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LESSON LEARNED

Special Event Planning: Establishing Multiple Radio Channels

SUMMARY

Event planners should establish and encourage multiple radio channel use during a special event.

DESCRIPTION

On June 16, 1995, the International Olympic Committee selected Salt Lake City, Utah to host the XIX Winter Olympic Games from February 8 to 24, 2002. Utah created the Utah Olympic Public Safety Command (UOPSC) in 1998 to plan and manage law enforcement operations for the Olympic Games. In 1999, the White House designated the Olympic Games a National Special Security Event due to its high-profile nature and the millions of expected attendees. As a result of this designation, several federal agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, joined the UOPSC to plan and manage law enforcement operations. The UOPSC oversaw thousands of security personnel, including law enforcement volunteers (LeVol), at the Olympic Games. These personnel required radio capabilities to receive instructions and information, as well as to make requests and report incidents, while performing their security assignments.

The UOPSC established multiple radio channels for the security personnel to use during the event. The UOPSC divided the channels into three categories: non-essential or assignment, operational, and command information. The multiple radio channel capability also allowed for a task force-style response to unplanned needs or activities by dedicating a channel for a particular event or operation. Security personnel communicated with each other on the designated radio channel at each Olympic venue. For example, LeVol supervisors working at the Soldier Hollow Olympic venue announced the time for shift change on a radio channel designated for Soldier Hollow non-essential or assignment information. This announcement did not disrupt Soldier Hollow command personnel radio communications, which had its own command communications-specific radio channel.

By establishing multiple radio channels, the UOPSC reduced the amount of radio traffic on each channel. This helped to minimize the possibility of information being missed or misunderstood due to congested radio channels. According to the UOPSC after-action report, event planners should establish and encourage multiple radio channel use during a special event.

CITATION

Folsom, Scott. Chief and Director of Public Safety, University of Utah Police Department. Correspondence with *Lessons Learned Information Sharing*, 30 Nov 2006.

Salt Lake City: The Utah Olympic Public Safety Command After-Action Report. 2002.

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