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LESSON LEARNED

Special Event Planning: Issuing Cellular Phones

SUMMARY

Special event planners should consider issuing cellular phones to all personnel in leadership and mobile positions prior to 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 (FBI), joined the UOPSC to plan and manage law enforcement operations.

The UOPSC distributed approximately 200 cellular phones to all public safety and civilian position supervisors, as well as fire and emergency medical services commanders prior to the Olympic Games. These cellular phones supplemented the primary radio communication system and served as a secondary means of communication in case radio communications were impeded. The primary radio communication system failed on the first day of the Olympic Games. As a result, the UOPSC could not communicate important information via radio to public safety officers that were manning security posts at Olympic venues. The UOPSC called the officers' supervisors on their UOPSC-issued cellular phones and asked them to relay the information to the officers. The cellular phones enabled communications to continue after the primary communication system failed. The UOPSC after-action report stated that these cellular phones were invaluable during the Olympic Games.

Special event planners should issue cellular phones to all personnel in leadership and mobile positions prior to a special event.

CITATION

Folsom, Scott. Chief and Director of Public Safety, University of Utah Police Department. Correspondence with *Lessons Learned Information Sharing*, 24 Oct 2006.

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

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