



IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT OF AN **EMERGENCY...**

In has been just one month since the tragic shootings at the Route 91 Harvest Festival in Las Vegas on October 1st. In the short four weeks that have followed, we, like many others in our field, have discussed and debated what occurred; we have expressed our heartfelt sympathies to all those affected by that terrible night; and we have recognized and thanked the multiple heroes who, thankfully, stepped up in the midst of the chaos...police, medical personnel, friends, strangers, hotel security staff, and more...to protect, treat and comfort those at the Festival, both during and following this horrific ordeal.

But beyond what have become almost obligatory, routine steps, I am discouraged at how quickly our industry, our governments, our media and our society, tire of a topic – even one this shocking and disturbing - and are willing to/allow us to move on, without any concrete actions or expectations that may help to minimize or prevent future such occurrences. As after other similar and far too prevalent events, our politicians and lobbying groups (such as and including the National Rifle Association – NRA) do their predictable dance of demanding change - with the other side denying the value of such change; claiming the excuse of 'not the right time' for larger, bipartisan and more focused, national and international discussions, without ever identifying those 'right times' and setting a plan in place to ensure that happens; but instead, quietly allowing the fervor to fade away into the mist of time, quickly replaced by other headlines and crisis, waiting until the next tragedy to do it all again. Remarkably, that entire dance has taken just about a month, following the largest mass shooting in the history of the United States.

Until we can find an answer to this unacceptable gridlock and lack of concern by those in elected positions (a self-inflicted conclusion, based upon historical lack of action), we must commit to ourselves, as a worldwide industry, to do whatever we can, within our own realms of control and influence, to ensure the safety of our events and audiences.

The IFEA has started a new Safety & Security / Risk Management Resources page on our web site at www.ifea.com, currently populated by our friends and partners at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Safety Set Consulting in New Zealand, Event Risk Management Solutions, LLC, and those of you who have offered to share your own resources, templates, etc. for reference by your peers (if you have additional resources to share, please send them to the attention of Nia Hovde nia@ifea.com). We have opened new dialogues with the Event Safety Alliance, who, since the terrible stage collapse at the Indiana

State Fair in 2011, have been consciously spear-heading the promotion of life safety first as a priority in the live events industry.

We continue our provision of risk management training sessions at our annual conventions, in selected cities, on-line through our IFEA Webinar Series, as part of our Event Management School (in partnership with the National Recreation & Parks Association), and within our professional certification program (CFEE – Certified Festival & Event Executive). We have, and will continue, to track and provide access to global media coverage of lessons learned from Las Vegas and other global incidents through our weekly *IFEA Event Insider*. We have added regularly reoccurring columns and topic-specific articles in our quarterly magazine, *ie: the business of international events*. And, in 2018, we are getting ready to launch a new *IFEA Safety Audited Event* program, that will help events, around the world, to ensure that they have taken all reasonable precautions to protect their attendees and stakeholders.

On your own home front, please do not let this conversation go quiet. While there are no new guidelines to prevent what occurred in Las Vegas, there are plenty of lessons learned and raised from this tragedy. Recommit your event at every level – your staff, your volunteers, your boards, your sponsors, your vendors, your technicians, et al. – to ensure a safe and memorable experience for everyone. Revisit your current risk management plans; fill in any action or communication gaps that may need filling; plan for table-top exercises to ensure that everyone knows your plan: relook at your event site through new eyes; and rethink how you can prepare your audiences – before and during your event – for any possible (even if unlikely) occurrence.

As unconventional as it might sound, think like an airline. Tell attendees before they arrive what they can and cannot bring with them; what security measures they can expect when they get there; and encourage them to arrive early to avoid any delays. Make sure your exits are clearly identified and marked. Assign all staff and trained volunteers what to do/communicate and when, in the event of any type of unexpected 'turbulence.' And, maybe start off your main events by communicating – from stage – what to do 'in the unlikely event of an emergency.' Point out the exits; tell them who they should listen and respond to; make them stop – for just a minute – that may save lives if the oxygen masks ever drop during your event. If we all did that, at every event, on a regular basis, it may, over time, take away the fear and replace it with a new assurance that our events are watching out for their safety from every angle.

Moving forward, I would rather add and repeat words of guidance, then express any more words of condolence.