



APTA-SS-SEM-S-003-08, Rev. 2

First Published: March 13, 2008

First Revision: April 1, 2013

Second Revision: February 21, 2020

APTA Security Emergency Management
Working Group

Security and Emergency Management Aspects of Special Event Service

Abstract: This standard provides security and emergency management guidance to transit agencies for planned special events affecting their service areas.

Keywords: emergency management, security, special events

Summary: Special events can affect transit agency operations in myriad ways. It is important for a transit agency to assess special event activities in advance to identify security and emergency management issues and contingencies. Special events can also provide a potential high-exposure and target-rich opportunity for individuals or groups intent on committing criminal and/or terrorist acts. Effective coordination and communication among event sponsors, emergency management agencies and transit agencies is critical to ensuring that events run smoothly and that contingencies are in place for potential major incidents.

Scope and purpose: This document covers the security and emergency management aspects of a transit agency's special event services. It is meant to provide a standard to transit agencies for evaluating the potential effect of special events to their systems.

This document represents a common viewpoint of those parties concerned with its provisions, namely transit operating/planning agencies, manufacturers, consultants, engineers and general interest groups. APTA standards are mandatory to the extent incorporated by an applicable statute or regulation. In some cases, federal and/or state regulations govern portions of a transit system's operations. In cases where this is a conflict or contradiction between an applicable law or regulation and this document, consult with a legal advisor to determine which document takes precedence.

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Introduction

This introduction is not part of APTA-SS-SEM-S-003-08, Rev. 2, “Security and Emergency Management Aspects of Special Event Service.”

APTA recommends the use of this document by:

- individuals or organizations that operate rail transit systems;
- individuals or organizations that contract with others for the operation of rail transit systems; and
- individuals or organizations that influence how rail transit systems are operated (including but not limited to consultants, designers and contractors).

Security and Emergency Management Aspects of Special Event Service

1. Pre-planning for special events

Having a planning process for special events benefits transit agencies by creating methodologies for coordinating with other event stakeholders. It also allows transit agencies to develop and document best practices and lessons learned for different types of events. Transit agencies should be aware of how special events require deviations from normal service patterns, and also require modified transit security measures.

The following are keys to successful management of planned special events:

- Achieve early, ongoing input, partnership and participation of involved agencies.
- Estimate crowd size, travel impacts and weather patterns for special events.
- Develop an integrated transportation management plan that can accommodate a range of traffic/transit demands and other contingencies.
- Implement the traffic/transit management plan.
- Continue to monitor traffic throughout the day, and use regional mobility contingency plans.
- Use lessons learned from prior special events.

1.1 Special event coordination

It is important that transit agencies be considered a primary stakeholder for special events that require any significant transit system involvement.

1.2 Post–special event records

Post–special event records should contain sufficient information to enhance planning for future events that are recurring, similar in type or at a repeatedly used venue. Post–special event records should include the following:

- name of the event and the sponsoring group
- nature of the event
- key contact information for involved groups and agencies (minimally name and title, landline phone number, mobile number and email address)
- past history of the event or others involving this location or organization, including problems and conditions encountered
- time frame of the event (days of the week, dates and hours)
- whether other area events (related or not) are occurring during the same time frame and whether the transit plan is separate or integrated between events
- geographic area of the event
- size and demographics of the crowd expected to attend the event and the number of people expected to use the transit system
- size and location of the event facility

- availability of alcohol
- types of transit system modalities involved (rail, bus, etc.)
- expected use of, or disruption to, the transit system
- adjustments made to rail or bus routes and schedules
- effect on transit system, including secondary locations, such as a transit hub that is remote from the event but likely to be inundated with passengers going to and from the event
- dedicated transit agency personnel required for the event
- general security concerns about the event and specific transit-related security issues
- outside security personnel deployed in support of the transit function, such as police patrols or crowd control at transit points
- transit-related communication to the public (posted signage, public address messages, etc.)

1.3 Pre-event coordination

Coordinate with stakeholders for special events to determine the effect the event will have on the transit system. Questions may include the following:

- Will the event require changes to bus routes?
- Will the event require additional buses?
- Will the event require temporary bus stop locations?
- Will personal vehicle traffic affect bus routes?
- Will the event require additional rail service?
- Should some buses or trains be held in reserve for contingencies (e.g., pre-staged in pocket tracks, at staging points or deployed)?
- Will the event require the potential need for bus bridges or paratransit resources?
- Will event participants be arriving and leaving all at once, or will it be a continuous flow in and out?
- Will crowd-control measures be required at transit system boarding locations and stations?
- Are elevated security measures required for the transit system?
- Will screening of vehicles, transit employees and/or passengers be required either at the venue, at the agency's facilities or at the transit agency?
- Are there security-restricted zones affecting the movement of transit vehicles or passengers?
- Are increased security measures required (e.g., vehicle screening, standoff distances and increased patrols)?
- What event risk factors may be present (e.g., overcrowding, violence, potentially increased criminal activity, demonstrations, fan celebration)?
- Are passenger problems anticipated (e.g., alcohol involvement, disorderly passengers)?
- At what level is the Incident Command System (ICS) being deployed, and what is the transit agency's role and level of participation?
- How do event contingency plans interact with the transit system?
- What communication assets are available to the transit authority, coordinators and AHJs, and what is the compatibility and/or interface among these assets?

1.4 Incident Command System and communications

Based on the size, complexity and nature of the event, transit agencies need to have the appropriate level of ICS-trained personnel involved, to either participate in or coordinate with the overall event ICS. There should always be a communication link to the event incident command post or supporting Emergency Operations Center. The following are some additional factors to consider:

- Potential scaling up of personnel and resources for the event and any related transit agency involvement should be considered in advance.

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- Specific key personnel should be identified in advance and be aware of their duties in the event of a scaling up in response to an incident at the special event.
- A comprehensive list of key event contact information for during the event should be developed, including positions, names, locations, telephone numbers, email addresses, etc.
- Consideration should be given to radio interoperability issues, if necessary to include providing radios to key communication liaisons of outside agencies.

1.5 Pre-event site survey

Pre-planning activities should include a survey of the event site area and associated transit locations likely to be affected. Where useful, maps and event logistics should be used and distributed to transit agency employees involved in the event. Some issues to consider include the following:

- the physical relationship of the event site to passenger drop-off and boarding locations and stations
- any need to have law enforcement involved in restricting traffic or pedestrian flow to accommodate transit system vehicles and passengers
- whether crowd surges by passengers exiting the event are anticipated, where they should be queued and who will be directing them
- whether transit vehicles will be staged during the event, and whether those locations require security
- whether there are any specific locations where transit signage directing passengers should be placed
- what direction and to what locations people are to be routed if event contingency plans include measures for mass evacuation, gross decontamination, etc.
- geographic/topographic issues such as egress choke points, potential/proximity to fall hazards, water exposures, etc.

1.6 Event plan

The agency should prepare an event action plan that articulates the involvement of the transit agency and provides an overall explanation of the event. In particular, consider the following:

- Function-specific duties should be outlined for agency departments involved in the event.
- Both event stakeholders and agency personnel should be made aware of the plan.
- Security sensitive plan information should be restricted to a need-to-know basis and controlled according to agency policies/procedures (including 49 CFR Parts 15 and 520).
- Contingency aspects of the plan should be outlined, such as use of the transit system to evacuate people or to deploy outside first responders from other locations to an event incident, or the impact of extreme weather conditions on the event and the transit system.
- Determine the need to bring on additional staff or to advertise announcements for patrons to prepurchase fares to assist in the collection of fares to reduce the congestion after the event.
- Any related transit emergency management plans should be referenced, such as the transit agency response to a major transit incident (derailment, explosion, chemical release, etc.).
- If necessary, the plan should outline any specific transit familiarization training that other agency personnel will be attending.

2. Special event operations

Transit agency field operations managers or supervisors involved in a special event shall consider the following:

- Maintain communications with the transit agency's command post, key internal staff and transit agency personnel in the field. The transit agency command post should identify a liaison to maintain contact with the event incident command post.

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- Continuously assess conditions affecting transit system functions (traffic flow, passenger volume, etc.).
- Notify the transit agency command post regarding transit system disruptions that may affect event participants.
- Notify the transit agency command post regarding any security incidents occurring on transit system property or vehicles.
- If spectators are likely to leave the event all at once, then determine the time of any anticipated crowd surge toward the transit system and ensure that the necessary resources and personnel are in place.
- Have communications and contingency plans in place in case of unscheduled evacuation of site.
- Be able to supply appropriate fleet resources as soon as possible in the event of an emergency.

3. Post-event analysis

Analyzing event plans after a special event is important for planning purposes. The focus of the analysis should be focused on successes and challenges. Specifically:

- Assess plan success and shortfalls with transit system personnel and resources assigned to the event in an agency After Action Review.
- Information should be solicited from multiple levels, not just management and supervision.
- Participate in any post-event After Action Reviews conducted by event planners.
- Keep all recorded documentation readily accessible in a Corrective Action Plan.

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Definitions

planned special event: A public activity, with a scheduled time and location, that may impact normal transportation system operations as a result of increased travel demand and/or reduced capacity attributed to event staging. Planned special events include sporting events, concerts, festivals and conventions occurring at permanent multiuse venues (arenas, stadiums, racetracks, fairgrounds, amphitheaters, convention centers, etc.). They also include less-frequent public events such as parades, political rallies, fireworks displays, bicycle races, sporting games, motorcycle rallies, seasonal festivals and milestone celebrations at temporary venues. The term “planned special event” is used to describe these activities because of their known locations, scheduled times of occurrence and associated operating characteristics.

Abbreviations and acronyms

AHJ authority having jurisdiction
CFR Code of Federal Regulations
ICS Incident Command System
NATSA North American Transportation Services Association
NCTR National Center for Transit Research

Summary of document changes

Document history

Document Version	Working Group Vote	Public Comment/ Technical Oversight	CEO Approval	Policy & Planning Approval	Publish Date
First published	—	—	—	—	March 13, 2008
First revision	—	—	—	—	April 1, 2014
Second revision	July 19, 2019	Sept. 13, 2019	Dec. 3, 2019	Jan. 3, 2020	Feb. 21, 2020