

## Planning moving people in an emergency terrorist threat situation

This guidance note has been developed by the SGSA in partnership with the National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO) to provide more specific guidance for sports grounds management in relation to the development of plans to move people in an emergency terrorist threat situation.

Currently sports grounds must be designed, maintained and operated to reduce the risk to safety arising from fire and other incidents that may create concern or panic.

Evacuation in response to a terrorist threat is not the same as evacuation due to fire or other incidents and the appropriate response may be different. The policy of simultaneous evacuation where all occupants leave the sports ground at the same time may no longer be the most appropriate response. In a fire scenario, it may be appropriate to use all available exits; in a terrorism scenario consideration should be given to directing people via alternative routes, to avoid exiting into a potentially hostile situation.

The current edition of the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (Green Guide) and Supplementary Guidance 03: Safety Management include guidance on the development of emergency evacuation from fire.

It is recommended that all sports grounds should revisit their emergency evacuation plans and upgrade or develop these plans so that they take account of the different risk situations and in particular those related to terrorist activity.

### Key points for sports grounds to consider for moving people in emergency terrorist threat situations

NaCTSO has advised that there are a number of options for emergency response during a terrorist incident, including:

- a full site evacuation;
- a phased evacuation;
- partial or zonal evacuation;
- a directional evacuation;
- an invacuation to safer (protected) areas;
- a partial invacuation;
- no action is required (a decision is made not to evacuate or invacuate);
- lockdown.



The decision on which response or combination of responses is appropriate in any particular terrorist threat situation should be guided by the best chances of survivability for all those present at the ground including spectators, athletes, staff and responders.

It is important for the safety officer to fully understand the layout and geography of the sports ground when developing plans for emergency response during a terrorist incident.

When developing the plan or checking its effectiveness, ground management should consider the following questions.

## General arrangements

The following actions are not intended to be definitive nor in order of priority, ground management should consider them as part of the planning process.

- Do the plans take account of known terrorist methodologies?
- Are the plans based on speedy decision making so that implementation is prompt and most likely to reduce casualties?
- Is it clear who is responsible for making decisions at all levels of the response?
- Are methods of recording decisions and actions including the rationale and justification detailed in the plans?
- Is there a clear chain of command in the plan with nominated deputies for all essential roles?
- Are critical operations staff, who will be responsible for closing down ground operations and continuing to manage ongoing operations, identified and aware of their responsibilities? Have these roles and responsibilities been tested and validated by exercises?
- Do the plans describe how contact will be made with police and other emergency services?
- Have the plans been drawn up following consultation with the police and other emergency services?
- Do the plans include taking opportunities to detect, deter and delay attackers? How are lifts, escalators, door locks and stairways controlled to delay attackers and clear paths for the movement of people?
- How will attackers or other threats be tracked so that responses can be appropriate to the developing situation?
- Are floor plans of the ground and plans of the wider area outside the ground available to the control room?



- What plans are in place to deal with injured people in the event of movement of the crowd?
- What plans are available to assist people with disabilities and impaired mobility in the event of movement of the crowd?
- Do Personalised Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPS) include details of movement strategies for responding to all incident types including potential terrorist activity?
- Does the safety control have access to staff lists and contact details?
- Has consideration been given to the use or non-use of fire alarms or other designated alarms or tones depending on the threat posed and to avoid uncontrolled evacuation?
- What arrangements are in place should it be necessary to move the staff from the control room to a secondary control point that take account of the different threats hazards and terrorist attack methodologies?
- Do the plans consider adjacent spaces, neighbouring premises' plans and local transport hubs?
- Are transport plans in place to ensure safe movement of athletes and staff during and after a terrorist incident?
- Ensure all safety and security staff are familiar with and have been briefed on any coded messages that may be used.

Ground management will need to consider the likelihood that a number of people will decide to undertake self-evacuation from the ground. Ground management should consider how and if this is to be managed or assisted and ensure self-evacuation does not create additional hazards and threats to others. People who have decided to self-evacuate are less likely to respond to instructions or communications.

For the purposes of this document the reader should understand that a decision has already been taken to cease the event/activity when considering the management responses below. Ground management should have a detailed plan outlining how an event/activity is interrupted suspended or cancelled.

## **Full site evacuation**

This is for situations where a full evacuation is considered necessary to empty the ground providing the best opportunity of survivability by moving people to a place of safety outside the ground.

- Are the circumstances under which a full evacuation might be called described within the plan?
- Is it clear within the plan how long the full evacuation will take and how that time might impact on different terrorist attack / major incident scenarios?
- Is consideration given to the use of lifts or escalators in non-fire situations?



- If a full evacuation is called where will people be directed once they have left the ground, including, if established, triage areas, casualty reception areas etc?
- Do the plans consider the use of assembly points outside the ground or abandonment and dispersal?
- What contact will be made with transport providers in the event of a full evacuation?
- What transport provision can be provided at short notice to assist the dispersal?

## Phased evacuation and partial (zonal) evacuation

This may be used to give priority to those people closest to or most at risk from the threat. It may also be used to prevent overcrowding on evacuation routes or areas outside the ground if, for example, roads that are normally used have been closed or are being used for emergency vehicle access. By its nature it is a dynamic operation subject to continual risk assessment and decision making, it is recommended that all decisions taken are recorded and logged.

- Are the circumstances under which a phased or partial evacuation might be appropriate described within the plan?
- Do the plans identify appropriate evacuation routes for each zone within the ground and are there contingencies for each route should it be out of use due to the threat or if it is necessary to close one?
- Has consideration been given to the naming or designation of the different zones within the ground and is this reflected in any signage?
- Are the capacities of the different zones or sections of the ground noted within the plans?
- Are steward positions and responsibilities described within the plan?
- Are pre-scripted messages available for a phased or partial evacuation?
- What arrangements are in place for reservoir areas outside the ground or for dispersal?
- Has consideration been given to actions required if large numbers of spectators in the other zones start to self-evacuate?

## Directional evacuation

This is where people are directed to specific exits and routes to avoid an area at risk This may increase evacuation time but reduce risk and improve survivability.



When considering this action ground management must have an understanding of the capacities of those areas through which and to which people may be moved in order to prevent a potentially more hazardous situation from that they are moving away from.

- Are the circumstances under which a directional evacuation might be called described within the plan?
- Are all alternative routes identified and evacuation times, via those routes known? Are there contingencies for each route should it be out of use due to the threat or if it is necessary to close one?
- Have the areas and dispersal options from the end of the routes been noted within the plans.
- Have methods of communication been considered and are coded messages available to assist with directional evacuation?
- Are steward positions and responsibilities in the event of a directional evacuation stated within the plan?
- Are the capacities of each exit and at what rate people can be directed through the exits known?

## **Invacuation or partial invacuation**

Invacuation is the movement of people within the perimeter ground, sometimes to protected spaces, and should be considered when the threat is either outside the ground and so prevents a safe egress or the exact nature of a threat is unknown and people may otherwise pass by or into an area of risk.

- Are the circumstances under which a full or partial invacuation might be called described within the plan?
- Does the plan identify areas of safety within the ground, including protected areas?
- Does the plan consider whether invacuation is advisable or possible in full capacity situations?
- Have the playing or competition area and/or internal concourses been considered as a location for invacuation?
- Is the capacity of the potential areas of safety known and recorded in the plans?
- If areas might be used for some time, are toilets and water available within the area and is there somewhere for people to sit?
- Are pre-scripted PA or radio announcements available should this option be considered?
- Have coded messages been considered rather than using named places?



- Are steward positions and responsibilities in the event of an invacuation stated within the plan?
- Has the ground identified areas which would be most at risk from potential vehicle or lone shooter attack? These areas should be highlighted on the plans and every effort made to keep them clear.
- How will exit gates be managed? See SGSA note on Lockdown [www.sgsa.org.uk](http://www.sgsa.org.uk).

## Decision not to evacuate or invacuate

It might be most appropriate not to evacuate or invacuate when it is judged safest for people to remain where they are. The assessment of the threat might be that it is a hoax or the incident might be outside the ground and remaining in place is deemed the safest option.

- Are the circumstances under which requiring people to remain without evacuation or invacuation might be appropriate described within the plan?
- Is consideration given to the continuation or suspension of activity on the field of play or cancellation of the event?
- Is consideration given to the catering facilities remaining open or closing?
- Are messages of reassurance prepared and arrangements in place to make them available by various methods of transmission?
- Are steward positions and responsibilities in these circumstances stated within the plan?

## Lockdown

This is where, because of an internal or external threat, the greatest chances of survivability are for the ground to be locked down and people not to be permitted to leave or enter the ground or particular sections therein. Separate SGSA guidance on lockdowns in a terrorist threat situation is available at [www.sgsa.org.uk](http://www.sgsa.org.uk)

## Communication

- Is there a clear communication strategy that can be implemented by all levels of the safety management team (i.e. control room and front-line staff) to inform all those involved of the reasons for the invacuation / evacuation / lockdown and any actions they must take?
- What arrangements are described within the communication plan for use of sports ground personal radios and other means of communication (PA, big screens, social media, apps, texting etc) in the event of a movement of people being considered?



- How are staff to be alerted that an incident is under way?
- Do the plans make provision for the control room to have telephone numbers and other contact details of senior staff members or event organisers?
- Are pre-scripted messages available to assist with all response options?
- What arrangements are in place to communicate with emergency services?
- What arrangements are in place to communicate with neighbouring premises?

In the event of a potential terrorist attack or incident at a sports ground, it is the responsibility of the venue safety officer, supported where necessary by a crisis management team, to act quickly and effectively to reduce the risk of casualties.

The above points have been designed to assist the decision-making process.

[More information about NaCTSO is available on the Protect UK website.](#)

Sports grounds management should visit Protect UK to obtain the most current information and guidance to help prepare their match / event day plans.