What's Your Plan?

Using a Critical Incident Management Platform for Planned Events

JUVARE

A critical incident management platform is a valuable tool for all types of organizations in preparing for unplanned, crisis incidents, as well as supporting day-to-day activities. However, these platforms can be just as effective in planning large-scale events and the activities and incidents associated with them.

A critical incident platform is valuable for all types of organizations in preparing for unplanned, crisis incidents. Usually, critical incident management technology is associated with managing response and recovery during large-scale, natural disasters such as hurricanes, wildfires, massive flooding, or crippling winter storms, as well as man-made disasters like terrorism, active shooter situations or cyberattacks. Certainly, it's an essential solution in all these circumstances. But these aren't the only events in which a critical incident management platform could be useful. These platforms can be just as effective in coordinating planning and response activities during large-scale, planned events and the incidents associated with them.

By definition, a large-scale planned event is a non-routine occurrence that has the potential to put a strain on community resources, might involve large numbers of people, may necessitate coordination between many agencies, and likely requires special permitting and additional planning, preparation, and mitigation, according to FEMA. Planned events might include concerts, festivals, sporting events, running races, political rallies, parades, fireworks displays, conventions, and spontaneous events such as a celebration after a big win by a local sports team.

Despite being "planned" events, there is also the potential for unexpected, "unplanned" crises or critical incidents to arise, such as The Boston Marathon bombing in 2013 and the shooting at a Las Vegas music festival in 2017. Therefore, it's important to be prepared for any unforeseen incidents or events. On the other hand, a critical incident management platform can also help event staff, stakeholders, law enforcement, or first responders to stay on top of all activities during the planned event, improving response if an event occurs, and helping to lessen the severity or even the possibility of crisis incidents. A critical incident management platform offers a wide variety of uses and capabilities for planned events, helping event organizers with such features as:

- Tracking location of personnel and resources

- Monitoring weather and NWS significant weather advisories

- Visualizing key points of interest such as gates, barriers, routes, etc.

- Real-time information about medical and situation status at the event

- Viewing available emergency services in the area, including hospitals and EMS

- Maintaining key contact lists

- Sending notifications to event participants or staff

- Managing tasks, assignments, forms, and reports

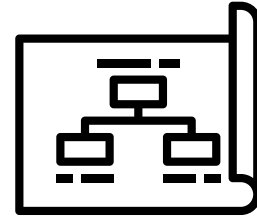- Keeping a record of incidents and details related to the event

5 Ways a Critical Incident Management Platform Can Be Used for Planned Events

1. Event Pre-Planning and Preparation

A critical incident management platform gives event planners and communities the capability to pre-plan, identify, and prepare for incidents or potential threats that could occur. The benefits of using critical incident technology also include planning security and safety objectives, enhancing cooperation between agencies and stakeholders, and avoiding duplication of processes during the event.
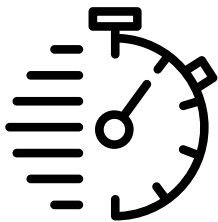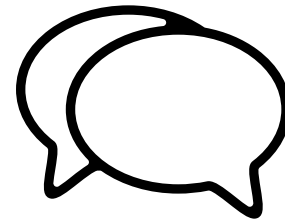
2. Situational Awareness

Using a critical incident management platform offers an accurate, comprehensive "Common Operating Picture" which allows allocation of strategic resources and better, more precise decision-making regarding incidents occurring during the event. Some platforms can also be used to track people and assets at large events to provide real-time date to emergency operations centers, which can in turn view and respond to patient loads by appropriately allocating resources and transportation assets.

3. Seamless Communication

In a large-scale event, it is important to have up-to-date, real-time, accurate, and consistent information that's available to the people who need it, when they need it. It's essential to be able to communicate that information quickly and effectively with everyone involved, from event staff to law enforcement and emergency responders.
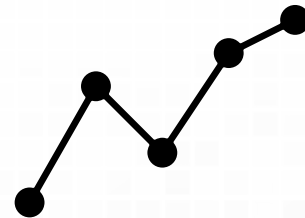
4. Incident Response

Being able to respond quickly to any incident, large or small, within the event is key to protecting the health and safety of attendees and the general public. Having the situational awareness, common operating picture, and efficient means of communication is essential for quick, effective response to any incident as it happens. It also helps to mitigate threats to safety, damage to property, and negative effects on brand reputation of the event or organizations involved in the event.

5. Assessment

Having a comprehensive record of all incidents that occurred during the event helps organizations prepare an after-event evaluation or assessment of what went right, what went wrong, how to mitigate or eliminate the negative aspects in future events.

Real Use Cases Involving Critical Incident Management Technology at Major Planned Events

Critical incident platforms have played a huge part in maintaining situational awareness at smaller events as well as some of the largest, most high-profile events in the world. Here are two examples:

Super Bowl LIII

More than 1 million people converged on the city of Atlanta over a span of a week, including a huge number of out-of-state visitors. Game day brought in 500,000 transit riders over a 24-hour period, and over 100,000 passengers were screened by TSA agents at the airport on the morning after the event. For months leading up to and throughout Super Bowl weekend, federal, state and local agencies monitored every event and incident including persons of interest, VIP events, unauthorized drones, suspicious packages, air quality, reported food poisoning, and more.

There were many challenges that had to be considered. The Super Bowl was basically one large planned event consisting of many other planned events, such as concerts and other activities held in different locations around the city throughout the week. Officials had to plan for events in a number of locations, many including celebrities and sports stars. Additionally, the sheer size of the event and its national implications required intricate coordination between numerous stakeholders at a variety of levels. The critical incident management platform they used connected emergency management, fire, law enforcement, medical first responders, local hospitals, transportation officials and other agencies at the local, state and federal level that would be required to respond at any time, at a moment's notice if an incident occurred.

Leveraging a critical incident management platform that was robust and flexible enough to accommodate a wide variety of agencies gave them a real-time common operating picture, allowing key stakeholders to work collaboratively to mitigate risks, and respond to any incident quickly and effectively.

Boston Marathon

The 123rd running of the Boston Marathon in 2019 brought a wide variety of scenarios for the event's planners to consider, as well as city and state agencies. Especially challenging was working to ensure the health and safety of over 30,000 participants taking part in the physically strenuous event along a 26-mile race route through the streets of downtown Boston, as well as thousands of spectators.

The event organizers and stakeholders had to consider a multitude of elements that could potentially come into play; not only public health and safety, but also monitoring traffic and street closures, weather, threats of violence, and more. Critical incident management platforms were an integral part of the event's preparation and response to any incidents during the event, and allowed seamless coordination and communication between multiple state and local agency partners.

In particular, the platform was utilized to communicate the status of medical facilities and first aid stations along the race route to the hospitals and medical centers in the greater Boston area, as well as to communicate situational awareness to various stakeholders within the metro area.

The solution was also used to track runners exiting or finishing the race with medical concerns and helped coordinate between first aid stations, EMS and hospitals, and also to facilitate family reunification for the event. Despite rain storms and lighting which caused some traffic light malfunctions, the event went smoothly with no major incidents reported.

How Can You Make Critical Incident Management Platforms Work for Your Planned Event?

The best critical incident management platforms have the flexibility and scalability to meet the specific needs of your event. In many cases, organizations can draw from the experiences of other organizations who have used the same critical incident management platform for similar planned events as well as unplanned, emergency situations.

Ideally, the solution you use would also have a community of users from other sectors, jurisdictions, and geo-graphical areas who can offer their assistance and recommendations about what types of processes worked best in planning, response, and mitigation, as well as the capability to find and deploy needed resources, to collaborate in real time.

Additionally, to be most effective, a critical incident management platform should be used on a day-to-day basis to coordinate daily activities and small events throughout the year. No incident is too small. The best training for users of a critical incident management platform is real world use.

Using the platform in smaller types of incidents makes larger events easier. Another advantage of day-to-day critical incident management platform use is that it gives users familiarity with the platform so they can react and respond quicker and more efficiently when a large-scale incident occurs.

Juvare Helps Organizations Prepare, Connect, and Respond – for Planned and Unplanned Events

At Juvare, our mission is to strengthen and optimize information sharing to empower preparedness and response professionals to protect people, property and brands. Juvare is the leading provider of critical incident management solutions.

Juvare solutions provide the situational awareness for critical incident management during large-scale planned events, unexpected emergency and disaster situations, and day-to-day operations, connecting your organization's data sources into a common operating picture that's configurable and easy to use. Corporations, healthcare facilities, and government agencies alike can use Juvare solutions to improve communications and information management before, during, and after all types of critical incidents.

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