



Planned Special Events

When Things Go Wrong

Survey and Report

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Planned Special Events
When Things Go Wrong

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With Catherine L. Feinman

Foreword by Glen Rudner

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Working with professionals from diverse backgrounds who share the commitment to protect and serve their communities is always an honor. This report was a collaborative effort that highlights the responses from attendees at a DomPrep Insiders Roundtable as well as respondents from a nationwide online survey. Many professionals came together either physically or virtually to provide insight and suggestions. Bringing that thought leadership together was possible only with the hard work and determination of many people, for whom I am very grateful.

First and foremost, DomPrep's staff Susan Collins and Catherine Feinman did a remarkable job in producing this report. Susan provided logistical support to coordinate and facilitate the roundtable, plus she organized the design, layout, and production, while Catherine edited and compiled the content into the final product. Andrew Bond, managing editor of Bellwether Publishing, authored much of the text. A special thank you goes to them.

Leading this effort was Glen Rudner, former Northern Virginia Regional Hazardous Materials officer and current DomPrep40 advisor, whose experience and knowledge added much insight on this topic. He spurred discussion about key issues on which the survey and report are based.

A warm thank you goes to all the attendees of the roundtable for creating an active dialogue that helped identify existing gaps and introduce new ideas. Our appreciation also goes to Director of Security Edward Labonte and the rest of the staff at the Verizon Center in Washington, D.C., for hosting the May 2013 DomPrep Insiders Roundtable.

This report, of course, would not be possible without the support of its underwriters: BioFire Diagnostics Inc. (formerly Idaho Technology Inc.), KD Analytical Consulting Inc., Proengin Inc., and Salamander Technologies. It is important to note that these underwriters also are experts in the fields of preparedness and response and have a stake in communities remaining vibrant and strong.

Last, but certainly not least, thank you to the more than 150 DomPrep readers, who each provided valuable feedback that led to this insightful report. Because of the growing interconnectedness of modern society, the need to carefully plan and integrate efforts is more valuable than ever. It is gratifying that DomPrep can serve as a catalyst for facilitating this type of dialogue and interaction. I hope you find this report to be helpful.

Martin D. Masiuk
Publisher of DomPrep

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FOREWORD

Planned special events take place every day across the United States and around the world, as do incidents. When those events and incidents overlap, however, the consequences can be devastating: a marathon and two bombs; a movie theater and a shooter; a high school graduation ceremony and a tornado; and the list goes on. Each event, whether planned or unplanned, has the ability to start a chain reaction of many more incidents – both large and small.

Recognizing the threats and risks – related to elements of the event, the venue, and the surrounding area – and taking effective and swift action can help mitigate an interrelated series of events. Because of the many “unprecedented” incidents that have occurred in recent years, perhaps the best scenario to plan for is a worst-case scenario, but that requires much planning and training.

Regardless of budget cuts, government shutdowns, and time constraints, organizations must still find ways to support a robust training program that is well attended by all stakeholders. Although circumstances often force planners to sacrifice long-term planning and training for short-term concerns, training and communication must remain at the forefront.

There are no shortcuts for building relationships, developing strategies, and implementing emergency plans, so the time to begin is now. In light of the lessons learned from the Boston Marathon bombings, emergency planners, responders, and receivers have collaborated to create this report and to better plan and execute future special events.

Glen Rudner
DomPrep40 Advisor

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SUMMARY

Since the last DomPrep Executive Briefing that focused on Planned Special Events (July 2012), many new planned events and unforeseen incidents have occurred across the United States and around the world. Among notable events and incidents both large and small were: the London Olympics, 27 July-12 August 2012; the Empire State Building shootings, 24 August 2012; the Giants sweeping Detroit in the World Series, 24-28 October 2012; Hurricane Sandy, which made landfall on 29 October 2012; the U.S. Presidential elections, 6 November 2012, and inauguration, 21 January 2013; Super Bowl XLVII, 3 February 2013; the Boston Marathon bombings, 15 April 2013; the fertilizer plant explosion in West, Texas, 17 April 2013; the devastating tornadoes in Oklahoma, 20 May 2013; the wildfires and flooding in Colorado, August-September 2013; and the shooting at Washington's Navy Yard, 16 September 2013.

In addition to those occurrences, the past year was also notable for planned incidents that law enforcement agencies successfully thwarted before execution. In May 2013, for example, U.S. Postal Service workers detected and intercepted ricin-laced letters addressed to the President of the United States, a U.S. senator, a local judge, and the mayor of New York City. Police in Albany, Oregon, after receiving a tip on 28 May 2013, were able to apprehend a teenager who had manufactured six different types of explosives and was planning to carry out a Columbine-style attack at his local high school.

However, the detonation of two explosive devices near the finish line of the Boston Marathon in April 2013 refocused attention on special event risk analysis, planning, and security. Those explosions killed three, injured more than 250, and shut down the nation's tenth-largest (in terms of population) metropolitan area for an entire day, at an economic cost of more than \$300 million. Consequently, on 29 May 2013, DomPrep hosted an insiders roundtable, "Special Event Plans: When Things Go Wrong," that explored the implications of the Boston Marathon bombings for a variety of special event activities, including: holiday parades, celebrations, sporting events, presidential and VIP visits, national special security events, and natural incidents, such as hurricanes, pandemics, and earthquakes. The roundtable focused on how incidents within an event would affect: risk planning and analysis; standards and training; communication and social media;

transportation and movement of people into, within, and exiting an event; and threats posed by improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and other weapons of terror, including chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE) devices and weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

The roundtable brought together selected DomPrep40 advisors and professionals from various sectors of the preparedness community at a prominent site of special events in Washington, D.C. The Verizon Center is a 20,000-seat arena that hosts some 220-250 major special events annually: sporting events, concerts, trade shows, and other miscellaneous events such as the Washington International Horse Show, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, and the Monster Truck Show. The Verizon Center also seemed an appropriate location for that roundtable because it contends with some additional security issues not present at all similar venues, such as the existence of a public parking garage that is in daily use on its lower levels.

Participants submitted questions in advance that helped to create a survey on special event security. Using a new roundtable format, DomPrep administered the survey interactively during the roundtable via the iRespond system. Each attendee received a hand-held clicker to record his or her responses, which generated immediate feedback for an engaging discussion of each question. Glen Rudner, former Northern Virginia Regional Hazardous Materials officer and current DomPrep40 advisor, led the discussion as the roundtable's facilitator.

Following the roundtable, the survey was then sent to DomPrep's audience of emergency planners, responders, and receivers for their responses, which facilitated a comparison between the perspectives of the roundtable participants and the broader preparedness community. This report summarizes those responses and discusses the following key findings:

- I. Current events have changed the overall threat assessment in risk planning. It has now become clear that, during risk planning and analysis, planners should consider all or most of the unique characteristics of a special event. Intelligence sharing among the multiple jurisdictions involved in major events is increasingly important.

- II. To ensure that stakeholders participating in preparedness efforts use the same process and terminology throughout the planning stage, stakeholders at the local, state, and federal levels must use a combination of written documents, pre-event meetings, and joint trainings. One of the ways of increasing the effectiveness of programs is for trained personnel to bring that training back to their home units (“train the trainer”).
- III. Communication and social media offer both challenges and opportunities for special event planning. Officials should designate a spokesperson(s) to provide timely information to the public should an incident occur during a special event. It is important to get the right message out accurately to neutralize misinformation arising from unofficial sources. Communication and social media (e.g., crowdsourcing) also have considerable potential in pinpointing the location of an incident, unruly behavior, and medical emergencies, as well as assisting law enforcement in apprehending suspects following an incident.
- IV. Moving people into and out of a special event has a “ripple effect” on neighboring jurisdictions, requiring effective communication at multiple levels and information sharing among multiple actors in the preparedness community. The transport of persons with functional needs, together with their assistance devices, is an especially important component of contingency plans for special event incidents and natural disasters.
- V. In the aftermath of the Boston Marathon bombings, it is apparent that security efforts should emphasize access and crowd-control measures at future events and heighten CBRNE/WMD detection and protection. However, screening alone cannot eliminate a potential CBRNE/WMD hazard from a special event of any size, so the best strategy entails a combination of heightened training, better quality and efficacy of detection and protection, and improved communication and training.

I. RISK PLANNING & ANALYSIS

As Glen Rudner emphasized at the outset of the discussion on risk assessment, “There is a difference between an event and an incident; events are planned and incidents are unplanned. What is really important are the incidents within the events.” He added that minor incidents within events are usually manageable, whereas major incidents often overwhelm the event. The Boston Marathon is an example of one such event that experienced a major incident two hours after the winner had crossed the finish line, but while more than 5,000 runners were still on the course. An initial set of survey questions addressed changes in risk/threat assessments since the Boston Marathon, implications for special events in the future, and planning strategies that are unique to a particular event versus planning strategies that use a general approach for all events.

The first order of discussion was to probe the extent to which special event planning should address the unique characteristics of particular events, such as marathons, parades, and political gatherings. There was a consensus among the roundtable attendees that plans should consider all or most of the unique characteristics of an event, rather than take a general approach. Supporting this view, those in attendance emphasized the great diversity in types of special events. Such events range from concerts and sporting events, where participants are confined within a specific area for a set amount of time, to parades and marathons, where spectators are widely dispersed for an uncertain length of time.

Whether planning for a 26-mile route through an urban area or for multiple events at a single location, many challenges may arise. Intelligence sharing is imperative for special events that involve multiple public jurisdictions. Some level of cooperation between corporate security providers and public law enforcement may also be involved.

Cyber attacks during a planned event also can create physical vulnerabilities that general plans often do not address. Any time an unauthorized user can penetrate a system, there can be a far-reaching effect on the event as a whole – for example, the implications if computers go down at an airport or metal detectors fail at a venue. For the latter scenario, Verizon Center’s director of security, Edward Labonte, noted that the back-up plan is to revert to manual pat-downs.

However, “denial of service” – or the simple failure of a system to perform an assigned task – may not be the greatest threat to cyber security; instead, a greater threat may be “spoofing the system,” or creating the illusion that the system has performed its assigned screening detection or other task when, in fact, it has not. In addition to gates and venue entrances, another cyber security concern involves the environmental systems. Major venues usually have air conditioning units and many other systems that are dependent on computers and, as such, are subject to cyber attack.

When considering risk planning and analysis for future events, emergency planners, responders, and receivers must ponder the following questions:

- What assumptions should planners make when assessing the CBRNE/cyber threat and taking protective actions?
- What has the nation done differently to prepare for these types of incidents within an event?
- What is missing from the cyber preparedness paradigm today?
- What do local, state, and federal agencies need to do to better respond and recover from such incidents?

Survey Results

The Boston Marathon bombings and the 23 May 2013 fatal machete attack on a British Afghanistan war veteran by Islamic terrorists in London have spurred many jurisdictions to change, or plan to change, the way in which they assess risks and threats. There was a large discrepancy between responses from roundtable respondents and DomPrep readers on this topic. The majority (72 percent) of roundtable respondents indicated that their risk/threat assessments had or would result in a change in their planning process and only 11 percent reported that their current plans are adequate. However, the responses from DomPrep readers showed an almost equal split (42 and 41 percent, respectively) between recognizing that their plans need to change and being satisfied with their current plans. Although several roundtable participants stated that it is only natural in the aftermath of a horrific event to question whether planning was adequate, the answer to this question seems equally natural; it is never enough (Figure 1).

Two roundtable participants indicated that their federal departments not only consider the type of special event during planning, but that event planning continues to evolve in light of the Boston bombings and other incidents. One specific topic of post-Boston discussion involved plans for screening the arriving special event spectators with metal detectors. Currently, this appears to be a more common practice in relatively closed venues such as stadiums and arenas than at open-air or open-air moving events such as the Boston Marathon.¹

There seems to be some uncertainty about whether special event vulnerability to terrorist attacks has increased in the aftermath of the Boston Marathon bombings. Although more than half of those who attended the roundtable (61 percent) speculated that future events would likely be more vulnerable, 20 percent believe that vulnerability levels would actually decrease. Those results are consistent with responses from DomPrep readers (Figure 2). Although there was general agreement that there is no such thing as too much response in planning for perceived vulnerabilities, there is also a risk that terrorists could exploit such vulnerabilities in multi-phased incidents to increase casualties.

Another survey question investigated whether planning for special events held on the campuses of schools, colleges, and universities should be handled any differently from those at other venues. Responses from both survey groups had slightly more people indicating that no special measures were required (Figure 3). However, Kay Goss – president of World Disaster Management, former associate director of National Preparedness Training and Exercises for the Federal Emergency Management Administration, and current DomPrep40 advisor – noted one important difference between schools and city/state jurisdictions that emergency planners should consider. School districts generally do not have emergency managers, whereas the cities and states hosting special events do. Many school districts rely on local responders to address their problems at the scene and do not always reach out to them in advance during the planning process. More school personnel, though, should be part of the team when mayors and county executives assemble to discuss local event planning.

Two Boston-area universities, Northeastern University and Boston University, serve as good examples of how each university uses a different approach for providing emergency medical services (EMS)

at special events held in the large on-campus venues. For non-sporting events, Northeastern used to rely on university police officers who were required to be certified as emergency medical technicians to provide EMS. The school now hires an ambulance service for each sporting and large non-sporting event such as commencement exercises. Alternatively, Boston University uses basic emergency medical technician teams from its student EMS agency for each special event. That university also contracts with a private ambulance service to stage a basic life-support unit on standby for transport during both sporting and non-sporting events.

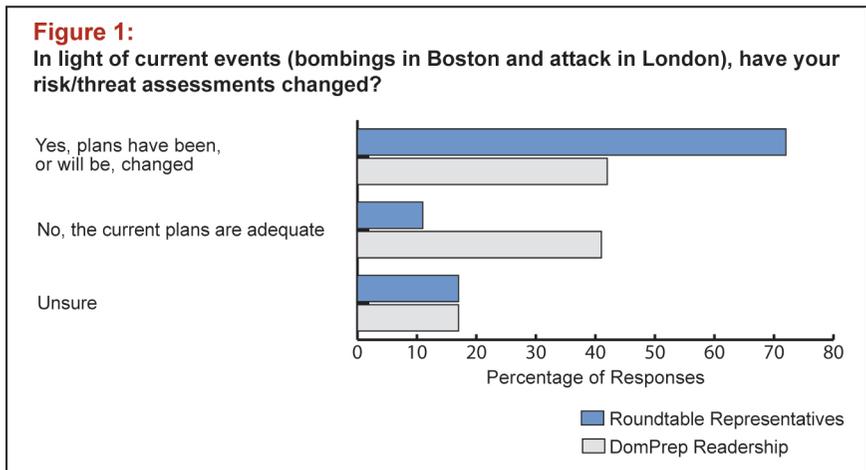


Figure 2:

Given what is known about how the Boston bombing suspects selected their target, what are the implications for the threat of terrorist attacks on special events in the future?

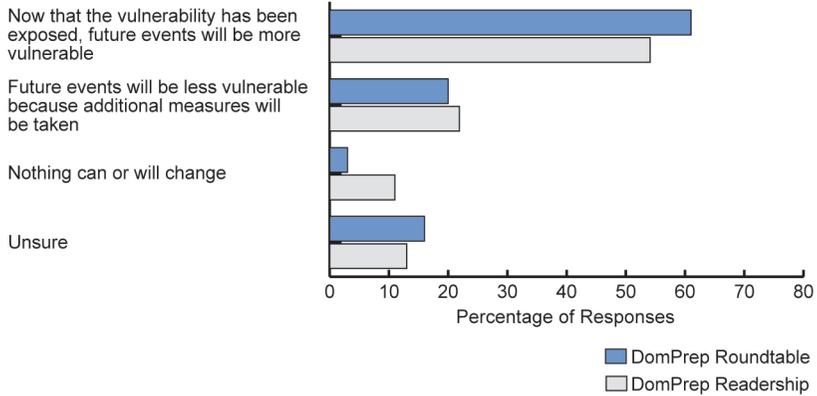
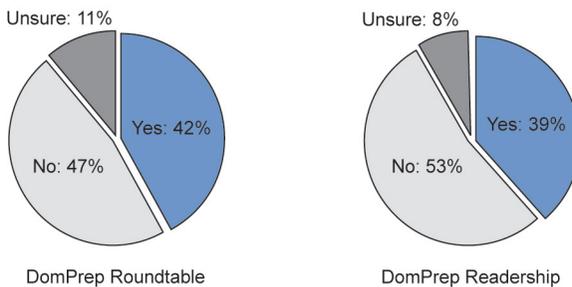


Figure 3:

Should special events on the campuses of schools, colleges, and universities be handled any differently than those at other venues?



II. STANDARDS & TRAINING

As in the 2012 DomPrep Executive Briefing on Planned Special Events, the discussion included a series of questions on standards and training, and more specifically on the importance of a unified approach to event preparedness. Other topics of discussion included: why existing training programs are not better utilized; to what degree all stakeholders are trained on access control procedures; whether comprehensive training-needs assessments are undertaken; and whether special event personnel participated in many of the specific training programs.

Perhaps the best ways to ensure that stakeholders participating in preparedness efforts use the same process and terminology throughout the planning stage are to provide written documents, hold pre-event meetings, and conduct joint trainings. All three of these tasks – using local, state, and federal assets – are key components of a unified approach to event preparedness. DHS’s National Planners Course² offers a standard framework and schedule for such training.

However, ensuring that training is equal for all responders and persons at all levels of the public and private sectors is not always possible, nor necessarily desirable. Some roundtable participants suggested that government mandates might be the answer. However, Lawrence O’Connell, executive vice president of the International Maritime Security Organization, asserted that, “You cannot ensure that they are equally trained. You can train to standards, but people who are prepared to work on a national incident will be working with locals who do not have the experience on the national level, but do know the local geography and information.” Ray Pena, an emergency-planning consultant, added that training equally is, “not only not possible, but not necessary. People train to do a particular task – they don’t need to know how to do everything.”

Access-control procedures for special events are one need that most stakeholders at a particular venue should train for, but often do not. For instance, “tailgating” can be a problem among special event workers, who deliberately or accidentally allow others to enter the scene by not locking gates or leaving doors open. One reason why many do not receive such training is that they believe it is the security person’s responsibility, rather than a shared, common responsibility.

All of the factors inhibiting participation in training programs are interrelated. One of the ways to increase the effectiveness of these programs is for trained personnel to bring that training back to their home units, to “train the trainer.” Yet training is often a casualty in the prioritization of funding. Money is often allocated to what is most beneficial in the short term, such as equipment, rather than to what would yield greater long-term benefits, such as training. The Federal Emergency Management Agency’s annual National Level Exercise³ provides a good benchmark for annual planning to determine what training personnel require for various special events. However, involvement in training tends to be reactive rather than proactive, which leads to spikes in enrollment in particular types of training after major weather hazards and other incidents – for example, active shooter training following the shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary.

Survey Results

When a training program is available, low attendance may prevent the program from reaching its full potential. Funding shortages and time constraints were the two main reasons reported for low attendance rates. Although funding such trainings is certainly a large concern for both the roundtable participants and the DomPrep readers, especially among those who responded from the public health sector, the large number of “other” responses suggests the need to delve more deeply into the issue (Figure 4).

One anonymous respondent, who works in the area of public health, voiced the following frustration: “We are pushed (forced) to do more and more with less and less funding and personnel. It’s not possible to prepare adequately with less money, more obligations, and fewer personnel.” Another respondent from the fire service is concerned that, “Many people see an ‘unending’ progression of ‘required training’ and do not want to be enrolled in a ‘never-ending’ cycle of training.” Some of the other reasons provided by DomPrep readers include: lack of knowledge about what trainings are being offered, where and when the trainings are being held, and who should attend them; low priority or interest level; no buy-in from management or elected officials; and complacency, or an “It won’t happen here” attitude.

The perceived lack of emphasis on training personnel and volunteers from small agencies and/or rural areas raises other concerns. Chapin Jones, a lieutenant from the Louisville, Kentucky, Metro Police

Department, stated: “Most agencies in the United States are relatively small, with limited financial and manpower resources, but little focus is given to these agencies because these types of attacks are portrayed as urban-area problems. Thus, they are not viewed as being a priority for smaller agencies.” Joseph Casper, team leader for Southtowns Hazardous Materials Response Team, echoes that concern with respect to volunteer responders: “It is difficult to get time for volunteers to attend trainings that are usually done during the day and at locations that require extensive travel time.”

Another gap that became apparent in the survey responses is communication and collaboration between the public and private sectors. On one side, a member of the public sector pointed out that: “With the current public sector fiscal trajectory, America’s hometowns cannot expect government to be the first line of defense. Promoting citizen awareness, reporting, and participation are key.” On the other side, a respondent from the private sector admitted, “Funding may be available, but some organizations do not have the expertise to go after the grants, nor do they want to be told ‘what to do’ by the Feds.” Although some examples show progress in bridging the public-private sector gap, there is still much more work to be done.

Comprehensive assessments of training needs would help identify the skills necessary for implementing event security plans. Although 26 percent of the roundtable attendees indicated that their jurisdictions do conduct such assessments, an even greater number (41 percent) reported that their jurisdictions do not. Among DomPrep readers, a much higher (40 percent) number of people claim that their jurisdictions conduct comprehensive assessments, but it is still less than half (Figure 5).

One Baltimore example sheds light on the importance of comprehensive training-needs assessments given the unpredictable attendance at certain special events. Following the victory by the Baltimore Ravens in Super Bowl XLVII, a parade through downtown Baltimore and subsequent victory celebration at M&T Bank Stadium on 5 February 2013 overwhelmed the city. Event planners expected a crowd of 40,000 for the parade, but 200,000 actually attended; the stadium hosting the event seats 71,000 people, but 100,000 filled the arena. Crowd-control conditions were challenging and, although the planners brought in trained personnel from outside jurisdictions, understaffing was still a major problem.

The final survey question on standards and training asked respondents to identify specific types of training that special event personnel receive. Discussion at the roundtable focused on the National Incident Management System's Incident Command System (ICS),⁴ which was the most frequent type of training identified by both attendees and readers (Figure 6). Planners increasingly use ICS for special event planning, so it is gaining greater acceptance across the private sector. However, the discussion revealed gaps in its use between law enforcement officers and firefighters.

Erik Gaull, lieutenant of the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department, observed, "Speaking as someone who has been both a firefighter and a cop, ICS is endemic to firefighters but, in law enforcement, it trickles down from the top. The average officers do not know where they fit in." Part of the reason for the disparity is because law enforcement agencies typically do not have the opportunity to work with other agencies as often as fire officials work with other responders. ICS is particularly important when simultaneously planning for multiple special events within the same jurisdiction – for example, the Preakness horse race and a visit by President Obama in Baltimore.

However, using the example of the ICS courses, mere attendance and certification does not equate to training unless personnel can apply the requisite knowledge in the field and/or under adverse conditions. In the follow-up discussion, participants emphasized the need for a demonstration of proficiency during training, as well as the identification of learning objectives and the ability to synthesize information and to apply it within the National Incident Management System and other frameworks.

A final comment submitted from a reader who works in the state/local government highlights three ongoing training gaps:

- Although all the boxes are checked, the depth and quality of these skills vary widely.
- Few, if any, integrative programs encompass crowd control, medical management, scenario applications, and other special event management topics.
- There is insufficient security/safety integration among all stakeholders throughout event planning and operations.

Figure 4:

There are many training programs available to assist all levels of government and response to be better prepared, yet they are poorly attended. What is the most likely reason?

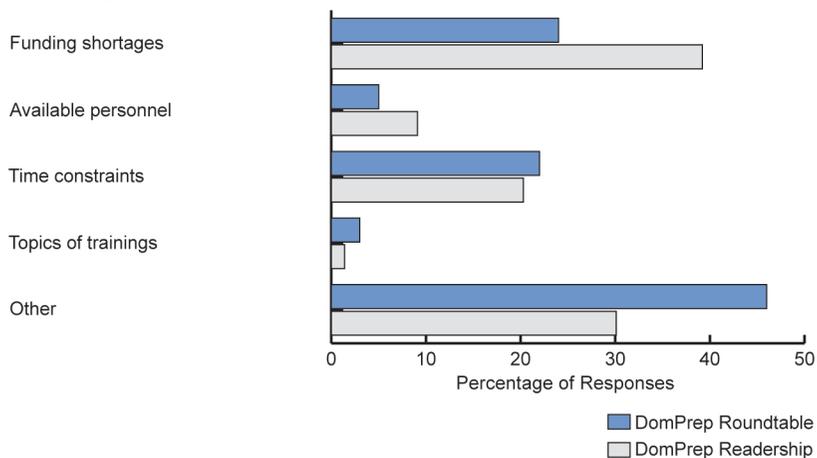


Figure 5:

Does your jurisdiction conduct comprehensive training needs assessments to identify skills necessary for implementing event security plans?

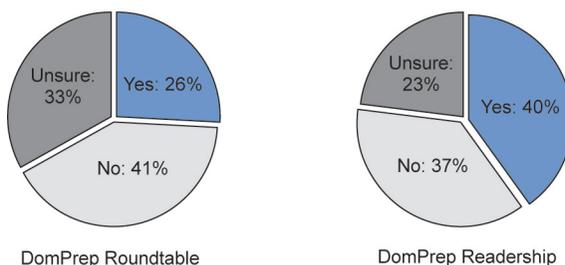
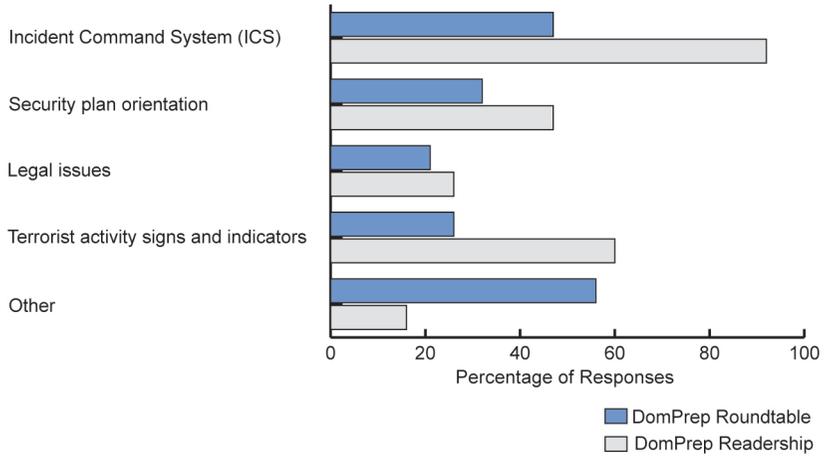


Figure 6:

Have special event personnel where you work participated in any of the following trainings? (Choose all that apply)



III. COMMUNICATION & SOCIAL MEDIA

The accelerated speed of communications and the proliferation of social media offer both challenges and opportunities for special event planning. On the one hand, as noted in the July 2012 DomPrep Executive Briefing on Planned Special Events, it compels special event officials, in concert with local authorities, to designate an official spokesperson(s) to provide timely information to the public should an incident occur during a special event. Otherwise, the media will designate their own unofficial spokesperson, and/or various threads of information, of varying accuracy, may go viral via social media. In either case, event officials have lost control over the flow of information, with potentially damaging results should the public take action based on faulty information about an incident.

On the other hand, communication and social media in the form of photographic images from security cameras and smart phones can be instrumental in informing officials of the location of an incident and its severity. As seen in the case of the Boston Marathon bombings, social media also can assist law enforcement in apprehending suspects. A “see something, say something” policy does work in terms of the public’s contribution to event security. Citizens across the nation are encouraged to report suspicious activity to the authorities and, in fact, the Baltimore Mayor’s Office of Emergency Management receives some 12-15 such calls each day.

Roundtable attendees addressed a range of questions about: special event public information policy; use of social media before, during, and after special events; and policies related to social media during a disaster. In general, policies on communication and social media have tended to evolve alongside technological advances.

The majority of roundtable respondents indicated that their organizations or agencies currently use social media to engage the public, but managing the flow of information can be challenging and time consuming. For example, officials in many cities use Twitter and Facebook for general preparedness messages, but generally do not use those outlets to release information about active incidents because they cannot yet fully manage such information during an incident. However, other officials such as the Office of the Surgeon General widely disseminate public health information via social media, which

the Medical Reserve Corps and other response groups use during active incidents to aid response.

There are other instances, though, when jurisdictions use social media to combat misinformation. For example, the Boston Police Department issued a text message after the Boston Marathon bombings that stated, “If you don’t get it from us, it isn’t real.” As a result, more people in the mass media began to follow the social media communications distributed by the police department.

Another positive aspect of social media is that patrons at an event are more likely to contact security about a problem via a text message or Twitter feed than to physically approach a security guard. In effect, patrons act as a force multiplier for the response. At the Verizon Center, for example, security organizers notify event-goers of a “Guest Assist” number to text when they see fans becoming unruly or when medical issues arise. Those sending the text will receive a response from security personnel either by text or in person.

Social media became more widely used in Maryland following the June 2012 derecho, a violent thunderstorm that produced widespread power outages. There is still a gap, though, within crowdsourcing models. Participants, in general, agreed that crowdsourcing has enormous potential and is a major area in need of development.

Discussion at the roundtable then turned toward the importance of social media for people with functional needs. Frequently, the main source for connecting people with functional needs is often social media, and they want to be able to both establish contact and receive feedback. Anne Arundel County, Maryland, for example, offers CodeRed, which is a reverse-911 operation that warns residents, including those with limited mobility, about the approach of severe weather events.

Incident investigation is another potential use for tweets. When the lights went out during Super Bowl XLVII, for example, some people initially believed it was the result of a cyber attack. If that had been determined, investigators could have used Twitter as an investigative tool to analyze tweets sent before the power outage. In fact, law enforcement officers did analyze tweets about an alleged bomb threat to the Kentucky Derby in May 2013. Planners also can create hashtags before a special event to promote information sharing among officials and develop trending mechanisms for potential incident monitoring during an event. Finally, social media broadcasts can direct

post-event crowds to the most convenient, least crowded stadium exits and roads, thereby ameliorating traffic bottlenecks.

Survey Results

A starting point for addressing the topic of communication and social media was to determine the extent to which special event personnel are aware that their organizations/agencies have public information policies. Well over half of both respondent groups indicated that their personnel are very, or at least somewhat, familiar with such policies and usually follow them (Figure 7). In many cities, officials require that no personnel talk to the media unless a representative of the organization's Public Information Office is present.

It is also important to accurately disseminate the right message about an incident, but officials often spend time regrouping after other sources distribute misinformation. One impediment to better communication is the general lack of public information training among first responders, who may view the media as an adversary rather than a potential ally. One suggestion for improving media-responder interaction is to invite the media to participate in training exercises.

When asked at what level their organizations/agencies use social media to engage their target audiences, responses from roundtable participants varied. More than half, however, focus more on broadcasts than engagement (Figure 8). As mentioned above, one reason for not engaging more with the target audience is a lack of resources to manage the responses in a timely manner. During an incident, the challenges can be even greater.

More than half of each respondent group also indicated that their jurisdictions do not scale back the engagement aspect of social media during a disaster (Figure 9). There is certainly the potential for greater and more effective use of social media during a disaster, given the already extensive use by the public as a source of disaster information. In fact, Twitter reported that, between 27 October and 1 November 2012, users sent more than 20 million tweets about Sandy's impact and aftermath, with the number of tweets escalating rapidly after Hurricane Sandy made landfall.

Figure 7:

Are personnel where you work familiar with the organization/agency's public information policy?

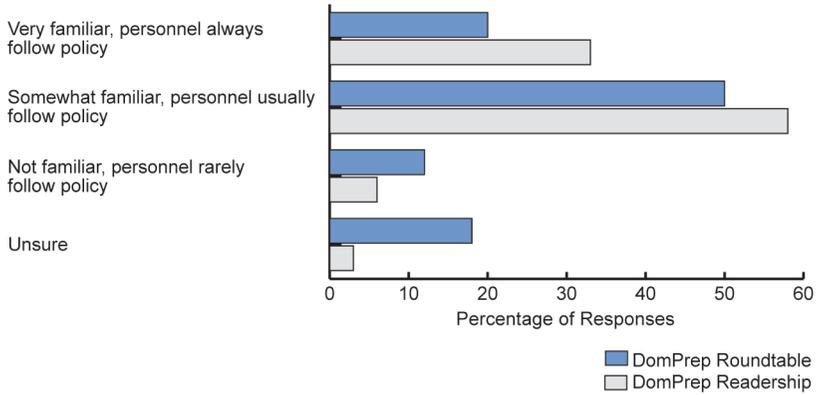


Figure 8:

If your organization/agency uses social media, at what level do they engage their target audience?

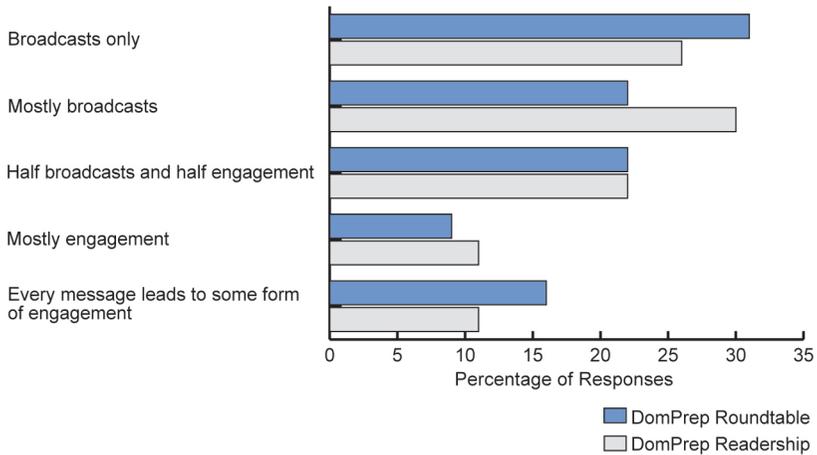
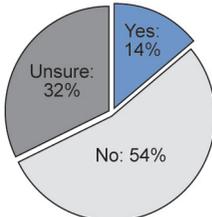
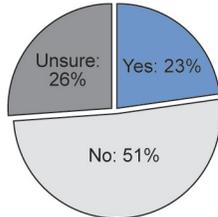


Figure 9:

Is the engagement aspect of social media scaled back during a disaster?



DomPrep Roundtable



DomPrep Readership

IV. TRANSPORTATION & MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE

Similar to the venue of the July 2012 DomPrep Executive Briefing on Special Events, the movement of people into and out of the Verizon Center before and after a special event has a major “ripple effect” on the surrounding Chinatown district of Washington, D.C., as well as on the Metro rail system operated by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. Local police officers close one block of F Street in front of the main entrance to the Verizon Center to automobile traffic 30 minutes before an event and reopen it again 30 minutes after the conclusion of the event. The Center also leases a “lay-by” on 6th Street, adjacent to the arena, where broadcast crews station their satellite trucks and dignitaries and other VIPs park their vehicles.

Complicating transit and traffic issues further, special events held at the Verizon Center can be concurrent, or nearly so, with those in the Chinatown area – for example, St. Patrick’s Day and the Chinese New Year parades. Special rerouting also may be required for motorcades of high-ranking U.S. government officials and visiting dignitaries involved in national special security events. Consequently, Verizon Center officials are routinely in contact with their counterparts in the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department, National Capitol Police, and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority to manage the normal flow of traffic into and out of event venues, as well as to plan for evacuations in which most of the people arrive by public transportation.

According to the roundtable participants, local mass transit agencies normally participate in coordination meetings only for larger special events within a locality. Super Bowl XLVIII – which will take place on 2 February 2014 at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey – will require an exceptional level of coordination between law enforcement and local mass transit. The event will be unique in that many fans, especially those traveling from the Super Bowl Village complex for event festivities in mid-town Manhattan to the stadium, will have to use mass rail transit. Given that the stadium rail station lies within the 300-foot “blast zone” of the stadium, the New Jersey State Police, which is the lead agency for security, has decided to conduct screenings of all passengers two stops prior to East Rutherford Station.

To manage such transit concerns, local mass transit agencies must have policies and procedures in place to guide their approach to special

event transportation. In the maritime industry, the U.S. Coast Guard has a vessel compliance program that applies to the construction and operation of U.S.-flag vessels. However, many vessels in U.S. ports and on coastal waters have international registries, so there is no uniform standard for training sailors and other staff aboard ships or for passenger safety. Even minor incidents can affect cruise-ship populations, especially when passengers do not listen carefully to the safety briefing at the start of the cruise. One small deviation can have people moving in the wrong direction, with potentially enormous implications for safety.

Survey Results

When asked whether local mass transit agencies in their areas participate in pre-event and post-event coordination meetings with local agencies such as law enforcement and event planners, a majority (63 percent) of roundtable attendees indicated that local mass transit agencies are involved in either pre-event planning only or both pre- and post-event meetings. That positive response was significantly smaller (only 43 percent) for the readership (Figure 10). Douglas McDaniel, emergency management instructional coordinator at Frederick Community College, observed that many different agencies were involved in his venue, but mostly pre-event, thereby missing some of the information and lessons learned post-event.

For special events held on the National Mall, the U.S. Park Police works closely with many other agencies in the area to help pre-stage people at the event. Nonetheless, despite pre-event planning, when an event goes from an estimated attendance of 60,000 to an actual 300,000, for example, there is a lot of congestion and difficulty in getting people out of the city – out of the Metro system, in particular. D.C. Police Lieutenant Gaul added that the D.C. rail system has a good record in responding to the needs imposed by special events, but experiences with the bus system during special events have been more challenging. Bus drivers often do not know where to go, and police officers do not always know how to re-route them.

Collaboration with neighboring jurisdictions and multiple participants is also important for coordination of evacuation plans. Most of the respondents (75 percent of roundtable attendees and 74 percent of the readers) reported very close or substantive collaboration on evacuations with neighboring jurisdictions (Figure 11). However, each jurisdiction has different equipment, so they may not be able to accommodate all special

needs, especially given limited resources. Identification of those with special needs during an evacuation is challenging because each state may have a different definition of “special needs,” and not all states have a mechanism for tracking those identified as having special needs.

The transport of persons with functional needs, together with their assistance devices, is an especially important component of contingency planning for both special events and disasters. More than three-quarters of the readers who responded (78 percent) indicated that their jurisdictions give additional consideration for transporting such persons during contingency planning. In contrast, more than half of the roundtable participants indicated that they are unsure about additional considerations for transporting persons with functional needs, which paves the way for further discussion on this topic (Figure 12).

Such planning enabled successful evacuation of people with functional needs on the east coast of the United States before Hurricane Sandy made landfall. The key is moving those people early, but carefully, as oxygen systems can potentially become accidental IEDs during an evacuation. For example, a fire killed 23 nursing home residents on a bus as they evacuated during Hurricane Rita in 2005.

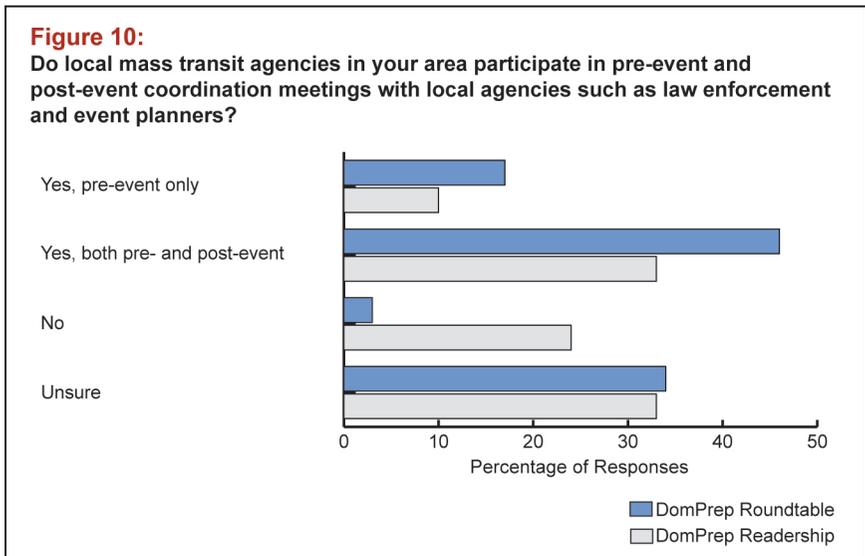


Figure 11:

How closely does your jurisdiction work with neighboring jurisdictions to coordinate evacuation plans?

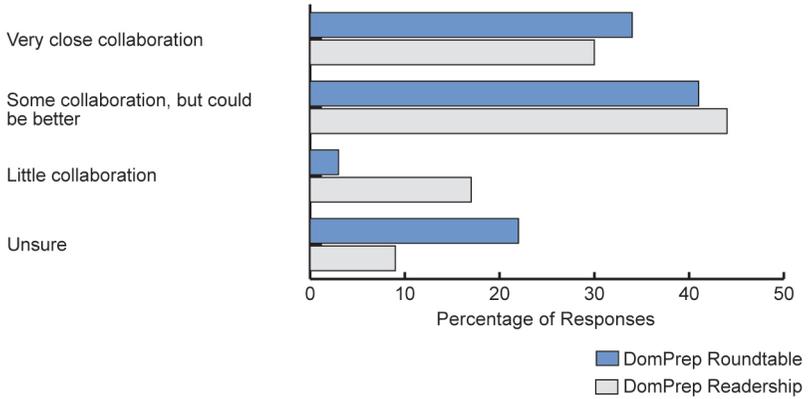
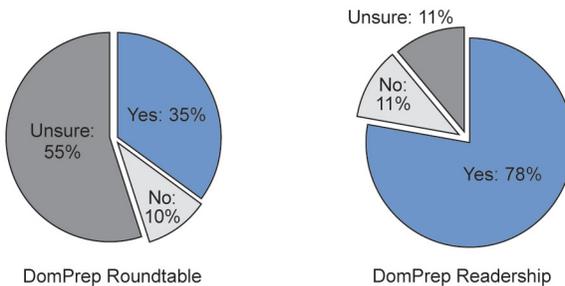


Figure 12:

When making contingency plans, is additional consideration given for transporting persons with functional needs (along with their assistance devices)?



V. IEDs & OTHER WEAPONS OF TERROR

On 15 April 2013, the detonation of two explosive devices near the finish line of the Boston Marathon riveted the nation's attention once again on issues, not only of terrorism but also of event security. The two crude shrapnel bombs, composed of pressure cookers packed with explosives, ball bearings, and nails, were effective in part because of: (a) the long duration of the event, which did not require highly precise timing; and (b) the large area that security forces had to cover. For the most part, people could freely enter the area with their belongings, including bags and backpacks, within which the attackers concealed two bombs.

The large group of responders concentrated at the finish line to render routine first aid to runners ensured a strong response following the explosions. The placement of the IEDs led some observers, in the immediate aftermath of the incident, to believe that the primary target may have actually been the responders. Nonetheless, the position of the bombs, located curbside near trashcans, and the immediate medical response were the main reasons for the low fatality rate of three deaths. Following the explosions, the many bags and backpacks that spectators abandoned as they fled the scene hindered the search for additional bombs. Law enforcement officers had to consider each as potentially containing an IED.

On 22 April 2013, the court charged the surviving suspect with the use of WMDs and malicious destruction of property resulting in death. In light of the experience gained in the six weeks following the attack, roundtable participants addressed several questions about detection of, and protection from, CBRNE agents and WMDs at special events.

When asked if better detection could have prevented the Boston bombings, roundtable attendees were in general agreement that screening alone cannot eliminate a potential hazard from a special event of any size. In fact, the average first responder may not have the expertise required to determine if someone is actually a threat. As such, special event security must have all of the following: intelligence, threat assessment, trained first responders, and a mechanism for deploying the responders.

Personnel readiness and training is an important aspect of deploying security personnel for special events. This was reflected in comments such as: "If people can't operate equipment, it doesn't matter how

good it is”; “I would love to say that our stuff works, but [it] doesn’t do anything without the people being properly trained”; and “No amount of equipment could have been more important than training.” Nonetheless, the imperatives of the moment sometimes trump long-term concerns such as training, with some agencies foregoing training because they believe, “We don’t have time; we have a job to do.”

Survey Results

Almost half (47 percent) of roundtable participants believe that access and crowd control should receive the most attention in special event security planning in the aftermath of recent events, with another quarter (26 percent) prioritizing CBRNE/WMD detection and protection. The readers who responded to the survey reported the same two priorities (33 percent for each), but that group included communication as a close third (28 percent) (Figure 13). In Boston, one asset that was almost immediately on the ground was Massachusetts’ WMD Civil Support Teams to conduct tests for radiation. DomPrep40 Advisor Goss stated that, “If you can’t do hazmat, you can’t do terrorism because terrorism is hazmat on steroids.”

When asked what the most important goal should be in providing CBRNE/WMD detection and protection at special events, the majority of both groups of respondents believe the answer lies in better quality and efficacy of detection and protection, as opposed to increasing the amount of coverage at an event or extending coverage to smaller events (Figure 14). Roundtable participants weighed the tradeoffs between speed of detection and accuracy; quick tests for detection can often be inaccurate and have many false positives. There is a continuing need to have actionable information quickly, but with some degree of certainty that the data collected is accurate.

When feasible, having stationary equipment pre-positioned throughout facilities often can be useful and provide initial readings to first responders as they arrive on the scene. D.C.’s Metro rail system, for example, has such equipment in place for detecting biohazards. However, the public’s role in detection and protection against CBRNE/WMD threats is still important. By reminding special event attendees to remain vigilant and alert to unattended bags and other potential threats, coupled with education on how to respond, event planners can improve detection and protection efforts.

The final survey question inquired about the resources or strategies that most likely would improve the outcome following an incident that occurs during a special event. The two most common answers were improved communication and better training, with roundtable participants putting slightly more emphasis on communication and the readership putting more emphasis on the training (Figure 15). Roundtable participants noted that all of the options presented in the question – including more equipment and personnel, and new equipment technologies – affect outcomes, albeit with interoperability concerns even in small jurisdictions. As one anonymous survey respondent pointed out, “If communication is poor, even good training may suffer” – and vice versa.

That point holds true for all stakeholders to assist in detection and protection against IEDs and other WMD threats. Aaron Marks, manager at Preparedness Support Programs Dynamis Inc., responded to the survey and stressed the importance of “having an engaged community that understands risk and response.” He also suggested conducting “broad training to provide the equivalent of ‘herd immunity’ – vaccinate the public against things that can go ‘wrong’.”

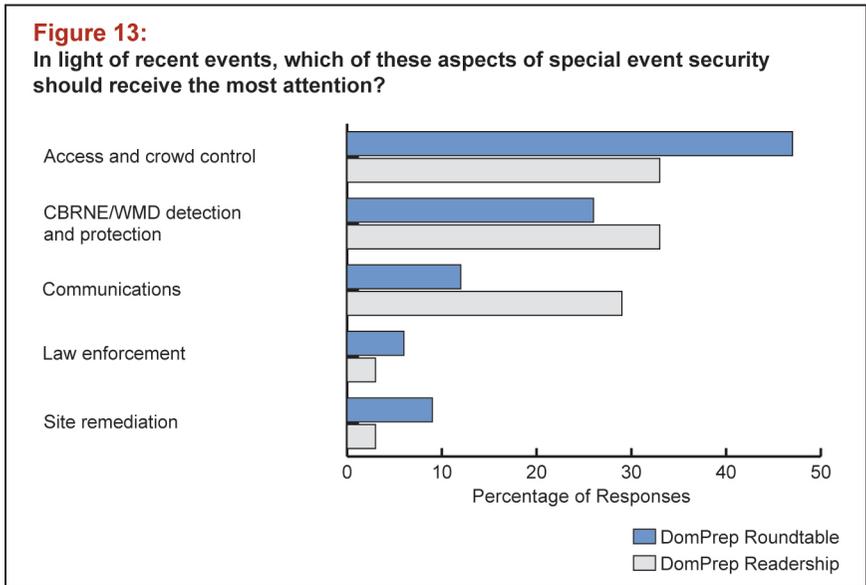


Figure 14:

Which of the following should be the most important goal in providing CBRNE/WMD detection and protection at special events?

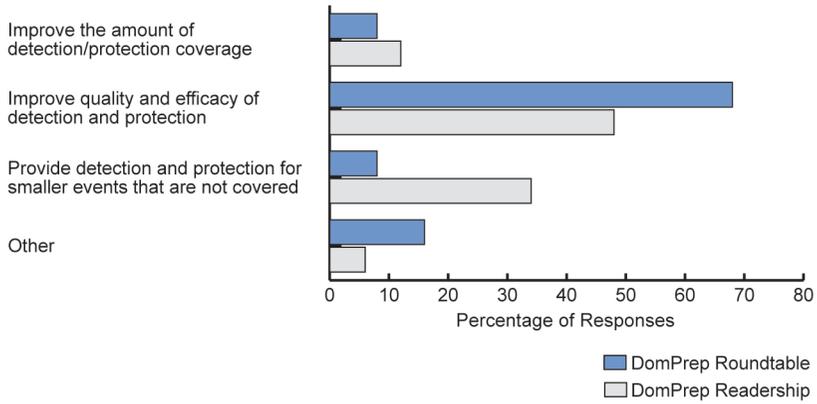
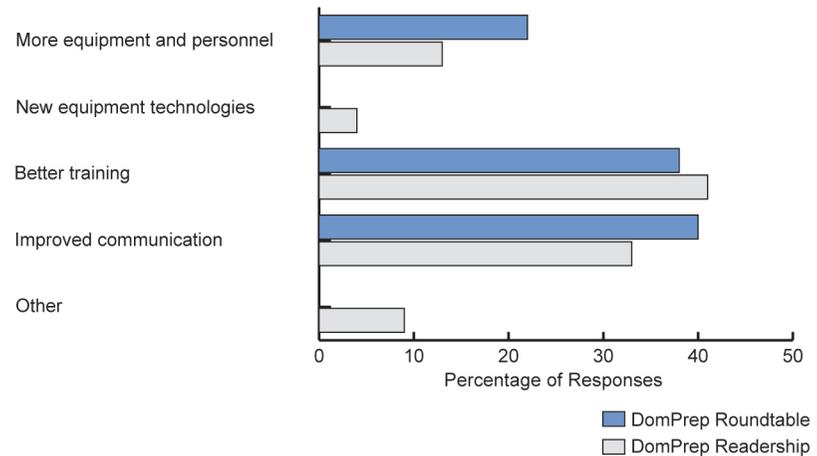


Figure 15:

Which of the following is most likely to improve the outcome when something goes wrong at a special event?



KEY FINDINGS & ACTION PLAN

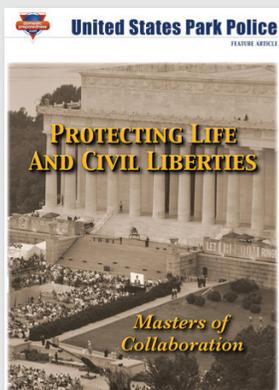
This report extends and builds upon a previous DomPrep Executive Briefing on Planned Special Events⁵ (July 2012) by incorporating lessons learned and new perspectives from the Boston Marathon bombings of April 2013. The 2013 roundtable and readership survey responses are based on the expert opinions of practitioners in a variety of disciplines, sectors, and levels of government. In addition to the continued need for better communication and coordination of efforts among neighboring jurisdictions, the heightened risk/threat assessment for special event planning in the aftermath of the Boston incident highlights a number of new key points to consider, as well as old points to reconsider. These include, in addition to the measures set forth in the July 2012 briefing, the following specific actions:

- Address the unique characteristics of a specific event during the planning process;
- Review existing access and crowd control measures, such as screening with metal detectors, at open-air and moving, open-air special events;
- Reassess appropriate levels of response to various types of incidents that may occur during special events;
- Increase the participation of nontraditional stakeholders like school districts and university administrations in events occurring on school and university campuses;
- Place more focus on the risks posed by cyber attacks to special events, including those with the potential to increase physical vulnerabilities;
- Investigate why stakeholders underuse existing training programs and search for ways of increasing participation rates;
- Provide additional training in access control procedures and in comprehensive risk assessments;
- Strengthen familiarity of special event personnel with public information policies and designate a spokesperson(s);
- Explore ways of expanding the use of social media, both to broadcast public awareness messages and to interact with/respond to the public for crowd and medical issues, including crowdsourcing;

- Improve coordination with local transit agencies in special event and evacuation planning, and focus more attention on the transport of people with functional needs; and
- Increase the quality and efficacy of CBRNE and WMD detection and protection in relation to special events.

This report provides an action plan for the preparedness community in special event risk assessment, plan formulation, training, implementation, communication, and post-event evaluation in the new security environment following the Boston Marathon bombings. By focusing on these new developments, planners can re-evaluate existing plans as well as formulate new ones in an effort to ensure successful outcomes of future events.

DomPrep Exclusive



A special behind-the-scenes look at the U.S. Park Police special event planning process, from the application form to the after-action report. This Feature Article is a must read for any community leaders who collaborate with multiple jurisdictions and multiple disciplines as they prepare for their own special events.

Coming Soon!

NOTES

¹During the writing of this report, organizers of the 2013 New York City Marathon (to be held November 3) announced a set of new security measures in response to the Boston Marathon bombings. These new measures include screenings and bag inspections at selected, high-profile sites along the route of the marathon. For example, there is to be: an expansion of baggage inspection at the race's starting area on Staten Island; special screenings and bag checks for visitors to the family reunification area; screenings along the race's finish line area; and an increase in assigned law enforcement officers, both uniformed and undercover. For additional information, visit http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/04/sports/organizers-overhaul-security-plan-for-marathon.html?_r=0.

²The National Planner's Course is an application-based series of workshops designed to train the fundamentals of planning to selected federal, state, local, and tribal planners. Each workshop uses the Federal Plan Development Process and is linked using an unclassified scenario, an introductory vignette, a process presentation, and a practical program. The course is a 40-hour program: (a) conducted over a five-day period by certified instructors with special planning experience; and (b) designed to be taken after the DHS/Department of Defense's Homeland Security/Homeland Defense Introduction to Planning course as the next step in a series of planning skills and development training. For additional information, visit <http://www.alisinc.com/?q=content/national-planners-course>.

³For additional information on the National Level Exercise, visit <http://www.fema.gov/national-level-exercise>, or visit the National Exercise Program at <http://www.fema.gov/national-exercise-program>.

⁴ICS is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazards incident management approach that: (a) allows for integration of equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure; (b) enables a coordinated response among various jurisdictions and functional agencies, both public and private; and (c) establishes common processes for planning and managing resources. For additional information, visit <http://www.fema.gov/incident-command-system>.

⁵To read DomPrep's "Planned Special Events" Survey and Report that was based on the July 2012 DomPrep Executive Briefing and readership survey, visit <http://www.domesticpreparedness.com/userfiles/reports/dpj29jan13.pdf>.

APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX B

Abbreviations

CBRNE	Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosive Devices
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

APPENDIX C

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names and affiliations disclosed.*

Table 1:
In what sector are you employed?

	DomPrep Readers
Fire Service	7.6%
Law Enforcement	6.1%
EMS	6.9%
Emergency Management	13.7%
Public Health	19.1%
Hospital (including VA)	9.2%
Federal Government	5.3%
Military	0.8%
State/Local Government	11.5%
Non-Government Organizations	3.8%
Privately Owned Company	8.4%
Publicly Traded Company	0.8%
Academic Institution	5.3%
Other	1.5%

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Many jurisdictions today are frequently faced with the overwhelming task of planning for special events. From the proposal of the event to the execution of the plan, there are many moving parts that need to be coordinated and communicated between all the agencies and jurisdictions involved. Even more important than knowing how to prepare for these events, agencies must be able to execute the plan and also implement a contingency plan if an unforeseen incident occurs.

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Underwriters

