

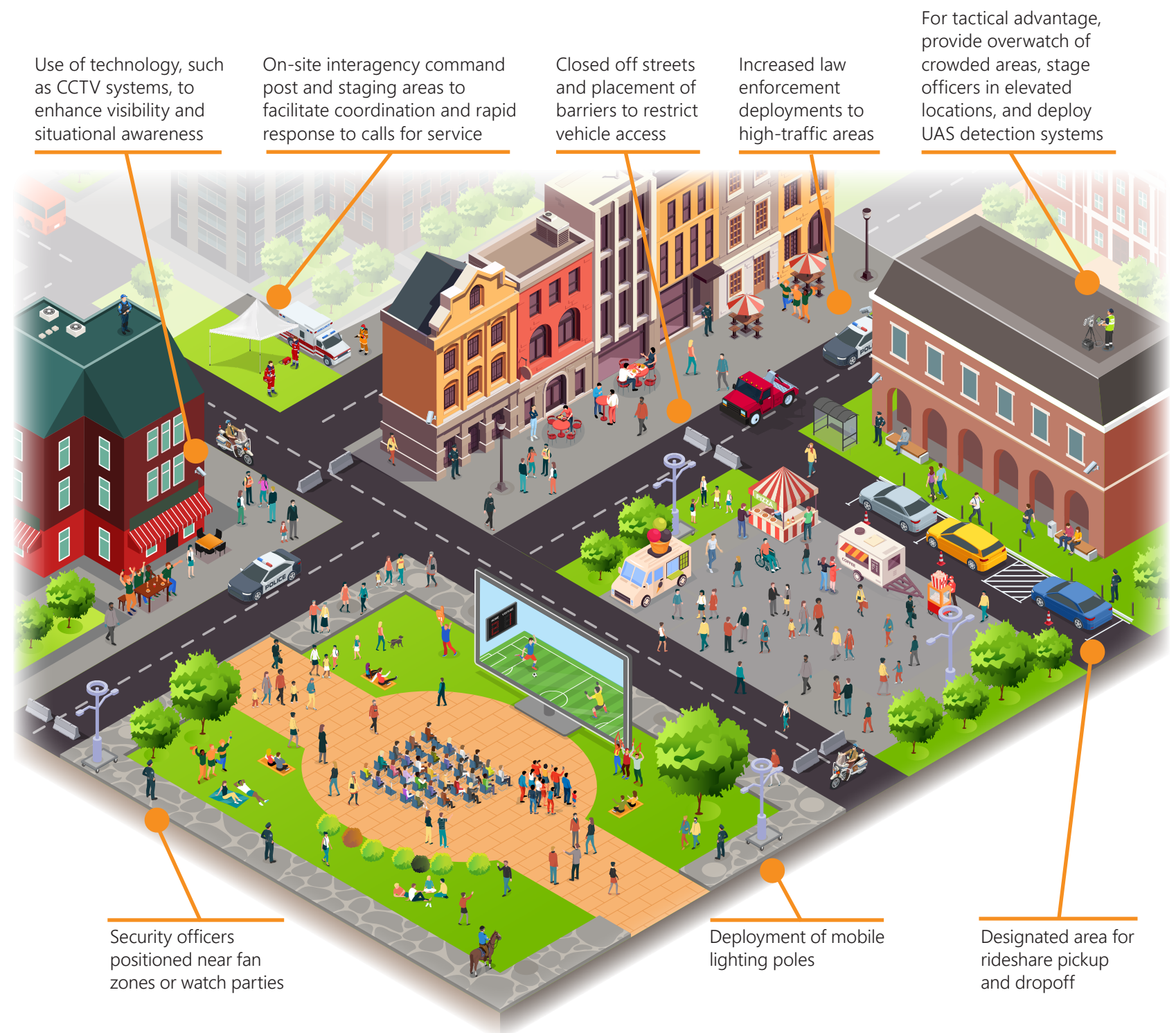
## Mitigating Terrorist Threats at Special Event Fan Zones and Watch Parties: Public Safety Considerations

**SCOPE:** This product is intended to offer considerations for public- and private-sector safety personnel as they plan for securing and responding to terrorist threats targeting fan zones, watch parties, and other mass gatherings associated with high-profile events.

Violent extremists may perceive fan zones and watch parties tied to special events as symbolic, lower risk, alternative targets for attack compared with more hardened stadiums and other official venues. Past terrorist attacks at special event venues have involved a variety of tactics, including shootings, stabbings, vehicle ramming attacks, and IEDs. An attack on a gathering associated with or in the vicinity of a special event is likely to have significant security implications for the event itself, underscoring the necessity of proactive coordination and intelligence and information sharing among all relevant stakeholders.

- Fan events tied to special events present vulnerabilities susceptible to terrorist tactics. Before the first game of the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Hamburg, Germany, a man threatened officers with a pickaxe and an incendiary device less than half a mile from a fan zone and at the site of an earlier fan walk. Although the incident was not terrorism related, violent extremists often use similar simple weapons and tactics and could use them to similarly target a fan zone or watch party outside a secure perimeter.
- In August 2024, authorities disrupted a plot by two teenage ISIS supporters who planned to drive an explosives-filled car into crowds outside a concert venue in Austria. Between 20,000 to 30,000 fans were expected to gather outside the stadium during the concert, a location that would probably not have had sufficient security checks and safety mechanisms to prevent such an attack.
- In October 2023, an ISIS-inspired attacker fatally shot two Swedish soccer fans about three miles from a Sweden vs. Belgium soccer match in Brussels. The attacker said in a video message that he had targeted the victims to avenge Muslims for Qur'an burnings in Sweden. The match was suspended at halftime, and attendees were held in place as a precaution before eventually being evacuated.
- In the months leading up to high-profile sporting events, al-Qa'ida and ISIS media outlets or the groups' supporters typically issue public statements intended to incite supporters to attack those events. In May 2024, a pro-ISIS outlet published at least one graphic suggesting that an attack against a Cricket World Cup match in New York would draw international media attention.

### MITIGATION MEASURES



## Mitigating Terrorist Threats at Special Event Fan Zones and Watch Parties: Public Safety Considerations *(continued)*

### Considerations

Comprehensive special event security requires implementation of enhanced security procedures at all locations and corridors likely to see extensive crowds during an event, while balancing these measures with accessibility concerns. Proactive information sharing between federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial public safety agencies and private-sector security partners before and during the special event is essential to ensure effective coordination in case of an incident with broad security implications.

### Information Sharing and Threat Awareness

- Establish points of contact and information-sharing mechanisms with local commercial and retail establishments, such as hotels, restaurants, and nightclubs, in the vicinity of the special event or associated gatherings.
- Proactively share event threat assessments, and, if applicable, work with property owners to identify and remedy potential security vulnerabilities.
- Establish procedures for reporting suspicious activity observed in and around fan zones and watch parties so that private-sector staff knows how to report the activity to local law enforcement and fusion centers.
- Maintain awareness of geopolitical developments that may impact the threat environment facing particular events or individuals—such as fans who represent a particular country or team—and adjust security protocols accordingly.
- Conduct training and exercises with relevant public- and private-sector partners to review plans, policies, and procedures for responding to threats and other incidents, including active shooter incidents, at special event-associated gatherings.

### Physical Security

- Ensure awareness of locations and venues with anticipated high attendance, and inform law enforcement patrols of anticipated crowds to guide resourcing decisions. Integrated CCTV systems provide awareness of crowd movements and help identify potential threats.
- Determine whether areas, including fan zones or numerous watch parties, warrant the establishment of a separate command post. Predetermine locations of staging areas to facilitate response to calls for service.
- Consider closing streets, travel lanes, and parking areas and strategically placing objects, such as large planter boxes or barriers, to restrict the potential for unscreened vehicles near fan zones and watch parties while maintaining accessible ingress and egress routes for emergency response.
- Assess routes, transit locations, and transportation modes by which attendees may arrive at fan zones and watch parties to aid in early identification of security vulnerabilities.
- Consider designating areas for rideshare pickups and dropoffs and coordinating with rideshare companies to geofence around the area.
- Deploy mobile lighting poles, as necessary, for greater visibility in particularly busy nightlife areas expected to host watch parties.
- For overwatch of crowded areas, consider deploying UAS surveillance or coordinating with private-sector partners to stage officers in strategic elevated locations.
- Consider increasing the presence of security officers who are well positioned to identify suspicious activity, respond and make notifications regarding active threats, and deter potential criminal activity.

- Consider distributing a specific list of prohibited items to employees. Post signage of prohibited items in a visible location for patrons. Security officers may also conduct bag checks outside of venues to deter and prevent patrons from entering with prohibited items, including weapons. Ensure sufficient room for crowd movement, particularly at the entrances and exits, and redirect those without bags to streamline the inspection process.
- Identify a location for a backup triage center, separate from the primary site, to manage overflows, offer flexibility to respond to multiple emergencies, or serve as an alternate site in the event of a disruption, such as an attack, to ensure continuity of medical care.

### Resources

[State and Local Fusion Centers](#) are focal points for receiving, gathering, compiling, analyzing, and sharing threat-related information.

The Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency's (CISA's) [Securing Public Gatherings](#) webpage includes links to tools and resources to support security planning and threat mitigation for mass gatherings and special events.

CISA's [Active Shooter Preparedness](#) webpage includes resources and training videos to help a broad range of stakeholders prepare for and respond to an active shooter incident.

[If You See Something, Say Something](#) is a program designed to help raise public awareness of the indicators of terrorism and terrorism-related crime. The program emphasizes the importance of reporting suspicious activity to proper state and local law enforcement officials.

[The National Threat Evaluation and Reporting Office](#) advances homeland security partner abilities to identify, investigate, assess, report, and share tips and leads linked to emerging homeland security threats. The office also provides technical assistance, resources, and training associated with best practices in developing and implementing threat analysis-related activities associated with the Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting Initiative.

[Joint Terrorism Task Forces](#) are composed of US law enforcement and intelligence agencies who work together and use participating agencies' resources to preempt, deter, and investigate terrorism and related illicit activities.

[eGuardian](#) is a web-based platform where federal and state law enforcement entities can document, share, and track potential threats, suspicious activity, and cyber, counterterrorism, counterintelligence, or criminal activity with the FBI and with each other.

The [US Violent Extremist Mobilization Indicators](#) booklet (2025 Edition) is an NCTC, DHS, and FBI product that provides a list of observable behaviors that might help determine whether individuals are preparing to engage in violent extremist activities.

**First Responder's Toolboxes** provide additional information about terrorist tactics, techniques, and procedures and considerations for response and mitigation. The toolboxes can be found on JCAT's [website](#), DHS's [Homeland Security Information Network](#), or FBI's [Law Enforcement Enterprise Portal](#).

- [Large Public Gatherings Attractive Targets for Violent Extremists](#)
- [Awareness of Preoperational Surveillance Tactics Associated With Terrorism Offers Opportunities](#)
- [Reporting Suspicious Activity – Critical for Terrorism Prevention](#)
- [Planning and Preparedness Can Promote an Effective Response to a Terrorist Attack at Open-Access Events](#)



# PRODUCT FEEDBACK

Please use the link below to complete a short survey. Your feedback will help JCAT develop counterterrorism products that support the public safety and private sector community.

<https://www.JCAT-url.com>

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(U) The Joint Counterterrorism Assessment Team (JCAT) is a collaboration by NCTC, DHS, FBI, state, local, tribal, and territorial government personnel to improve information sharing and enhance public safety. The First Responder's Toolbox is an ad hoc, unclassified reference aid intended to promote counterterrorism coordination among federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial government authorities and partnerships with private sector officials in deterring, preventing, disrupting, and responding to terrorist attacks.