Crowd Surge Tabletop Exercise

Situation Manual

[Insert Date]

**\*[Insert Caveat]\***

This Situation Manual (SitMan) provides exercise participants with all necessary tools for their roles in the exercise. Some exercise material is intended for the exclusive use of exercise planners, facilitators, and evaluators, but players may view other materials that are necessary to their performance. All exercise participants may view the SitMan.

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# Exercise Agenda

| Start Time | End Time | Activity |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 8:00 a.m. | 8:30 a.m. | Welcome and Introductions |
| 8:30 a.m. | 9:15 a.m. | Module One: Pre-Incident Information Sharing |
| 9:15 a.m. | 10:00 a.m. | Module Two: Incident Response |
| 10:00 a.m. | 10:15 a.m. | Break |
| 10:15 a.m. | 11:00 a.m. | Module Three: Incident Recovery |
| 11:00 a.m. | 11:30 a.m. | Hot Wash / Closing Remarks |

*\*All times are approximate*

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# Exercise Overview

| **Exercise Name** | Crowd Surge Tabletop Exercise (TTX) |
| --- | --- |
| **Exercise Dates** | [Indicate the start and end dates of the exercise] |
| **Scope** | This exercise is a TTX planned for [insert exercise duration] and will focus on response to and recovery from a crowd surge incident.  This exercise was developed using materials created by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) for a CISA Tabletop Exercise Package (CTEP). |
| **Mission Area(s)** | Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, Recovery [Select appropriate Mission Area(s)] |
| **Capabilities** | * Community Resilience * Intelligence and Information Sharing * On-Scene Security, Protection, and Law Enforcement * Operational Coordination * Operational Communication * Physical Protective Measures * Planning * Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) * Public Information and Warning |
| **Objectives** | 1. Review intelligence and information sharing capabilities between public and private sector entities before and during an incident. 2. Examine operational coordination and response protocols with private sector personnel, law enforcement, and EMS personnel during a crowd surge incident with a focus on mass casualty incident (MCI) and public messaging procedures. 3. Discuss plans, policies, and procedures to ensure continuity of operations and business continuity. 4. [Insert additional objectives] |
| **Threat or Hazard** | Crowd Surge |
| **Scenario** | An interactive, discussion-based exercise focused on a crowd surge at a performance venue. The scenario consists of three modules: Pre-Incident Information Sharing, Incident Response, and Short-Term Recovery. |

| **Sponsor** | [Insert the name of the sponsor organization, as well as any grant programs being used, if applicable] |
| --- | --- |
| **Participating Organizations** | [Please see Appendix A.] |
| **Point of Contact** | [Insert the name, title, agency, address, phone number, and email address of the primary exercise point of contact (POC) (e.g., exercise director or exercise sponsor).] |

# General Information

## Exercise Objectives and Capabilities

The exercise objectives in Table 1 describe the expected outcomes for the exercise. The objectives are linked to capabilities, which are the means to accomplish a mission, function, or objective based on the performance of related tasks, under specified conditions, to target levels of performance. The objectives and aligned capabilities are guided by senior leaders and selected by the Exercise Planning Team (EPT).

| **Exercise Objectives** | **Capability** |
| --- | --- |
| Review intelligence and information sharing capabilities between public and private sector entities before and during an incident. | * Intelligence and Information Sharing * Planning * Public Information and Warning |
| Examine operational coordination and response protocols with private sector personnel, law enforcement, and EMS personnel during a crowd surge incident with a focus on MCI and public messaging procedures. | * Intelligence and Information Sharing * On-Scene Security, Protection, and Law Enforcement * Operational Communication * Operational Coordination * Planning * Physical Protective Measures * Public Health, Healthcare, and EMS |
| Discuss plans, policies, and procedures to ensure continuity of operations and business continuity. | * Community Resilience * Planning |
| [Insert additional objective] | * [Insert capability aligned to each objective] |

Table 1. Exercise Objectives and Associated Capabilities

## Participant Roles and Responsibilities

The term *participant* encompasses many groups of people, not just those playing in the exercise. Groups of participants involved in the exercise, and their respective roles and responsibilities, are as follows:

* **Players** have an active role in discussing or performing their regular roles and responsibilities during the exercise. Players discuss or initiate actions in response to the simulated emergency.
* **Observers** do not directly participate in the exercise. However, they may support the development of player responses to the situation during the discussion by asking relevant questions or providing subject matter expertise.
* **Facilitators** provide situation updates and moderate the discussion. They also provide additional information or resolve questions as required. Key EPT members also may assist with facilitation as subject matter experts (SMEs) during the exercise.
* **Moderators** are responsible for admitting and signing in all participants to the virtual exercise, monitoring the chat area for questions and / or issues, and controlling participant audio.
* **Data Collectors** are assigned to observe and document the discussion during the exercise, participate in data analysis, and assist with drafting the After-Action Report (AAR).

## Exercise Structure

This exercise will be a discussion-based, facilitated exercise. Players will participate in the following three modules:

* Module One: Pre-Incident Information Sharing
* Module Two: Incident Response
* Module Three: Short-Term Recovery

Each module begins with an update that summarizes key events occurring within that time period. After the updates, participants review the situation and engage in discussions of appropriate prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery issues.

## Exercise Guidelines

* This exercise will be held in an open, no-fault environment wherein capabilities, plans, systems, and processes will be evaluated. Varying viewpoints, even disagreements, are expected.
* Respond to the scenario using your knowledge of current plans and capabilities (i.e., you may use only existing assets) and insights derived from your training.
* Decisions are not precedent setting and may not reflect your jurisdiction’s / organization’s final position on a given issue. This exercise is an opportunity to discuss and present multiple options and possible solutions.
* Issue identification is not as valuable as suggestions and recommended actions that could improve prevention, mitigation, response, and recovery efforts. Problem-solving efforts should be the focus.
* The assumption is that the exercise scenario is plausible, and events occur as they are presented. All players will receive information at the same time.

## Exercise Evaluation

Evaluation of the exercise is based on the exercise objectives and aligned core capabilities. Players will be asked to complete a participant feedback form. These documents, coupled with facilitator observations and evaluator notes, will be used to evaluate the exercise and then be compiled into the AAR / Improvement Plan (IP).

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# Module One: Pre-Incident Information Sharing

## Scenario

## [Insert location]

### [Insert Month, Day, Year]

The [insert venue name] is preparing to host a large event in several weeks, featuring performances by prominent artists as part of a major tour. Attendance for this event is expected to be greater than normal, as several thousand fans from the area and nearby cities will be attending. Ticket sales and fan interest on social media predict a near sold-out show.

[Insert venue name] leadership has contracted a third-party security company to provide crowd control and venue security support for the event.

## Discussion Questions

1. How does your organization prepare for near- or at-capacity events?
2. What are your organization’s main priorities in advance of an event?
3. What factors influence additional resource consideration?
4. How would your organization rely on third-party security contractors for venue security?
   1. How does your organization vet potential security contracting agencies?
   2. Can the third-party security contractor provide additional personnel in a timely or immediate manner? If not, what procedures exist to ensure enough personnel can quickly respond in the event of an incident?
   3. What are third party security personnel’s use of force rules?
5. What policies or procedures have been made to involve law enforcement and EMS at the venue?
   1. Are law enforcement and medical services on standby at the venue or an “as needed / as available” basis?
   2. Are surrounding jurisdictions prepared and willing to assist in an emergency if needed? Are mutual aid agreements already established?
6. How are law enforcement agencies notified of events?
   1. Who oversees this information sharing?
7. Given the attendance projections, what standard protective measures would your organization use for venue security in advance of an event of this size?
8. How does your organization receive or collect information pertaining to potential security concerns?
   1. How is this information prioritized?
   2. How is the information communicated?
   3. With whom is this information shared?
9. Does your organization maintain contact with other venues or performers regarding security and threats?

## Scenario Update

## [Insert location]

### [Insert Month, Day, Year]

As the event date approaches, news articles about performances on this tour begin to circulate on national media. The performers in these shows appear to encourage and instigate rowdy crowd behavior, and other venues have suffered damage and minor injuries among security staff and attendees as a result. Despite facing criticism in the media for their actions, the performers are adamant they have done nothing wrong. As a result of the controversy surrounding the tour, ticket sales have rapidly increased for the upcoming event at [insert venue name].

## Discussion Questions

1. How does your organization distribute tickets and control potential attendee numbers?
2. How does your organization vet potential entertainers for past behavioral problems?
   1. What considerations are weighed when approving or denying potential entertainers?
   2. Would your organization consider cancelling upcoming events because of risks associated with entertainer behavior and venue security?
3. What are your organization’s main priorities prior to the event?
   1. Given the credible estimates for maximum-capacity attendance, what changes would your organization implement? When would you implement them?
   2. What timeframe is required for a third-party security contractor to guarantee enough staff for the event?
      1. What options are available if the security contractor backs out or cannot provide the staff?
4. What training does your organization provide to security staff? If using a third-party security agency, what training do you require of them?
   1. Does this training include crowd control, first aid, and response to other potential threats?
   2. What staff, other than security, are given this training?
   3. How often is training conducted and renewed?
5. What information do law enforcement or local first responding agencies receive in advance of large-scale events?
   1. Who oversees this information sharing?
6. What would the law enforcement posture be for this event?
   1. How many law enforcement personnel would your organization request for an event of this size?
7. How would preemptive security posturing change based on information about venue attendance or performer behavior?
8. How will attendees be informed of any security changes prior to the beginning of the event?
   1. Who oversees this information sharing?
   2. How would this information be shared?
   3. Would this information be shared in languages other than English?
9. Does your organization engage in any social media monitoring for potential threats prior to events?
   1. With whom is this information shared?
   2. Who is responsible for compiling and sharing this information?
   3. At what point would law enforcement begin vetting credible threats?
10. How are local businesses or vendors integrated into information sharing procedures between the venue and law enforcement or security?

# Module Two: Incident Response

## Scenario

### [Insert Month, Day, Year]: [Insert time]

It is the night of the performance and huge crowds of spectators and attendees arrive at [insert venue name] for the event. The attendance projections were accurate, and the venue is at maximum capacity. However, more attendees are arriving and trying to buy tickets or attempting to sneak in. Despite advanced messaging to fans saying the show was sold out, a large and growing crowd is gathering at the ticket windows. Due to the significant interest in the show, many counterfeit tickets have been sold and circulated, resulting in a significantly higher presence than usual at the venue. Ticketing agents are informing the latecomers that the performance is sold out.

As soon as the event is underway, the energy and demeanor of the crowd is palpable. Front row security is having minor issues with crowding at the stage, but no incidents are being reported. The at-capacity-and-growing attendance coupled with the controversy surrounding the performers makes it evident that the crowd expects direction from the performers.

Inside the venue, movement is difficult. Attendees are crowded together attempting to get closer to the main stage. As the performers take the stage, conditions at the front of the crowd-holding area worsen, and people have continued to push past security into the standing-room section beyond the regulated capacity.

## Discussion Questions

1. What are your organization’s main priorities as the crowd grows?
2. What security posturing would be initiated for an event of this size?
   1. How many security personnel would be present?
   2. How would they be positioned throughout the venue?
3. Does your organization have defined emergency action plans (EAPs) for crowd control incidents?
   1. How often are these plans exercised or reviewed?
   2. To what extent does the local fire marshal or code enforcement entity monitor venue capacity?
   3. What action(s) is / are taken for over-capacity issues? When would this happen?
   4. How would your venue staff assist attendees with access or functional needs?
   5. How would your staff take very important people (VIPs) into consideration?
4. How would venue staff coordinate information sharing with the entertainers and their staff?
5. Does your venue have on-scene medical staff?
   1. How many medical personnel would be on-scene for an event of this size?
   2. Are security personnel and medical staff trained together on incident response?
   3. What information sharing tools does your organization use between medical and security staff?
6. What would lead your organization to consider pausing or canceling an event as it is underway?
   1. Who is responsible for making this decision?
   2. What factors would influence this decision?
   3. How would this decision be shared with performers or attendees?
7. How would information be disseminated to attendees?
   1. Who would oversee this information?
   2. How would this information be disseminated?
   3. Would this information be sent in languages other than English?

## Scenario Update

### [Insert Month, Day, Year]: [Insert time]

Between the tight conditions, the momentum of the crowd, and the encouragement of the performers, concert attendees knock down barricades separating the crowd from the stage. Security, unable to handle the press of the crowd, retreat to safety. In an attempt to get closer to the artist, attendees begin rushing the stage resulting in a crowd surge and crushing people standing near the front of the crowd. Attendees ignore all attempts from the security staff to control the scene.

Security staff are alerted to injured people near the front of the stage who can’t move away because of the congestion of people. The performers, who can see the actions of the crowd but cannot tell the extent of the danger, are not taking action to stop or calm the crowd. Instead, the performers increase the tempo of the performance and incite the audience to continue its behavior.

## Discussion Questions

1. What are on-scene security personnel’s immediate priorities in this incident?
2. Who would be responding initially, and who else would be called in to respond?
   1. How quickly could that backup response come in?
   2. Are there barriers that would prevent law enforcement or other outside response agencies from entering the facility?
3. What methods exist for attendees to contact venue security during an event?
   1. How are attendees made aware of this capability?
4. What actions would be taken to regain control of the crowd?
   1. What plans and procedures exist for venue sound technicians to take control of the situation?
5. What primary actions would your organization and staff take once informed of injuries in the crowd?
   1. Which staff would this information be shared with?
   2. Are local healthcare and medical service providers coordinated in advance? Who would notify them in the event of an MCI?
6. At what point does your organization consider an incident an MCI?
   1. How does this determination affect incident response procedures?
7. At what point would security staff call first responders for assistance?
   1. Who would oversee contacting law enforcement or EMS agencies?
   2. How soon could first responders be on-site to assist?
8. Does your organization have a predetermined incident command (IC) center where operational and security decisions can be made and disseminated to staff?
   1. What personnel are assigned to the IC, and who is in charge?
   2. Is the command center operational for all events or stood up only in emergencies?
   3. Does the command center have access to cameras to monitor the venue? If not, how is information relayed to the IC?
   4. How is law enforcement and medical staff integrated into the command center?
   5. Have staging areas for responding agencies been established?
9. How will your staff facilitate an evacuation of the venue?
   1. How is this information relayed to attendees?
   2. Are alternate routes identified for evacuation?
   3. Do assembly areas have appropriate lighting, access, and safety features (e.g., curbs, fencing, jersey walls, etc.) highly visible and accessible under all conditions?
10. Will any state or federal organization be contacted at this point to aid in response?
11. Given the enormity of the incident, what will the impact on the surrounding area / jurisdiction be?
    1. If law enforcement agencies from the surrounding area are assisting with crowd control and injuries, what resources are available to handle calls for service outside the venue?
12. Does your organization have dedicated public information officers (PIOs) or staff in charge of public messaging?
    1. Who oversees this messaging?
    2. Does your public information staff have pre-recorded messages to disseminate for an event like this? Does this dissemination include social media platforms?
    3. How will information dissemination be coordinated with first responders and entertainer staff?
    4. How would your public information staff respond to disinformation and rumors online?

# Module Three: Short-Term Recovery

## Scenario

### [Insert Month, Day, Year]: [Insert Incident Time + 2 Hours]

It has been 2 hours since the initial report of injuries near the stage. The venue has been evacuated, but the crowd is frazzled and disoriented and many people are still wandering the area in search of friends and family members. Some spectators are demanding to speak to venue staff, unaware of why they were evacuated and angered by the event’s cancelation. Others are hurt or in shock from being trampled or squeezed into the crowd and are waiting for medical attention.

Social media is abuzz with pictures and videos of the event and rumors are rampant, throwing accusations at the venue, security staff, and performers for responsibility for the situation. Media is reporting based on the social media posts, and many people are calling the ticketing office and law enforcement looking for information about the incident and the status of loved ones who were at the event.

## Discussion Questions

1. What are your organization’s immediate priorities post-incident?
2. Does your organization have a continuity of operations plan? If so, does it include a crisis communications plan?
3. What communication takes place between [insert venue name] officials and first responders after the incident?
   1. What other agencies / organizations do you need to contact at this point?
4. What messaging would your organization send out to the attendees and the public about the situation?
   1. Who is responsible for disseminating this information?
   2. How quickly can this information be disseminated?
5. Do you have pre-identified reunification centers for employees and attendees?
6. If so, how have you pre-communicated information about accessing the reunification center to employees and other applicable stakeholders (e.g., through employee orientations or the organization’s website)?
7. With whom would you be coordinating to activate the reunification center?
8. Who is responsible for conducting patient triage?
   1. Do your plans include procedures for communicating with local hospitals in case of an emergency?
9. What does your organization consider an MCI?
   1. Would this type of incident be considered an MCI?
10. How would your organization handle incoming requests for information over the phone from concerned family members and news agencies?
    1. What about requests coming through various social media sources?
11. How does this incident affect other venues? Who is responsible for communicating with nearby or similar venues in the region?

## Scenario Update

### [Insert Month, Day, Year + 24 Hours]

It has been 24 hours since the initial crowd surge and injuries at [insert venue name]. There is some structural damage to the venue, and media is calling non-stop looking for information about how the incident unfolded and why it reached the level it did.

Social media has been flooded with pictures and videos of the previous day’s incident. Many users across popular platforms are sharing and responding to the posts. Misinformation runs rampant as internet influencers make dubious claims about venue leadership and the timeline of events.

The performers and their representatives, although expressing their condolences to and concern for the victims, have placed the responsibility for the chaos on the shoulders of the venue and its management.

## Discussion Questions

1. What ongoing mental health services are available for employees, attendees, and responders?
   1. How would your organization communicate available services?
2. How will your organization maintain social media posturing?
   1. How will your organization ensure public messaging in social media is coordinated and consistent with other official statements?
   2. How will your organization address social media posting by employees?
   3. Do you have dedicated social media teams to respond to criticism and disinformation?
3. How will your organization work to assess property damage to the venue?
   1. Does your organization have funds set aside for large-scale structural repairs?
4. How will venue staff coordinate and cooperate with law enforcement during their investigation?
   1. Who oversees this coordination?
   2. Will security assets, like camera recordings, be made available to law enforcement?
5. How will your organization prepare for potential large-scale litigation?
   1. How soon will legal entities be contacted to prepare for lawsuits?
6. Will your organization conduct an independent investigation because of this incident?
   1. What resources or information will be necessary to do this?

## Scenario Update

### [Insert Month, Day, Year + Two Weeks]

Two weeks after the incident, there have been [insert number] reported deaths and [insert number] injuries resulting from the crowd’s behavior and stampede. Families of those who died, as well as several survivors, have initiated lawsuits against the venue for what they view as complacence in the relaxed security environment which allowed the incident to occur.

Some performers who have heard about the event have taken to social media, stating that they refuse to play at [insert venue] until a full investigation of the incident takes place.

## Discussion Questions

1. How will your organization work to recover their public image and establish good will to all parties?
2. How long would the venue be closed for repairs before being re-opened for operation?
3. How is your organization prepared to comply with state or federal investigations into the incident?
4. How does your organization plan to manage continued large-scale media attention and scrutiny post-incident?
5. How will your organization return attendees’ personal belongings left at the venue post-incident?
   1. Where will this take place?
   2. Who is responsible for this reunification process?
6. Will state or federal agencies or resources be used in recovery operations?
7. What other business continuity factors need to be considered post-incident?

# Appendix A: Exercise Participants

| **Participating Private Sector Organizations** |
| --- |
| [Insert private sector participants] |
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|  |

| **Participating Local Organizations** |
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| [Insert local participants] |
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| **Participating State Organizations** |
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| [Insert state participants] |
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| **Participating Federal Organizations** |
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| [Insert federal participants] |
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| **Other Participating Organizations** |
| --- |
| [Insert other participants] |
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# Appendix B: Relevant Plans

[Insert excerpts from relevant plans, policies, or procedures to be tested during the exercise.]

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# Appendix C: Acronyms

| Acronym | Term |
| --- | --- |
| **AAR** | After-Action Report |
| **CISA** | Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency |
| **CTEP** | CISA Tabletop Exercise Package |
| **EAP** | Emergency Action Plan |
| **EMS** | Emergency Medical Services |
| **EPT** | Exercise Planning Team |
| **IC** | Incident Command |
| **IP** | Improvement Plan |
| **MCI** | Mass-Casualty Incident |
| **PIO** | Public Information Officer |
| **POC** | Point of Contact |
| **SitMan** | Situation Manual |
| **SME** | Subject Matter Expert |
| **TTX** | Tabletop Exercise |
| **VIP** | Very Important Person |

