



# Event Security and Safety

## Introduction

As the holidays approach, many individuals, families, and organizations are planning events. These events can range from galas hosted at homes to convention hall functions or be as large as stadium events. In any case, planning and preparation are key. Special events planned and executed properly can be remembered by hosts and attendees for years to come, and be positive economic drivers for communities. It may cost a lot in time and resources to plan and manage the event, however, it is important to realize the negative impact of a preventable incident or accident.

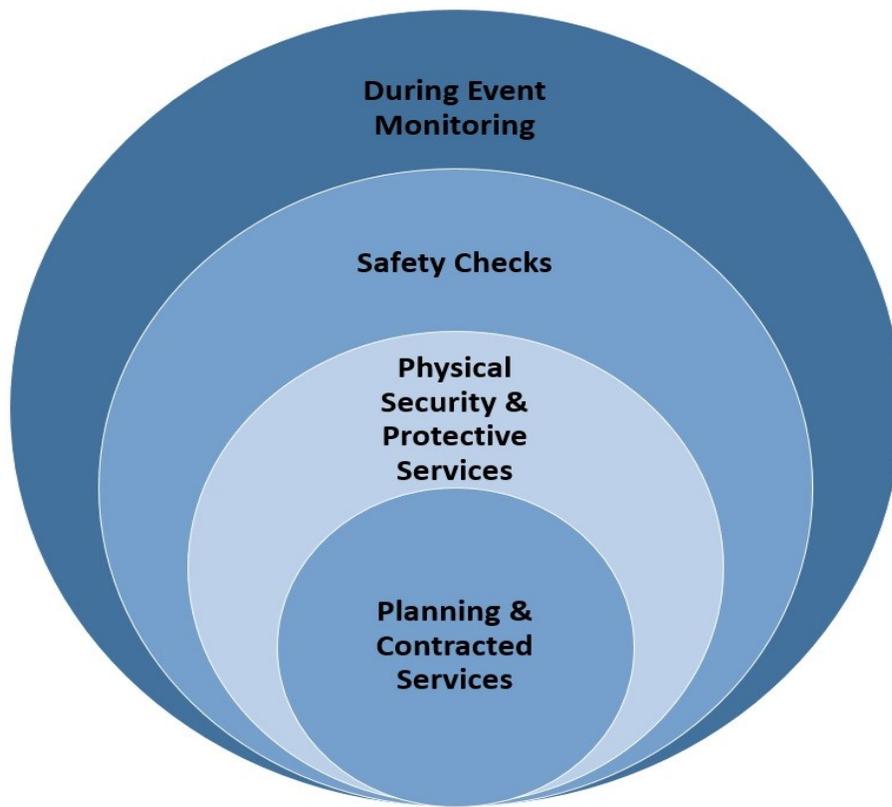
Security and safety are paramount to a successful event. Some of the initial considerations of planning an event should include:

- Will the event be ongoing or is it a one-time affair?
- Will the event be public or private?
- Will the attendees be managed by tickets or invitations?
- Will the event impact the community - including traffic, influx of attendees, and public transit resources?
- Will the event require special permits?
- Will the event include or attract media attention?
- Will the event necessitate law enforcement assistance and/or emergency support?

Regardless of the size of the event, there are some basic elements of planning a successful event from the perspectives of safety and security. This report will include those foundational elements such as: 1) The Selection of Service Contractors and Vendors; 2) Assessing the Need for Physical Security and Protective Services; 3) Understanding Safety and Accident Prevention; and, 4) Event Monitoring.

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## Catering & Food Safety

More than 100 members of the NAACP served the upscale hotel chain Sofitel with a suit in California state court this month alleging they were stricken with food poisoning after eating tainted salmon at a gala dinner event, and that the hotel's refusal to help them while they were ill was discriminatory.

Each member of the suit said they became severely ill from eating the fish which was subsequently identified by area hospitals as tainted with norovirus.

The NAACP members say their requests to hotel management and staff for emergency help went unheeded. The NAACP members said they had to call ambulances and emergency help themselves, and some drove themselves to the hospital.

## Contracted Services and Vendors

Far too often event planners and hosts overlook the potential threats contractors and other employees can pose to an event. Should the event be hosted at your home, event planners, catering/food prep workers, wait staff, clean up staff, and other contractors are likely to be in and around your home for a significant period of time. This can pose a risk to the homeowner because these strangers can very easily steal valuables or simply case the home for a future robbery (or worse).

It is important to conduct due diligence before hiring your contracted services. A good start is to read as many online reviews of the companies as you can. Any glaring issues with the company are likely to be found within Yelp or other online review sources. It is also a good idea to request references from the vendors. Most vendors are more than happy to provide this to you and we recommend you take the time to contact and question the references provided to you. If the vendors are unwilling or otherwise unable to provide you a few references, we suggest moving on to another company.

Part of your conversation with the vendors should include discussions regarding whether or not they conducted background checks on their employees before hiring them. In some cases, the company will have already conducted these checks, especially if they hired their workers from a temp agency. If background checks have not been conducted on the employees, you may want to look elsewhere for a company that has conducted the checks, or have the vendor you hire provide you with a list of the workers that will be in and around your home during the event and either conduct the background checks yourself, or (more likely) hire an outside vendor to conduct the checks. Having an outside company conduct the checks is convenient because you can provide a master list of all of your vendors and their workers for the event. While background checks on contracted services are manageable for a small party at your home, it would likely be far more difficult to do for a larger event such as a trade show or festival. In these situations it is vitally important to choose your vendors wisely, doing your research on each vendor's reputation (reviews) and following up on references.

Finally, Mindstar Security recommends you include a "no social media or photography" clause in all service contracts in order to prevent service providers from disclosing sensitive information. You do not want service providers snapping photographs from within your home and posting them to social media. This could result in opportunistic criminals or other threat actors using photos from within the home to virtually canvas the house and/or property for valuables or to obtain a better understanding of the layout of the home.

## Violence at a Home Gala

Violence can occur even at the most sophisticated of events. A party hosted at a Connecticut home this month turned violent when a gunman open fired at over a hundred people attending the gala. Thirteen people were struck by gunfire. The gunman still remains at large.

This party is hosted every year by the same family. It is typically a lovely event with no problems. However, even at a home in a great neighborhood that can easily host 100+ guests comfortably, can attract unwanted people. In this case, it appears that the gunman was not invited to the party, nor was the violence spurred by some type of verbal altercation prior to the party. While police are not disclosing a lot of details regarding the incident, the home and event did appear to be targeted.

The gala event was disclosed in the news as well as via social media each year it has been hosted – thus, the reoccurring event was somewhat predictable. The event did not include protective services. While physical security personnel may not have been able to stop the incident from occurring entirely, the injuries and damage could have been reduced on the scene. Planning for this event, however, did include notifying local law enforcement, thus, emergency response was quick and effective.

## Physical Security and Protective Services

When planning an event, it is important to give your guests and yourself some piece of mind by employing some reasonable security measures, which often includes hiring a security team. Security teams have become popular at events ranging from at-home galas to trade shows and art exhibits. Even perfectly planned events can go awry. A guest can drink too much and become aggressive or otherwise create a scene. An uninvited guest could show up with the intent of creating a disruption. Maybe an invited guest wanders into an area of the house they are not authorized to be in. Having a professional security team there to handle these hiccups can be the difference between a successful event and an unfortunate disaster. Regardless of the type of event you are planning, it is vitally important to hire an event security team to keep the guests safe and secure.

The first important step is to assess your need for security. This includes deciding whether you need it at all and if you do, how much you will need. You should not assume that just because your event is small that you do not have a need for security. Security teams do not have to focus solely on worst-case-scenario type of issues; they can also assure that the event goes smoothly by conducting a pre-event assessment and controlling access to areas before and during the event. In some instances, the mere presence of a security team is enough to prevent problems at the event and ensure that your guests are at ease and enjoy themselves.



## Hiring a Security Team

In order to help you better navigate the process of obtaining a good security team for your event, Mindstar Security is providing the following tips for hiring a team. These tips have been taken from both the IGS Security website and from past Mindstar Security reports. We hope some of these tips are helpful to you in your future event planning.

### 1. DETERMINE WHAT YOU NEED

While planning the event, you need to determine the services that you may need from the security team. This will help you to choose the best people for the job. It is a good idea to find out about the team's training and background so that you can make sure that they are qualified to do what you need. Getting a team that is the right fit for the event is essential. If you are planning a music festival or large-scale trade show, you need to look for a security company that has experience in events of that size. In this case, your needs are different from someone who needs security for a wedding or house party. Personnel with prior experience performing security operations or protective detail in the U.S. government (i.e., USSS, FBI, military) or have an intelligence or law enforcement background are preferable.

## Accidents & Incidents

Accidents and security incidents can occur at home events as well as at large stadium events. Over the last few months, several incidents have been reported at sporting events.

A fan fell from approximately 30 to 50 feet while leaving Sports Authority Field at Mile High Stadium after the Denver Broncos played the Houston Texans on October 24, 2016. "The initial investigation indicates the adult male was sitting on a railing and fell approximately 60 feet," according to Denver police. The fan fell at about 9:45 p.m. after the Denver Broncos game ended. Emergency personnel responded to a 911 call for help from the area near one of the exit gates.

A Ravens fan is in the hospital in critical condition after a fight with Raiders fans at M&T Bank Stadium broke out during the October 2, 2016 game between the two teams. The injured man got into a verbal confrontation with a group of Raiders fans near the end of the game. He was reportedly struck and hit his head on the concrete, knocking him unconscious.

## Hiring a Security Team, continued.

### 2. LICENSED AND EXPERIENCE IN-COUNTRY

When hiring a security company for your event, you should make sure that you research the company thoroughly. You want to make sure that the company is fully licensed and above board. The licensing requirements will vary depending on your location. If you are hosting an event outside of the U.S., select a team that has experience in the host country and preferably security personnel that reside in the host country and/or speak the host country's language.

### 3. APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF SECURITY

It is important to get the right balance between the number of attendees and safety concerns. A large number of security personnel for a relatively small event is not cost effective and it can even make the guests feel uncomfortable. If you are planning an event with hundreds of attendees, you need a large team to take care of the security needs effectively. You will also have to consider how many security personnel should be obvious (i.e., in uniform) or in plain clothes blending in with your guests.



*“Choose a physical security team that has the right credentials. Having a balance between blending in and showing an overt presence is also important.”*

### 4. ASK FOR REFERENCES

You should never make your decision based on the company website or brochure. It is important to get references from people who have actually used the company's service. Before you hire a security team, ask for references—either from the company or from another Family Office or corporation that has used a protection team. Talking to past clients can give you the peace of mind that you need when choosing security services and will give you an idea of what to expect from the company and their security team. You may also want to consider using off-duty officers from your local police district.

### 5. PLAN FOR A VISIT TO THE VENUE SITE

When you hire a security team, it is important to arrange for a visit to the event venue. Security teams like to know what they are dealing with before the event day and they may want to perform a risk assessment at the venue. You might have carried out an assessment of your own but the experts will get a better feel for the venue and they can even spot things that you may have missed. Visiting the venue before the day of the event can be very helpful, especially if there are some changes to be made.

When choosing a security team, you should always trust your gut instinct. You need to make sure that you are happy with the team you are planning to work with. The security company may have all the licenses and come highly recommended, but you need to know that you can trust them. At the end of the day, the safety of your guests is in your hands. Using the price of the security detail as your main basis for choice can result in you having a security team that is not quite up to expectations.

## Safety Considerations

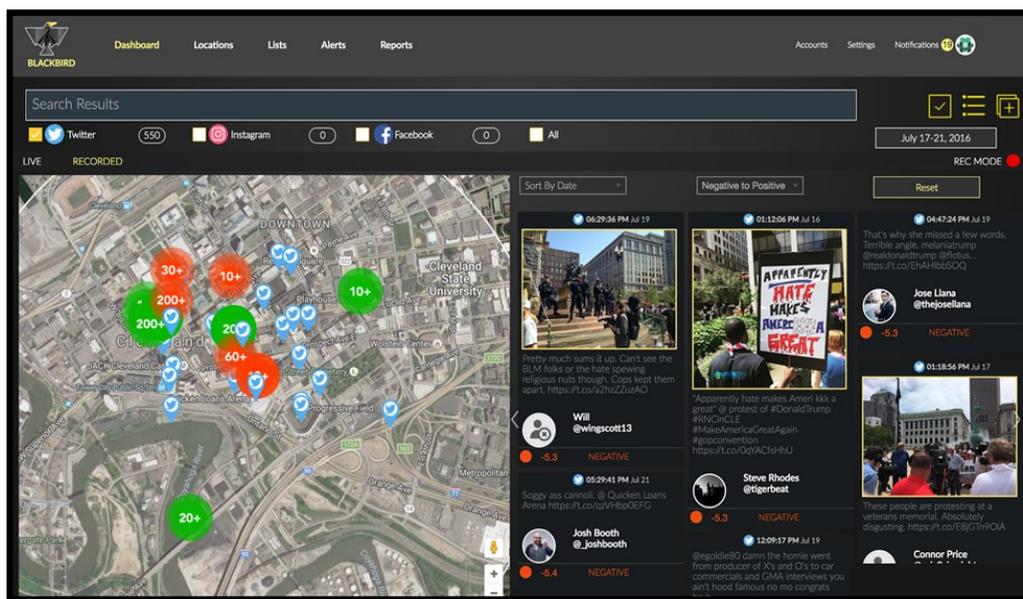
Safety is an important element to consider even when you are throwing a party at your home. Most large venues (e.g., convention centers and stadiums) must adhere to OSHA standards and are inspected regularly. But home safety during the planning stages of a private gathering is just as critical.

There are numerous items and potential dangerous areas in and around your home that you live with everyday—and everyone seems to know to either avoid those things or to heed caution. However, when you invite several dozen or several hundred people into your home, they may not be as vigilant or careful in your environment. In addition to unfamiliarity with your home, people attending open houses, charity events, or galas may be eating and drinking, thus paying even less attention to their surroundings. No homeowner wants to deal with an accident, injury, fire, drowning or other incident that could occur during the special event.

Just as considering a security team, do consider hiring or having someone do a safety perimeter walk around your home and

property as you are preparing for your guests. A few of the things to look for include:

- Any exposed wires, pipes, or protrusions that could cause someone to trip and fall. If special lighting or music is being brought in, the additional equipment should not present a hazard to attendees.
- Areas of the home which include generators, external connections to power, FiOS, Internet, gas lines and the like should be closed off with physical barriers.
- Swimming pools should be monitored and areas that may get wet and become slippery should be watched and dried as soon as possible—likewise for bar areas that may have ice spill and melt creating a slick surface.
- Lock away tools, ladders, pool chemicals, paints, pesticides or other chemicals.



This screenshot shows a “heat map” of the social media activity in real time.

## Real Time Event Monitoring

One of the security services needed for an event is real time social media monitoring. In today's environment, social media is everywhere and can actually provide event managers, physical security personnel or response personnel the first indications that something is suspicious or occurring. No one seems to go anywhere or attend any event without their smartphone and selfie stick. People post in real time about where they are and what they are doing. The use of technology to monitor these social media postings from Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook can be used to gather intelligence and conduct security sweeps from an electronic perspective.

So, to better secure your intimate or public event, understanding what is happening in the actual geo-location of the event as well as in the surrounding area is important. One example of a great tool to perform these social media security sweeps is Blackbird.AI by Social Trendly.

## Social Media Monitoring Case Studies

Whether a small gala, a private event or large scale production, Blackbird.AI can monitor a radius up to 10 miles around the event and provide social media chatter insights to create awareness of the event for security teams and personnel. There are several benefits that can be gained by understanding what is happening in the immediate area including :

- Who is using social media in the general vicinity and what are they saying;
- Who may be entering areas that are off limits or restricted (by collecting the GPS data from their postings); and,
- Who may be using threatening or highly emotive language indicating a potential issue of security or safety.

The two case studies below highlight the applied, real time use of social media collection during a small home gala and a large stadium event.

### Home Gala

Blackbird.AI monitored a private party at a celebrity's Las Vegas mansion where trespassers were found outside of the approved areas. One of the men posted a photo from an area of the property where guests were prohibited. Because the social media post was flagged along with the attached image immediately, security personnel were able to quickly respond and remove the guest from the area.

The intruder Tweeted the name of the celebrity with a hashtag along with a photo of the side of the home which housed some of the electrical and plumbing connections. Within a few minutes this man's Instagram account already had 26 "likes" and 3 comments, thus this data was being proliferated online.



The red markers show all the guests that were posting live to social media at the party.

### Stadium Event - RNC

The security planning and monitoring that is used in large scale events or very public venues is more expansive than what is needed for a home gala. In addition to the volumes of people posting to social media, which exponentially increases the number of messages that have to be analyzed, the potential for public disruption tends to be higher. People who are not able to attend the large event may congregate in tail-gating areas or in other locations nearby the actual event. Many large scale public events have their share of protesters and other detractors who can create a substantial safety or security issue for attendees or for the public.

At this year's Republican National Convention (RNC), Blackbird.AI was able to detect an event of interest involving a flag burning a few blocks away from the convention center which resulted in police involvement and some localized disruption. Cleveland Police Chief Calvin Williams said a protester attempted to set the flag afire — a legal activity as long as it is not used to incite a crowd — and the flames jumped to the protester's pant legs and then spread to others. Large crowds of journalists and delegates swarmed as protesters chanted anti-police slogans near this scene.

Having this type of information as soon as possible would enable officials and organizers to divert security personnel to the affected areas, re-route travel patterns for clients coming to or leaving the convention center, or any number of other quick decisions that need be made in response to security vulnerabilities. Continuing to monitor the dispersement of the crowd following the police intervention also providing needed information to determine whether "copy cat" or similar incidents would occur elsewhere in the city.

Social media monitoring tools have been around for a while, but mostly in the hands of marketers using them to track brand mentions and measure campaign effectiveness. Social media, however, contains so much more than just marketing insights. People post anything and everything on social media, including information about themselves, who they are with, what they are doing, and what they plan to do. Having access to this type of intelligence can greatly add to the information and data needed to help security professionals plan and manage a variety of events.

## Social Media Research

More and more social media is being used as the indicator for potential risk or danger. Being able to monitor what people are saying on social media is very important both before and during a special event.

In addition to Social Trendly's Blackbird product, others are investing time and resources into understanding the relationship between comments on social media and the emergence of an incident. British researchers working with the RAND Corp. will be monitoring millions of tweets related to the L.A. area in an effort to identify patterns and markers that prejudice motivated violence is about to occur in real time.

The researchers then will compare the data against records of reported violent acts. The research is designed to eventually enable authorities to predict when and where hate crime is likely to occur and deploy law enforcement resources to prevent it.

The ongoing research as well as the field functional and applied products such as Blackbird will assist in greatly improving the overall safety of both small and large special events.

## Summary and Recommendations

Being the individual, family or organization that is hosting an event can be challenging. In addition to the right venue, food, music, and other components, safety and security must be included as a top priority. This report covered the very basics including the selection of contract services and vendors, implementing physical security teams, reviewing safety, and monitoring real time social media. Those basics certainly do not cover every aspect of making a special event secure and safe, but it provides a baseline starting point. Some additional recommendations and security elements to consider include:

- A red-carpet affair with top-level security normally requires "platinum" level event security from a top-level provider. However, for home events, consider hiring off-duty police officers from your local police force.
- For large capacity events always have an emergency medical crew onsite for first response and to handle the unexpected food allergy, medical condition, heart attack or slip and fall head injury.
- For a home event, pre-test all security cameras - and reposition as necessary. You may want more coverage inside the home and in restricted areas outside the home. Consider having a security professional monitor the live cameras feeds.
- During the planning phase of your event be sure to ask a representative from your security provider to be present so that they are apprised of the schedules, logistics, and personnel involved.
- Decide what type of photography should be allowed and by whom. Innocent photos of the interior of your home and ingress/egress routes which end up on Pinterest or Instagram may result in a vulnerability post-party.
- Have a communications plan for during the event. If everyone knows their role but does not or cannot communicate their actions or needs during an incident, things can degenerate and become worse.
- Always consider parking and the entering and exiting paths of your guests.

We wish you exciting and successful events during the holidays and throughout the year!



**Mindstar Security & Profiling specializes in security solutions for family offices, high profile/high net worth executives, and their families. Our customized focus includes the security trifecta of Internet/Social Media Safety, Physical Security and IT Security.**

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