USDA
United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Chief Financial Officer

CONFERENCE & TRAINING SECURITY ASSESSMENT GUIDE

December 10, 2018

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Executive Summary

In carrying out its day to day mission, the USDA and its Agencies host a variety of conferences and training events to meet with our farmers, producers, customers, employees, and the public. These events are used to promote Agriculture in America, meet with industry partners, inform our customers and the public on USDA programs, and to train our employees. As we carry out our customer service mission, it is important that we also consider the safety and security of participants and attendees. Most often, these events are peaceful and not contentious in any way.

The USDA Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) in coordination with the USDA Office of Homeland Security (OHS) created this guide as an easy-to-use tool to assist Mission Areas, Agencies, Staff Offices and organizations with security considerations for the planning and execution of their conference and training events. This guide will help you identify the issues you should address in the very early stages of planning or even when you are considering promoting or sponsoring such an event.

1. Purpose

This guide serves as a supplement to the USDA OCFO Conference and Training Approval Template. Therefore, a security assessment and corresponding risk mitigation plan will be included as part of the OCFO Conference and Training Approval Package for all USDA Sponsored Conferences and Training Events over $75,000.

This guide provides a standard for USDA agencies to identify potential risks by evaluating threats, vulnerabilities and consequences that could arise during conferences and training events. It also provides tools to develop risk mitigation strategies that reduce the risk and mitigate vulnerabilities to threats and their potential consequences. As a result, this should reduce risk to an acceptable level and promote safe and secure events or meetings.

While risks generally cannot be eliminated, this guide can assist with devising a risk mitigation plan that will enhance the security and safety of your conference or training event.

2. Risk Management Process

Risk management is a systematic, analytical process to consider the likelihood that a threat will endanger an asset (e.g., a structure, individual, or function) and identify actions that reduce the risk and mitigate the consequences of an attack. Therefore, during the pre-event planning phase, it is critical to develop a formal risk assessment unique to the special event or meeting. This assessment will drive the overall planning process and must be continually updated as more timely information and intelligence becomes available. An

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effective risk management approach includes a threat assessment, vulnerability assessment, and a consequence/impact assessment.

Risk categories include (1) harm to persons, (2) damage to property, (3) loss of revenue for the event and jurisdiction if incidents prevent people from attending or cause increased expenses, (4) increased liability due to negligence, and (5) loss of reputation.

3. Threat Assessment:

A threat assessment identifies and evaluates threats based on various factors, including capability and intentions as well as impact of a harmful event. Groups and individuals that should be considered include the following categories: (1) insider threat (employees, contractors, and invited guests), (2) terrorist organizations, (3) activist groups, (4) general public, and (5) criminals.

Critical information and questions to be considered include:
- What is the topic of the event/meeting?
- Is it controversial in nature?
- Have there been meetings and/or events on this topic in the past? If yes, were there threats or incidents from prior similar events or meetings?
- Will it be open to the public, only invited guests; or only employees?
- Will it be located in a controlled government facility or public venue?

4. Vulnerability Assessment

Once the above threats have been discussed, a vulnerability assessment of the venue must be conducted. Agencies shall consult with their Agency Physical Security Officer (APSO) to validate potential threats and for subject matter expertise in conducting the vulnerability assessment.

The vulnerability assessment is a process that identifies weaknesses that may be exploited and provides strategies to eliminate or mitigate those weaknesses in security that need to be addressed prior to and during the event. The vulnerability assessment will also identify strategies to mitigate identified risks and vulnerabilities. In some cases, it may be necessary to coordinate with local, city, state and federal law enforcement agencies. It may also require the contracting of armed security guards to mitigate potential threats.

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Items to Consider:

1. Location of Event – Does it need to be open to the public or can it either be in a location restricted to the public or in a secure Federal Building?
2. Security Measures at the Event Site - Is there Armed Security? CCTV Cameras? Security Systems? Personnel trained in the Security and Evacuation Plan?
3. Attendees - Is event open to the public? To invited guests only? To employees only?
4. Access to Event - Will there be a guest list/name tags/sign-in sheets? This should be considered to control who can enter the event and for auditability and accountability of who attended the event.
5. Entrance into Event - Is it possible to control all ingress/egress points? All critical entrances, gates and doors must be identified and secured prior to the event.
6. Emergency Exits - Identify emergency evacuation plan.
7. Police/Armed Security Guards - Are police or armed guards needed to admit/screen guests? For a deterrent? To respond in the event of a disruption?
8. Police/Armed Security Guard Responsibilities - Do they know their responsibilities (i.e. How to handle an individual yelling at a presenter at a conference or meeting)?
9. Screening of Visitors for Weapons or Contraband - Will visitors need to be screened through magnetometer devices and their belongings visually inspected or run through x-ray detection?
10. Signage - Clearly identify where you want attendees to go.
11. Parking - Where will VIPs park? Is it secure? Do VIP's need escort into and out of the meeting?
12. Emergency Evacuation of VIP/Speakers - Is there a plan developed?
13. Medical Services - Identify locations for first aid and emergency services personnel.

Alternatively, the above list incorporates a risk methodology that prioritizes special events using seven factors relevant to event security planning: (1) Size of event; (2) Historical, Political, Religious, or symbolic significance; (3) Duration; (4) Geographic Location; (5) Dispersion of the site and protective complexity; (6) Dignitaries attending; and (7) preparedness of state and/or local law enforcement agencies to protect the event.

5. Consequence/Impact

Part of the risk assessment requires determining the consequence or impact of loss if an undesirable event were to occur. For example, some undesirable events like vandalism may not have a major impact on an event from continuing successfully. However, other undesirable events may impact the event so severely that the consequence is that the event would need to be stopped or cancelled.

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6. Risk Analysis

To determine level of risk, the combined measure of threat probability, vulnerability, and consequence must be calculated for each potential undesirable event.

Appendix A provides Risk Management Tables for Threat, Vulnerability, and Consequence. The tables identify levels, descriptions and quantitative scores. The assessor will need to determine a level in each table and calculate a final score for each undesirable event. Based on the final score, the Risk Management Plan table provides further guidance on actions that may be required.

Undesirable events that should be reviewed include:

1. Acts of terrorism
2. Public Disturbance/Protest
3. Trespassing/Unauthorized Entry
4. Undetected Unauthorized Entry
5. Insider Threat
6. Assault
7. Theft
8. Medical Emergency

7. Risk Mitigation Implementation

After the risk analysis is completed on each undesirable event and you have calculated final scores, you must now determine if you can lower the scores through the implementation of security countermeasures or other mitigation measures.

It is very difficult to focus on lowering Threat Probability as this will fluctuate and may change for the better or worse before the event starts. It is also difficult to focus on lowering the Event Consequence as some undesirable events, such as an active shooter, will always rank as a higher consequence, while some undesirable events, such as vandalism will always have a lower event consequence.

The best opportunity for impact to mitigate risk is through vulnerability assessments and associated countermeasures. Therefore, it is critical that existing security countermeasures are reviewed through the Vulnerability Analysis and that security measures are added as needed. This will not only lower the Vulnerability Analysis level of risk but may also lower the Threat Probability as additional deterrents are in place to deter or prevent an undesirable event.

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An example of adding security measures would be that a hotel conference room may receive an initial Vulnerability Analysis rating of *Very High* (No meaningful physical security measures present (beyond typical locks on doors). However, if the conference room was secured through the implementation of controlled visitor access and the on-site presence of armed security guards stationed at the entrance to the conference room/inside the event, the Vulnerability Analysis rating may be reduced significantly.

8. Conclusion

This guide, and associated security assessment process will serve as a tool to assist all USDA agencies with the planning and conducting of safe, secure and successful events. Agencies shall consult with their Agency Physical Security Officer (APSO) to validate potential threats and for subject matter expertise in conducting the vulnerability assessment. If you have any additional questions, please contact your Agency's Physical Security Office.

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APPENDIX A:

REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY SOURCING INFORMATION

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APPENDIX B:

EVENT INFORMATION COVERSHEET

Name of Event
Description of Event
Date(s)/Time(s) of Event
Location of Event
Size of Event
Sponsored By
Target Audience
Any VIP's or Special Guests in Attendance
Event Open to Public (Yes/No)?

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APPENDIX C:

RISK ANALYSIS

I. Risk Management Tables:

1. Threat Probability (How likely is it that an undesirable event will occur?)

Threat Probability	Threat Level Description	Score
Minimum	Less than 1% chance an undesirable event will occur.	1
Low	At least a 1-9% chance an undesirable event will occur.	2
Medium	At least a 10-49% chance an undesirable event will occur.	3
High	50-74% chance an undesirable event will occur.	4
Very High	75% chance an undesirable event will occur.	5

2. Vulnerability (Are there security measures in place to prevent an undesirable event?

Vulnerability Levels	Vulnerability Description	Score
Minimum	Extensive physical security measures in place.	1
Low	Adequate physical security measures in place but could be improved.	2
Medium	Some physical security measures in place, but not adequate to protect against all threats reviewed in this report.	3
High	Minimal physical security measures in place, needs improvement.	4
Very High	No meaningful physical security measures present (beyond typical locks on doors).	5

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3. Consequence (What is the impact/consequence if an undesirable event occurred?)

Event Impact	Event Consequence	Score
Minimum	No impact to event.	1
Low	Event interrupted but can continue; possibility of minor injury and impact to facility/event venue.	2
Medium	Event interrupted and may be temporarily stopped to deal with the interruption; possibility of mild to severe injury and impact to facility/event venue.	3
High	Event disrupted and may or may not be able to be continued; possibility of major injury and major impact to facility/venue.	4
Very High	Event disrupted and cannot continue. Event will be cancelled. Possibility of major injury and major impact to facility/venue.	5

II. Risk Management Score:

The below table displays the risk management score, level of risk, and action required to be taken:

Score Range	Risk	Requirement
1-25	Minimum	No action needed.
26-50	Low	Further review required by Agency Physical Security Office. No further action needed after that.
51-75	Medium	Additional Security Countermeasures must be put in place to mitigate threats and vulnerabilities. Agency Physical Security Office must sign-off that additional security measures adequately mitigate vulnerabilities.
76-100	High	Additional Security Countermeasures must be put in place to mitigate threats and vulnerabilities. Agency Physical Security Office must sign-off on plan and send to USDA OHS for approval.
101-125	Very High	Must be elevated to USDA OHS to determine if risk mitigation measures can be put in place to ensure adequate security for event.

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III. Risk Management Determination/Calculation:

For each threat identified, calculate the score in the table below using the formula of <u>Threat Probability x Vulnerability x Event Consequence = Total Risk</u>. This will provide you with the Level of Risk for each threat.

Undesirable Event	Threat Score	Vulnerability Score	Consequence Score	Total Score	Action required
Public Disturbance/Protest					
Annotate Risk Mitigation (If Applicable):					
Trespassing/Unauthorized Entry					
Annotate Risk Mitigation (If Applicable):					
Undetected Unauthorized Entry					
Annotate Risk Mitigation (If Applicable):					
Insider Threat					
Annotate Risk Mitigation (If Applicable):					
Assault					
Annotate Risk Mitigation (If Applicable):					
Theft					
Annotate Risk Mitigation (If Applicable):					
Medical Emergency					
Annotate Risk Mitigation (If Applicable):					
Other?					

<u>Note:</u> Any undesirable event with a score over 26 will require review by your Agency Physical Security Office. Any undesirable event with a score over 51 will require some form of documented risk mitigation.

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