintain ability to egress.
- ❑ Maintain the ability to know how many patrons are at the event at any given time and the event's capacity and overcrowding contingencies.

### **Monitor Cyber/Technological Threats**

- ❑ Consider having dedicated IT staff within the incident command post to monitor systems (communications, power systems) and to communicate alerts.
- ❑ Ensure backup generation, redundant power/communication systems have been tested and are strategically positioned throughout the event.
- ❑ Activate redundant systems and facilities to keep the event running.



*Accessible Viewing Area, Companion Seats  
2025 World Para Ice Hockey Championships Buffalo, NY*

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<sup>1</sup> Be sure to understand and adhere to FAA regulations if using drones for such purposes and note that drones generally cannot be operated directly over people.

### **Section III: Post-Event Activities**

#### **Debriefs**

- Hold thorough post-event debrief/hotwash of notable incidents, identified points of failure/successes.
- Ensure a wide variety of event management input (i.e., beyond just head of security, EMS, etc.).

#### **Demobilization**

- Properly demobilize event management and security resources; ensure all issued equipment is returned to the appropriate party.
- Consider a phased demobilization approach (i.e., stagger out the removal of resources).

#### **Review of Medical Incident Response Procedures**

- Integrate medical response review into overall post-event review and/or hold separate, more thorough evaluation.

#### **After-Action Review and Plan Development**

- Following the hotwash, determine if a larger After-Action Review is necessary.
- Identify optimal After-Action Plan to produce. Ensure that plan will be used for future events and is not just a formality. Assign owners, timelines, and tracking mechanisms for implementing recommendations from After Action reviews.

## **Appendix A: Applicable Rules and Regulations**

### **NYS Department of Health – NYS Sanitary Code Part 18:**

- ❑ Part 18 sets requirements that public functions expecting to attract more than 5,000 people must comply with.
- ❑ Emergency health care facilities at public functions must comply with minimum equipment requirements.
- ❑ The person holding the public function must obtain a permit issued by the State Commissioner of Health.
- ❑ Additional information is available at:  
<https://www.health.ny.gov/professionals/ems/part18.htm>

### **NYS Labor Law Requirement – §475**

- ❑ Events attracting more than 5,000 people must comply with Labor Law §475, which includes crowd control measures that must be taken.
- ❑ Additional information is available at:  
<https://labor.ny.gov/workerprotection/publicwork/PWLabLaw.shtm>

### **Americans with Disabilities Act**

- ❑ Protects individuals with disabilities' right to fully access events and opportunities. Establishes standards for compliance with accessibility.  
<https://www.ada.gov/>

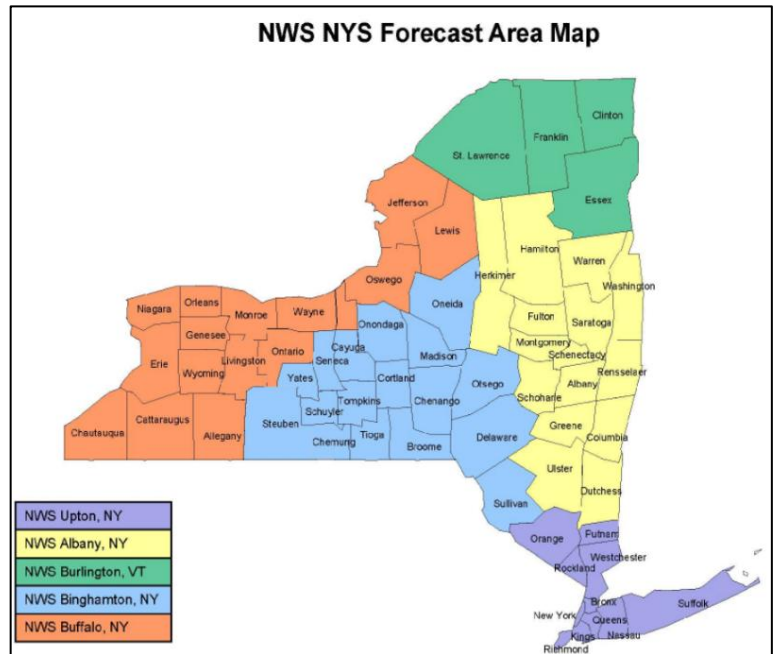
### **International Fire Code - §403.12.2**

- ❑ Where the fire code official determines that an indoor or outdoor gathering of persons has an adverse impact on public safety through diminished access to buildings, structures, fire hydrants and fire apparatus access roads or where such gatherings adversely affect public safety services of any kind, the fire code official shall have the authority to order the development of or prescribe a public safety plan that provides an approved level of public safety and addresses the following items:
  1. Emergency vehicle ingress and egress.
  2. Fire protection.
  3. Emergency egress or escape routes.
  4. Emergency medical services.
  5. Public assembly areas.
  6. The directing of both attendees and vehicles, including the parking of vehicles.
  7. Vendor and food concession distribution.
  8. The need for the presence of law enforcement.
  9. The need for fire and emergency medical services personnel.
- ❑ Additional information is available at:  
<https://codes.iccsafe.org/public/document/IFC2015/part-ii-general-safety-provisions>

## **Appendix B: Useful Web Resources**

- ❑ FAA Unmanned Aircraft System Information  
<https://www.faa.gov/uas/>
- ❑ US DHS: Security of Soft Targets and Crowded Places Resource Guide  
[Security of Soft Targets and Crowded Places – Resource Guide](#)
- ❑ CNA Institute for Public Research: Managing Large-Scale Security Events: A Planning Primer for Local Law Enforcement Agencies.  
[Managing Large-Scale Security Events: A Planning Primer for Local Law Enforcement Agencies](#)
- ❑ CDC AFN Toolkit  
[https://www.cdc.gov/readiness/media/pdfs/CDC\\_Access\\_and\\_Functional\\_Needs\\_Toolkit\\_March2021.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/readiness/media/pdfs/CDC_Access_and_Functional_Needs_Toolkit_March2021.pdf)
- ❑ FEMA: Special Events Contingency Planning: Job Aids Manual.  
[special events planning - NDEMU \(National Disaster & Emergency Management University\) Search Results](#)
- ❑ US DHS: Evacuation Planning Guide for Stadiums  
[Commercial Facilities Publications | CISA](#)
- ❑ US DHS: Active Shooter Preparedness Resources  
<https://www.dhs.gov/active-shooter-preparedness>
- ❑ NYS DHSES 480 Seconds Active Shooter Video  
[480 Seconds.](#)
- ❑ NFPA 3000: Active Shooter/Hostile Event Response (ASHER) Program  
<https://www.nfpa.org/codes-and-standards/all-codes-and-standards/list-of-codes-and-standards/detail?code=3000&tab=research>
- ❑ US DHS: See Something, Say Something Information  
[If You See Something, Say Something® | Homeland Security](#)
- ❑ US DHS: Protective Measures Guides  
<https://www.dhs.gov/commercial-facilities-publications>
- ❑ DHSES OFPC Crowd Manager Training Information  
[Crowd Manager Training | Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services](#)
- ❑ US Access Board: Guidance on the Americans with Disabilities Act  
<https://www.access-board.gov/guidance.html>
- ❑ National Fire Protection Association  
<https://www.nfpa.org/downloadable-resources/guides/evacuation-guide-pdf>

- ❑ ADA Best Practice Tool Kit for State and Local Governments  
<https://archive.ada.gov/pcatoolkit/toolkitmain.htm>
- ❑ IPAWS Message Design Dashboard training: <https://bentearsolutions.com/learn2warnADA>
- ❑ NYS Mesonet Weather Website  
[NYS Mesonet](#)
- ❑ National Weather Service Offices
  - ❑ [Albany, NY](#)
  - ❑ [Binghamton, NY](#)
  - ❑ [Buffalo, NY](#)
  - ❑ [Burlington, VT](#)
  - ❑ [New York, NY](#)



*National Weather Service Forecast Areas*

## Appendix C: Hostile Vehicle Mitigation (HVM) Barriers

New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES) manages a Hostile Vehicle Mitigation (HVM) program. Our program provides movable vehicle barriers made by Meridian that provide a temporary solution to protect pedestrians and large crowds from accidental and intentional vehicle ramming.

The barriers are designed to be configured as a system that supports the larger protective strategy for areas where vehicles and pedestrians mix, or where crowds gather, and vehicles should not be permitted. Each barrier weighs 700 lbs. but is easily movable using a Meridian designed hauler.

Current inventory: 10 trailers of 8 barriers per trailer.

Storage Location: Two trailers are stored at the DHSES Guilderland Stockpile in Albany County, two trailers are stored at the Bayshore Stockpile in Suffolk County, two trailers are stored at the Hamburg Stockpile in Erie County, two trailers are stored at the Oriskany Stockpile in Oneida County, and two trailers are stored at the Montgomery Stockpile in Montgomery County.

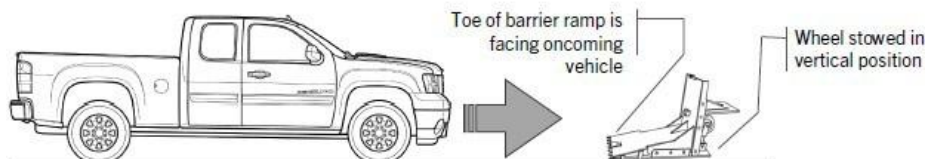


*Barriers in use at 2024 Belmont Stakes Event*

Deployments: A request for the HVM barriers must be made through the NYS Office of Emergency Management's (OEM) NYResponds system or by emailing [barriers@dhses.ny.gov](mailto:barriers@dhses.ny.gov). Upon submission of a request, the NYS Office of Counter Terrorism or Office of Emergency Management will evaluate the request, and reach out to the POC to obtain additional information as necessary.

Additional Details: The rapidly deployable Archer 1200 Anti-Vehicle Barriers can supplement any fixed-in-place natural or man-made barriers. Deployment comes with: Air-Tow Trailer (1), Archer 1200 Anti-Vehicle Barrier (8 each set), 4 Foot Arrestor Cable (7), 10 Foot Arrestor Cable (1), Barrier Hauler (1), Field Tow Bar (1)

### **Correct Barrier Placement**



3,500lb. taxi hitting four unconnected Archer® 1200 Barriers at 30mph



3,500lb. van hitting four connected Archer® 1200 Barriers at 30mph

## Appendix D: On Site Messaging and Communication

**IPAWS:** Emergency public messaging is coordinated at the county level with the use of IPAWS. The National Weather Service also uses this capability for specific types of weather hazards. Event planners should consider the use of pre-scripted IPAWS messages for mass gatherings, if applicable.

**Opt-In:** Event organizers may leverage the use of opt-in messaging for attendees. This allows the organizer to message attendees independent of IPAWS or NWS notification specific to the event site.

Messaging systems vary and users need to be aware of character limitations or restrictions for which platform they are using. The alert originator needs to be aware of these character limitations for whichever system they are using.

**Public Address and Social Media:** Mass gathering venues may also make use of a Public Address (PA) system. Events may also be supported by social media that reaches a broader audience. These systems provide additional flexibility in providing information, with no character limitations.

### Warning Message Contents

Message Content	Description
Source	Use local, familiar, trusted sources. Spell it out completely (no acronyms).
Hazard	Provide the name of the hazard for which the warning is being sent. Be as specific as you are able to be about the type of threat affecting the population.
Hazard Impact	Describes the impacts that may occur as a result of the threat and the reasons that a person should take protective actions.
Location	Use familiar landmarks and known physical boundaries in addition to city/county names. In some cases, location includes where people should go as well as the areas affected.
Protective Action Guidance	Tell people what they can do to protect themselves. Be specific and instructive about how to take action. Also, tell them when actions need to be taken.
Expiration Time	Most warnings will not include an expiration time, but some will. If you do not include an expiration time, tell people where to get more information about the hazard and how they will learn that conditions are safe.

### Warning Message Criteria

The following page lists sample alerts for messaging. These are provided as samples and should be modified to apply to the messaging technology being used, the event, and the capabilities of the jurisdiction. All alerts and templates should start by stating the authority to provide such information (e.g., Empire County Fair and insert message). Further, the messaging should address the message content as noted in the table above.

**Sample Template Alerts:** Alert originators must make appropriate changes depending on the method of issuance. For example, a source may not be needed if disseminating the message via PA system. More characters will be allowed depending on the method of dissemination. Add more details if you have them. Anything listed in [brackets] must be edited to fit the situation.

Message Type	Hazard Type	Draft Template Message: (Source: Hazard Impact/Risk, Location, Protective Action Guidance, Expiration or Further Information).
Severe Weather	Thunderstorm	[Source]: The National Weather Service has issued a Severe Thunderstorm Warning until 1:00 pm. Winds of up to [x] mph, heavy rain, and lightning are possible until then. Take cover now in the nearest building. Additional updates to follow once storm passes. Medical aid station located at [location/building #] or call 9-1-1 for emergencies.
Severe Weather	Extreme Heat	[Source]: The National Weather Service is forecasting feels like temperatures of up to [x degrees] until 8:00 p.m. Hydrate frequently, take breaks, and find shade. Red, hot, and dry skin with no sweat; a rapid, strong pulse; and/or dizziness, confusion are signs of a heat stroke. Medical aid station located at [location/building #] or call 9-1-1 for emergencies.
Emergency Activity	Fire	[Source]: There is a fire in [location/building #]. FIND the nearest exit and LEAVE the building now. Stay clear of emergency vehicles. ASSEMBLE in the parking area and follow instructions from first responders.
Event Resume	General	[Source]: The emergency at the [location] has concluded. Attendees can return to the venue.
Safety	Police Activity	[Source]: Local police are responding to an [type of incident] at [location] [risk to the public?] [STAY AWAY FROM [location]]. Additional updates to follow.
Transportation	Traffic Impediment	[Source]: An [accident/delays/etc.] NOW at [location]. Expect significant delays. Seek alternative routes to leave the [event].