U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Risk Management Division
Office of Infrastructure Protection

Stadiums and Arenas

There are more than 1,300 stadiums and arenas in the United States. They are located in every region and state; in most, if not all, major municipalities; in many smaller localities; and often on university and high school campuses. Arenas and stadiums range in size from on-campus field houses and high school football stadiums that can accommodate a few hundred people to downtown sports arenas, large indoor/outdoor stadiums, and automobile racetracks that can accommodate over 100,000 spectators. They host many types of events, including sporting events, concerts, religious gatherings, university/high school graduations, political conventions, and circuses.

Potential Indicators of Terrorist Activity

Terrorists have a wide variety of weapons and tactics available to achieve their objectives. Specific threats of most concern to stadiums and arenas include:

- Explosives (e.g., car bomb, suicide bomber)
- Arson (e.g., firebombing, using accelerants)
- Biological/chemical/radiological agents introduced into the facility
- Hostage-taking
- Indiscriminate shooting of patrons

Terrorist activity indicators are observable anomalies or incidents that may precede a terrorist attack. Indicators of an imminent attack requiring immediate action may include the following:

- Persons in crowded areas (e.g., facility common areas, food courts) wearing unusually bulky clothing that might conceal suicide explosives or automatic weapons
- Vehicles (e.g., cars, motorcycles, trucks, boats, or aircraft) illegally parked near facility buildings or near places where large numbers of people gather (the larger the vehicle, the greater the quantity of explosives that might be loaded into it)
- Vehicles approaching the facility at unusually high speeds and/or steering around barriers and traffic controls
- Unattended packages (e.g., backpacks, briefcases, boxes) that might contain explosives (packages may be left in open areas or may be hidden in trash receptacles, lockers, or similar containers)

Indicators of potential surveillance by terrorists include:

- Persons discovered with facility maps, photos, or diagrams with critical assets highlighted or notes regarding infrastructure or listing of personnel
- Persons questioning facility employees off site about practices pertaining to the facility and its operations, or an increase in personal e-mails, telephone calls, faxes, or postal mail requesting information about the facility or one of its key assets
- Facility employees using video/camera/observation equipment that is not job-related
- An increase in threats from unidentified sources by telephone, postal mail, or the e-mail system and/or an increase in reports of threats from outside known, reliable sources
- Unfamiliar cleaning crews or other contract workers with passable credentials, or crews or contract workers attempting to access unauthorized areas

Common Vulnerabilities

The following are key common vulnerabilities of stadiums and arenas:

- Large number of people entering facility for events with varying levels of inspection of the items carried in
- Little or no control or inspection of vehicles entering parking areas adjacent to the facility
- Little or no inspection of items carried in by event participants, vendors, contractors, and maintenance and janitorial personnel
- Limited security of facility (e.g., lock downs, patrols, inspections) between events
- Large number of people present at scheduled and publicly announced events, providing easy targets

Protective Measures

Protective measures include equipment, personnel, and procedures designed to protect a facility against threats and to mitigate the effects of an attack. Protective measures for stadiums and arenas include:

- **Planning and Preparedness**
  - Develop a comprehensive security plan and emergency response plan for the facility
  - Establish liaison and regular communication with local law enforcement and emergency responders
  - Conduct regular exercises with facility employees
  - Review available threat information and determine whether events should be cancelled on the basis of this information
- **Personnel**
  - Conduct background checks on all employees (more detailed checks should be conducted on those who will have access to critical assets)
  - Maintain an adequately sized, equipped, and trained security force for all events
  - Conduct continuous roving security patrols during special events; expand roving/motorized patrols to outer perimeter
- **Access Control**
  - Establish a process for controlling access and egress to the facility; including designated, monitored points of entry
  - Establish a buffer zone and perimeter around the facility and a process for controlling access
  - Define and secure controlled areas that require extra security
  - Control employee and concessionaire identification and access through use of photo identification badges
  - Formally identify gathering areas for tail-gate parties and other such gatherings in locations with natural surveillance and access; make informal areas off-limits and subject to automatic scrutiny
- **Barriers**
  - Increase the number of temporary venue barriers and place them to guide the flow of vehicles
  - Offset vehicle entrances from the direction of a vehicle's approach to force a reduction in speed
- **Communication and Notification**
  - Maintain contact numbers and checklists to follow in the event of a security-related incident
  - During events, maintain instantaneous communication capability with local, state, or federal law enforcement and emergency responders
- **Monitoring, Surveillance, Inspection**
  - Ensure that the venue has an intrusion detection system
  - Provide video surveillance systems on venue grounds
  - At the beginning and end of each event, inspect interior/exterior of facility
  - Require screening of all patrons before they are allowed to enter the facility's perimeter
  - Require screening of all employees, concessionaires, event participants, and delivery and emergency service personnel before they are allowed to enter the facility's perimeter for special events
  - Check outdoor air intakes of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems to ensure that they are protected
- **Infrastructure Interdependencies**
  - Provide 24/7 guard at utility supply points starting 24 hours before a special event until its conclusion
  - Ensure that an emergency power source is provided for critical systems
  - Ensure that dumpsters are secured and enclosed
- **Cyber Security**
  - Minimize the number of people with authorized access to computer systems
  - Increase computer security levels to maximum, if not already in place
- **Incident Response**
  - Ensure that multiple evacuation routes and rallying points are available
  - Inspect all available emergency equipment prior to any event to ensure that it will operate during crisis situations
  - Assign specific staff members the responsibility of turning off the gas, electricity, water, and alarm systems in the event of an emergency

More detailed information on stadiums and arenas is contained in the document, *Stadiums and Arenas: Potential Indicators of Terrorist Activity, Common Vulnerabilities, and Protective Measures.* Information on issues relevant to a wide range of critical infrastructures and key resources is available in the document, *Overview of Potential Indicators of Terrorist Activity, Common Vulnerabilities, and Protective Measures for Critical Infrastructures and Key Resources.* Both are available from the contacts listed below.

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