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LESSON LEARNED

Special Event Planning: Providing Special Passes or Tickets to Undercover Officers

SUMMARY

Special event planners should consider providing special passes or tickets to undercover officers to enable them to enter the venue discretely. This may help ensure that officers are not delayed in performing their duties.

DESCRIPTION

The City of San Diego hosted Super Bowl XXXVII and related events from January 18 to 26, 2003. The Department of Homeland Security designated the Super Bowl a Special Event Readiness Level (SERL) 2 because of its high profile nature and tens of thousands of attendees. Under this designation, the San Diego Police Department (SDPD) retained jurisdiction as the lead law enforcement agency. SDPD worked in conjunction with federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to provide security for all Super Bowl-related events at sites such as the Qualcomm Stadium, hotels, and practice areas. The National Football League (NFL) contracted with a private security company to provide crowd control and assist in other security assignments at Qualcomm Stadium. The private security company reported to both the NFL and SDPD.

Representatives from SDPD, NFL, and other federal, state, and local agencies formed an Investigative Committee that was responsible for a range of functions, including providing pro-active, investigative details at selected events. The committee established undercover investigative teams to target pick-pocket crimes, ticket scalping, purse snatches, counterfeit products, and prostitution at the Super Bowl. These teams included members from SDPD and other agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Administration, California State Parole, and San Diego Sheriff's Office. The United States Secret Service provided all law enforcement officer credentials to access Qualcomm Stadium during the Super Bowl.

Undercover officers could not display these credentials without revealing their undercover capacity. Private security personnel often stopped undercover officers and required them to display their credentials before entering the venue. This delayed some undercover officers trying to follow pick-pocket suspects into the stadium. A San Diego Police Department after-action report recommended that "certain types of passes or tickets can be given to a limited number of selected undercover investigators to ensure they do not get delayed while performing this function."

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CITATION

Bryden, Joel. Special Operations Assistant Chief, San Diego Police Department. Interview with Lessons Learned Information Sharing. March 28 - April 24, 2006.

San Diego Police Department, *San Diego Police Department Super Bowl XXXVII: Operational Assessment*.

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