

Risk Management and Security for Festivals & Events

With Peter Ashwin

What Keeps You Up At Night?

It's often that chance meetings lead to unexpected journeys and consequences; this happened to me in 2011 when I met Steve Schmader, CFEE, President and CEO of the IFEA through a mutual colleague here in Boise (Idaho). This chance meeting occurred in between my monthly trips to London, where I was providing advisory services to the Director of Security and Resilience for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

During our first meeting, I discovered that we shared some of the same core IFEA values, particularly "the sharing of experience, knowledge, creativity and best practices," and was soon persuaded to present a workshop on Risk Management at the IFEA's 56th Annual Convention & Expo in Fort Worth, Texas in 2011 in between my travels to/from London.

"What Keeps You Up At Night – An Introduction to Event Risk Management" was my first presentation to an IFEA audience. My aim was to "translate" Risk Management concepts and best practices into a format which was more practicable and relevant for any event planning team. Much of this presentation was based on my experience with working on six previous Olympic Games where we had to "...plan for anything that could disrupt the Games or pose a risk to the Olympic Family, athletes, sponsors, spectators, the general public and the Venues."

An interesting outcome for me from this presentation was that many of the IFEA convention attendees did not have risk management plans in place. Why was this? I think it was due to a number of reasons but primarily:

Preparing a Risk Management Plan (RMP) appeared to be a daunting task

which was made more challenging by the fact that international risk management standards appear to be complex and not geared towards festivals and events.

The event team did not have the experience or resources (budget for outsourcing) to develop a RMP.

There wasn't a clear understanding how risk management is an integral part of the event planning cycle.

Notwithstanding this, we should not forget that Risk Management is part of our responsibility as event organizers to provide a "Duty of Care" to our staff, volunteers, spectators, sponsors and other partners and stakeholders.

Duty of Care is both a legal obligation and social responsibility.

To follow through with my commitment to Steve and the IFEA to "share my experience," I recently presented an online Webinar for IFEA on "The Nexus Between Risk Management and Your Event Security & Safety Management Plan." For me, it was the logical next step to demonstrate how Risk Management is incorporated into an Event Security and Safety Management Plan and the over arching event operations plan.

So what's next? During the weeks following the Convention and my Webinar presentation, Nia Hovde, Vice President/Director of Marketing & Communications at IFEA, politely... and persistently, reminded me of my commitment to agreeing to write a column on Risk Management for the IFEA quarterly magazine "i.e." As the saying goes "...be careful what you wish for (or commit to)!"

Since I can no longer use the London 2012 Olympic Games as an excuse for being in "crisis management" mode and not submitting my column for publication, I hereby present the start of my column for the "i.e." magazine, "What Keeps You Up At Night." I look forward to the opportunity to share with you in future issues, a variety of topics on Risk Management and Event Security that may assist you in the delivery of successful events – both safe and secure.

Peter Ashwin is the Managing Partner for Exelar Consulting; a small consulting company specializing in master security planning, risk management and operational readiness for major events. Peter is recognized as a leader in major event security planning and implementing integration strategies to "bridge the gap" between Organizing Committees and Public Safety / Security agencies.

Peter's diverse range of skills have been developed through 13 years of major event security planning and operational management including six Olympic Games, the 2010 G8/G20 Summit (Toronto), His Holiness, the Dalai Lama visit to Idaho (2005) and 12 years of military protective security operations.

Peter has led and managed multinational project teams in seven countries including USA, Russia, Qatar, Greece, Italy, Canada and the UK.

An accomplished technical security writer, Peter has authored the security chapter of "Bid Books" for two successful bids - Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games and the Russia 2018 FIFA World Cup. Other Bids have included the Rome 2020 Olympic Games Bid, the Doha 2016 Olympic Games Bid, and the Hambantota (Sri Lanka) 2018 Commonwealth Games Bid.

As the Head of Integrated Planning (Security & Resilience, London 2012 Olympic Games), Peter was responsible for the delivery of a programme budget of £160 million across six workstreams - C3, Intelligence, Protective Security Systems, Search & Screening, Security Coordination and Logistics Security.

As a former Australian Army Special Forces officer, Peter led highly trained and specialized military personnel in support of Australian national security objectives.

Peter is based out of Boise, Idaho but he still calls Australia "home".