

safety and security checklist





Expect the worst and plan accordingly. That's the bottom line when planning for the safety and security of your attendees. While it's impossible to prepare for every emergency or natural disaster, you can devise an action plan that will ensure the safety and security of your guests in the majority of unforeseen circumstances. For guidance in preparing such a plan, consult the Safety and Security Checklist.



- Review event insurance coverage.
- Prepare action plans for various situations, including natural disasters, fires, medical emergencies, demonstrations, bomb threats and terrorist threats. Consider or incorporate the facility's existing emergency and evacuation plans.
- Is there a written emergency plan for extreme weather conditions such as hurricanes and tornadoes?
- Does the facility have any fire doors that close automatically?
- What transportation methods are available in the event attendees need to be moved away from the site?
- Know where exits are located and who to contact if an emergency arises. Make sure your exit plans include meeting and exhibit areas.
- Designate staff to enact the plans when necessary and delegate specific responsibilities.
- If providing child care for attendees, discuss the emergency plan with the provider and designate an area to bring kids.
- Give staff a copy of all action plans and designate a specific area where they can regroup in the event of an emergency.
- Communicate your plans to the facilities and other suppliers.
- Communicate your plans to the home office and establish a point of contact for staff to check in with should an emergency or natural disaster arise.
- Be aware of controversial content or speakers in order to anticipate demonstrations.
- Train staff on how to handle unregistered attendees without credentials. Ask the facility about protocol in these situations.
- For international meetings and conferences, have the phone number and address of the U.S. Embassy/Consulate readily available.
- Be aware of any security measures when preparing and shipping meeting materials outside the U.S. so that they are not unduly delayed by customs or security. Also, be aware of limitations on attendees entering the U.S. for a meeting.
- Obtain the following phone numbers and addresses and post them at the registration desk and staff office:
 - Nearest hospital for emergencies
 - Nearest walk-in clinic
 - Nearest 24-hour pharmacy
 - Fire department
 - Non-emergency police number
 - Phone number of taxi company
- Survey attendees for information about existing medical conditions and any disability requirements. Train staff to recognize problems and respond appropriately.
- Notify the facility of any attendees with disabilities or special medical needs. Be aware of facility procedures in case of emergency.
- Include space for an emergency contact name and number on the attendee registration form.
- Have you hired a security company and EMT? What specific emergency areas are they responsible for and what are they trained in?
- Are you taking attendees off site? If so, is the transportation company bonded? Do you have hold-harmless agreements for any team-building activities?



- Take staff on a tour of where security, EMT and first aid are located as well as the designated area outside the facility to meet in case of evacuation.
- Identify the nearest exits to the staff office, registration area, meeting rooms and exhibit space.
- Keep a first aid kit and emergency radio in the staff office.
- Review the locations of defibrillators with staff. Discuss protocol.
- Have a battery-operated radio, flashlights, glow sticks and supply of batteries on hand in case power is lost.
- Provide a printed list and download of attendee emergency contact information to registration and to your hotel contact. Keep this list with you at all times.
- Maintain a list of emergency phone numbers, including the facility emergency phone number, extension in the staff office and extension in the registration area.
- Provide safety tips and emergency procedures as a registration addition in attendee tote bags or in the program book, including:
 - Write your emergency contact information on the back of your name badge.
 - Do not wear your conference badge outside the meeting area.
 - Keep your luggage and personal belongings in your possession at all times.
 - Consult with the hotel concierge about reputable taxi companies or car services.
 - Always inquire about the closest and safest routes to walk or jog.
 - Ask what time the surrounding area “shuts down” and until what time transportation will be available.
 - Be alert and aware of your surroundings when outside the meeting area.
 - Ask for identification of hotel staff, if there is any question, before allowing anyone into your room.
 - Do not leave your personal belongings or laptop readily exposed in your guest room.
- Point out the nearest exits during your general session housekeeping notes.
- If a demonstration occurs, consider the following:
 - Cordon off an area for protesters. Work with police.
 - Set up a press conference to address the issues or any changes in the event schedule.
 - Brief staff on the organization’s position and procedures on handling press inquiries.
- If a bomb threat occurs, consider the following:
 - Record the time of the call, the exact words of the caller, who took the call, where it was received and who has been notified.
 - If possible, ask questions to keep the caller on the line to assist authorities in tracing the call. Ask why they are doing it, where the bomb is located and when it will go off.
 - Note background noises, if the voice is familiar, any accents or distinguishing vocal features.
 - Write down any observations for the authorities.



- How often are emergency drills conducted?
- Are hotel staff certified or trained in CPR, first aid, and the Heimlich maneuver? Ask for a list of names and contact numbers.
- Does the facility own an automatic external defibrillator and who is certified to use it?
- Inquire about possible union strikes and protests during the conference and how it might affect the attendees.
- Ask the director of security what the most prevalent incidents are in the facility and the surrounding areas.
- Are security personnel on staff or subcontracted? If they are subcontracted, is the company bonded? Do security personnel undergo background checks prior to being hired?
- Does the facility have personnel who speak languages other than English? If so, how can you contact them?
- Who is the manager on duty while on site and how do you contact him/her?
- Is there a doctor on call 24 hours?
- Does the facility require an EMT during the event? If so, what is the policy and where will he/she be located on site? What are the station's hours of operation?
- Is there an emergency lighting system and evacuation process in place?
- During power outages, do the elevators shut down automatically? Are ventilation systems turned off automatically?
- Are all exits clearly marked in hallways, guest rooms and meeting space? Do all exit doors lead directly out of the building?
- Is there a paging or telephone system that reaches all occupants simultaneously?
- What is the evacuation plan for guests with special needs? Examine the process by which impaired or disabled guests will be able to contact the front desk or security immediately.
- What procedures are in place to alert hearing-impaired guests to an emergency?
- What is the procedure if a fire alarm should sound? Is the fire department notified right away?
- Where is the primary location for guests to assemble during an evacuation?
- Ask about any ADA enhancements or exclusions that may be unique to the specific hotel or convention center.
- Confirm which hotel staff have keys and to what areas, including who carries the master keys.
- Does the hotel have the ability to do an audit on electronic door locks?
- What are the hotel's procedures for dealing with demonstrations and confrontations?
- Is security on the staff radio or do you contact them via phone or through the convention services manager?
- Is the staff trained in the service of alcohol? How often? What procedures are followed if a guest becomes intoxicated?
- If there is an elevated security status nationwide, meet with the head of security and go over the management/safety of the group. What is the evacuation policy? Is the facility a designated public shelter in an emergency? Is the facility a command post for local law enforcement?

- What is public access to the hotel and/or convention center? How is it monitored and controlled?
- What other events are going on at the same time as your function that may cause additional traffic in the building or any potential security issues?
- Can vehicles be driven into the building? If so, what are the rules? (i.e. disconnected battery, one-quarter tank of gas, etc.)
- Are some or all of the facility doors locked at night?
- Closely examine evacuation routes. Are they cluttered with tables, chairs or anything else that would impede a quick exit?
- Is access to the parking garage restricted?
- Ensure that the parking lot and pathways to the hotels are well lit at night.



- Reiterate to the front desk that all guests requesting “lost” keys should promptly be asked for identification before receiving the key and ask that employees do not speak the room number out loud to guests at any time.
- Does hotel staff show ID before entering rooms?
- What is the procedure for guests entering a room while it’s being cleaned?
- Can guests traveling alone request an escort to their room?
- Verify that all guest rooms have instructions on how to contact security or 911 directly.
- What happens if someone calls 911 from a hotel phone?
- Check guest room safes. Are they secure? Is there room for a laptop as well as other valuables? If not, is there access to a safety deposit box?
- Do windows in guest rooms open?
- Do sliding glass doors have deadbolt locks?
- What is the follow-up procedure when wake-up calls are not answered?
- Where is the nearest exit from the meeting rooms and the guest rooms? Are they lit properly? Are they illuminated if an emergency or fire alarm goes off?
- Is there a house phone on each guest room floor and in meeting space with instructions on what number to call to report an emergency?
- Are smoke detectors, sprinklers and fire extinguishers on each guest room floor? Hallways?
Meeting space?
- Are banquet chairs interlocked in theater seating?
- Are there crash bars on all doors in the meeting space?
- Examine the condition and presence of internal lighting. When do lights go on, how well lit are the hallways and exits?