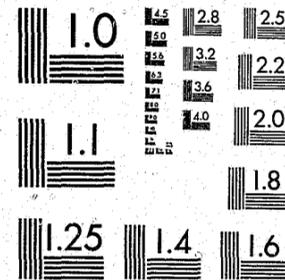


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THE COVER: No elephant crossing! A Salt Lake City officer does his duty, citing the transgressing trunks as Orville Wilson, a crime laboratory photographer, captures the moment.

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William H. Webster, Director

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Operations

Stadium Security

A Modern Day Approach to Crowd Control

By JOE SHIRLEY

Director
Stadium Operations and Security
Atlanta Braves
Atlanta, Ga.

In the last few years, violence in major league stadiums has become a major concern of those working in stadium operations. Stadiums house professional sports, religious crusades, and rock concerts, with up to 80,000 people in attendance. In the 1960's, individuals dealing with stadium security began to realize that they were facing a whole new ballgame in the area of crowd control.

Reported incidents of stadium violence occurring in recent years include:

- *11 killed in a panic at rock concert
- *Security guard thrown head first over a rail by football fans
- *Riot in football stadium after rock group failed to perform in the rain—many policemen injured
- *Fan runs onto playing field with knife in hand
- *High school football game interrupted by sniper fire—three wounded
- *Fans storm stage at concert causing injuries to police and security personnel
- *600 people injured at stadium concert
- *Professional athletes hit by hard objects thrown from stands

*Baseball game canceled because of damage to playing field from concert held the previous week

*Thousands of fans invade baseball playing field causing game to be forfeited when order could not be restored

Police files in almost every city are filled with incidents of violence in stadiums. There have been thousands of fights between fans, some resulting in deaths. This type of violence is not unique to the United States; however, we appear to be far ahead of many countries in our approach to crowd control.

An article appearing in a Soviet newspaper reported on a Moscow scientific worker who was so drunk when he left a football game that upon seeing a trolley bus without a crew, he drove it home. The newspaper cited the incident as an example of deterioration in the behavior of Soviet sports fans. The newspaper said drunkenness, hooliganism, ticket speculation, foul language, and women pestering sports stars to marry them were creeping into the sports scene.

In Tel Aviv, an Israeli soccer player was stabbed to death when rioting fans stormed the field near the end of a soccer match.

In London, a soccer game was delayed for 19 minutes when fighting broke out and hundreds of fans spilled onto the field. By the end of the day, 38 persons had been arrested, another 132 ejected from the stadium, and 102 injured.

Most important in stadium security is liaison with the local, State, and Federal law enforcement agencies. Personnel of the Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium emphasize total support of police assigned to stadium crowd control. It is essential that an in-house security force work hand-in-hand with local police, who should be defended in any civil liability case. In addition, police officers who have done outstanding work are presented a plaque or certificate of appreciation during an awards program. Motivation of the police officer can be enhanced by support and recognition.



Joe Shirley



Charles Sanders
Vice President and Business Manager
of Atlanta Braves



Maj. Joe Amos
Atlanta Bureau of Police Services

In-House Security Role

The Stadium Operations and Security Department has the responsibility of operating the stadium for all events in the Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium. This in-house security force consists of 30 to 40 uniformed security officers, since it is our experience that a uniformed guard is far more effective than a security officer in a blazer and slacks. More than one-half of the security officers carry firearms and all carry mace and night sticks. For the most part, the in-house security officers work fixed posts. They are assigned to ramps going to restricted areas, at gates, to prevent unauthorized entry into the stadium and to confiscate cans and bottles, and at money vaults and clubhouses. In-house security personnel also prevent fans from going onto the field during games—an officer is assigned to each team dugout—and secure the stadium and all gates at the end of an event. They also handle lost children, keep fans away from the players as they exit the stadium, and prevent gate-crashers. Security officers are also sometimes involved in physical confrontations with fans who are fighting. It is best to get the situation under control and turn it over to the police when they arrive on the scene.

It is essential that security officers working in crowds receive many hours of training. Our officers are trained by certified police instructors, with emphasis placed on the mechanics of arrest, self-defense, and firearms training. Like police officers assigned to the stadium, security officers are also recognized at an awards program and receive other benefits to ensure motivation for continued effectiveness.

Stadium Security

The following security considerations are important when operating a major league stadium:

- 1) Flow of traffic to parking lots and protection of fans in parking lots;
- 2) Protection of VIP's attending events in the stadium;
- 3) Bomb threat searches and evacuation;
- 4) Threats against ballplayers;
- 5) Emergency evacuation of fans;
- 6) Key control;
- 7) Unauthorized entry to clubhouses;
- 8) Demonstrators and pickets;
- 9) Confiscation of cans and bottles at the gates;
- 10) On-field intrusion of fans;

- 11) Protection of umpires;
- 12) Stopping fights in the stands;
- 13) Lost and found;
- 14) Protection from terrorist group activity;
- 15) Medical aid.

Crowd Control Techniques

In every stadium around the country there are times when crowd control can be a problem. Special crowd management strategies may be required when items are given away free or when tickets to popular events are sold. There have been instances when individuals have been crushed against fixed barriers when persons in the rear pushed to the front.

To control a crowd trying to obtain items being given away, use rope or saw horses to create a buffer zone directly in front of the distribution point, extending down each end, completely closing off the area. Six or eight entrances should be opened where lines form and are kept orderly by police or security. As the fans purchase their tickets or receive a free item, they should exit at each end. Exits should also be watched by security or police. If the buffer zone becomes crowded, persons should not be permitted to enter until it clears.



During sporting events, illuminated signs instruct fans to vacate the field.



When the Atlanta Falcons made it into the playoffs in 1978, two to three thousands fans stormed the ticket windows to purchase tickets. To gain control, approximately 20 police officers used a bull horn, 100 feet of heavy rope, and stands to form a wedge and cut through the crowd, creating a buffer zone with the rope and stands. Police officers positioned themselves behind the rope and did not allow anyone inside the buffer zone until the crowd was orderly. At that point, lines were formed and no other problems occurred.

Another helpful technique in crowd control is to video tape crowd activity. A camera with a zoom lens can be used to tape disturbances in crowds. This is especially helpful when police officers eject resisting offenders. When the offenders are sober and in court, their story usually differs from what actually happened. A tape of the incident can be a reliable record when presented in court, as well as solid protection from civil liability.

The best technique to use when handling hostile individuals in crowds is to arrest anyone breaking the law. To maintain order, individuals cannot be permitted to unite against the police.

Police techniques used in crowd control are varied, but may include:

- 1) Motorized golf carts to patrol the parking lots;
- 2) Use of mounted patrols and helicopters;
- 3) Decoy squads in and around the stadium;
- 4) Involvement with the community;
- 5) Strict enforcement of city ordinances; and
- 6) A firm policy of bringing charges against all those who break the law.

Other useful strategies for crowd control include:

1) High visibility and numbers. In any facility that has 50 to 100 thousand fans for sporting events, it is essential that you have a large, very visible security force. A show of force can be most effective if problems are anticipated;

2) In addition to video taping, it is wise to also make photographs of the crowd where there is an unruly atmosphere;

3) Have adequate signs. It is amazing how large, prominent signs can help control crowds;

4) Use PA announcements to influence crowds;

5) In the event of a rock concert, it is vital that the power supply have adequate protection and ample backup; and

6) The stage for outdoor concerts must be almost indestructible. Everything must be done so the show can continue no matter what adverse conditions occur.

Gate Security

Gate security is one of the most important areas of stadium security. The gates have to be totally controlled when spectators are entering and have to be opened fully for exit. There must always be unlocked gates that can be opened on short notice in the event of an emergency.

Control of the gates does not necessarily come into play only on the day of the event. If you have a rock concert, you can expect arrivals up to 24 hours in advance. Some early arrivals will camp out on the property, build fires, and look for weak points to gain entry into the stadium.

An important factor to consider in gate security is when to open. If you open early, you have the added cost of extra staff and clean-up and increased vandalism. If you hold the gates closed too long, there is the possibility of a stampede with persons being injured or killed. Even if you open the gates 4 hours prior to the event, there will still be a frantic rush to get in.

Another important part of gate security is confiscation of cans and bottles. There should be no event in a modern stadium where fans are allowed to bring in cans or bottles. It is always helpful to have a "no cans and bottles" policy printed on the tickets and in any newspaper ads. Other techniques for good gate security are:

1) Have a security officer assigned to each gate;

2) Watch for any cash transactions at gates;

3) Watch for adults entering on a child's ticket;

4) Have adequate containers for confiscation of cans and bottles; and

5) Make sure adequate gates are open through which spectators may exit.

Emergency Evacuation

It is essential to have a well-planned emergency evacuation plan in a stadium security program. A panic situation where spectators are not able to exit could be a tragic experience. All modern stadiums are designed with adequate exits that must be open and unrestricted. Most stadiums were designed with exits for athletic competition, not for festival-type field seating that is seen at rock concerts. Conducting an emergency evacuation is made extremely difficult when there are 20,000 spectators on a playing field, plus occupancy of all main seating areas. The following steps would be taken during such evacuation of the Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium:

1) Announcement over our PA system for doctor no. 5,000 to report to customer service. This announcement alerts all operations personnel that we are going to evacuate;

2) Remove turnstiles from all gates so fans will not encounter any obstructions;

3) Fully open all gates;

4) Announce to fans that we have to evacuate the stadium and they should exit at the nearest gate in an orderly manner. We request that they take all personal items such as brief cases, overcoats, and packages; and

5) All players and umpires should report to the center of the playing field and remain there. (This could change depending on the type of evacuation.)

Emergency lighting could be critical in a major nighttime disaster. On some occasions there is little or no advance warning for evacuation. Well-rehearsed, trained personnel are essential in these instances.

Medical Program

The medical program at Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium is a part of the Stadium Operations and Security Department. With crowds exceeding 60,000, emergency medical services comparable to a city of that size must be provided. There should be a minimum medical staff of one R.N., one M.D., and two paramedics. The staff increases as the anticipated crowd increases. A policy of rendering only emergency first aid is desirable. You should maintain the same emergency equipment for heart attack victims as a hospital emergency room.

There are several areas of importance in the operation of a stadium medical program including:

1) Good communications should exist. Due to the size of most major league stadiums, it is essential that there is an adequate number of walkie-

talkies so that when a person is injured, no more than 2 minutes elapse before help is on the way;

2) It is important to have a stadium ambulance in good working order. A stadium ambulance is a golf cart equipped with the necessary emergency equipment and engineered to accommodate a stretcher;

3) Each person receiving emergency first aid should, if at all possible, complete a report with all information regarding the injury; and

4) All R.N.'s and paramedics should receive annual cardiopulmonary resuscitation certification.

Terrorism

A stadium full of people could be a prime area for assassinations, kidnappings, taking of hostages, bombings, armed attacks, or extortions. Where, other than stadiums, could a terrorist group find such a concentration of people? You must have liaison with local authorities and the FBI to advise on any potential terrorist activities. You must be constantly aware of terrorism as more terrorists acts will probably occur in this country and some possibly in stadiums.

Conclusion

All crowds are potentially violent. It is possible for a group of law-abiding citizens to turn into a rock-throwing abusive mob. All it takes is a leader, a common enemy, and the anonymity of the group. Leaders in a crowd, as they try to incite others, sometimes appear as if they have specialized training in arousing crowds to violence. It is incredible how a person will go along with a leader who is shouting and inciting a large group of people. An otherwise law-abiding citizen experiences the safety of anonymity in a crowd. That feeling of anonymity can be removed by breaking up the crowd, by using a camera, and by shouting explicit orders while pointing at a specific individual. A properly selected and trained staff will insure a "winning season" for a stadium security staff. **FBI**

END