

Planning for incidents at special events

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CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Abstract**

Forsyth County plays host to dozens of special events every year where hundreds to tens of thousands of participants gather. The problem is FCFD does not initiate a plan to deal with incidents that may occur at special events in Forsyth County. The purpose of this research is to determine the need for developing a plan to deal with potential incidents at special events in Forsyth County. The descriptive research method was used to conduct the research. Research included a literature review of current authors, surveys and interviews used to answer the following questions: a) what national standards are available regarding planning for special events? b) What steps are taken by other organizations to plan for special events? c) What criteria determine the need for an Incident action plan? d) What special events take place in Forsyth County? and e) what other agencies should be involved in planning for special events in Forsyth County? Surveys were completed by several Georgia fire departments to help answer the research questions. Interviews and personal communications were also conducted with several key members of the FCFD and others granting permission for special events. The research determined that event planning is conducted on international, national, state and local levels. The National Incident Management System is the desired structure for event planning. The majority of fire departments initiate event planning alone while others join with multiple agencies to plan. Most planning begins several months in advance and results in increased safety of responders, visitors and participants. Requests for medical assistance are the top need for response during special events. Several recommendations for FCFD include reviewing national standards, meeting and training stakeholders, updating the special events permit process, develop an action plan, and conducting exercises.

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## **Introduction**

Like most communities around the country, Forsyth County plays host to several special events throughout the year. The largest of which is the Cumming Country Fair which boasted that a whopping 154,406 people walked through the fair gates between October 2 and October 12, 2014. This year's attendance actually trailed last year's record attendance of 167,616. (Robins, 2014) Other special events range from 5/10k fun runs to the National BBQ Cup and a multitude of others. Forsyth County Fire Department (FCFD), through its emergency management division, has the mission "to provide a comprehensive and aggressive mitigation and emergency preparedness, response and recovery program for Forsyth County citizens in order to save lives, protect property and reduce effects of disasters" (2014).

The problem is FCFD does not initiate a plan to deal with incidents that may occur at special events in Forsyth County. The purpose of this research is to determine the need for developing a plan to deal with potential incidents at special events in Forsyth County. The descriptive research method was used to conduct the research. Research included a literature review of current authors, surveys and interviews used to answer the following questions: a) what national standards are available regarding planning for special events? b) What steps are taken by other organizations to plan for special events? c) What criteria determine the need for an Incident action plan? d) What special events take place in Forsyth County? and e) what other agencies should be involved in planning for special events in Forsyth county?

## **Background and Significance**

Forsyth County has been among the fastest growing counties in Georgia for at least the last decade. The Forsyth County Commission Chairman is quick to point out — it's not just growth, it's "good, quality growth." "Our growth has been pretty good to keep the quality of life

up and the quality of health up,” said Chairman Pete Amos. One day after being named Georgia’s healthiest county, Forsyth also maintained its rank as the fastest growing (Sami, 2014, p. 1). The US Census estimated the 2013 population of Forsyth County at 195, 405 (*Quick Facts*, 2015, p. 1). This number is a big difference from the 2000 population of 98,407 (*Demographics 2000*, n.d., p. 1). The main reasons for the steady stream of new residents making the trek north of Atlanta are **good schools and low taxes** (Southerland, 2014, para. 1).

The Forsyth County Fire Department has attempted to keep up with the growth. The Forsyth County Fire Department began in 1972 as the Forsyth County Fire Protection Committee, created in response to a residential fire claiming the life of a county resident. The county’s volunteer Fire Department was incorporated in 1973. The International Association of Fire Chiefs published in 1983 that Forsyth County, Georgia, with 336 volunteer firefighters on the roles, was the nation’s largest volunteer Fire Department. The volunteer Fire Department served the county until 1998, when the time came to establish a modern fire department and to hire 30 full-time, career firefighters (2014, p. 8).

Today, the department serves the citizens of Forsyth County with 140 suppression members, 12 fire stations, 12 engines/pumpers, 2 ladders, 1 technical rescue truck, 1 haz mat vehicle, 3 brush trucks, 3 water tenders. The administrative staff includes the Fire Chief, 4 Division Chiefs, and xx personnel working in training, inspections, investigations, and fire safety education. Staffing includes 139 personnel in suppression and 29 personnel in administration. (K. Wallace, personal communication, February 16, 2015)

The growth has brought its share of demand for the fire department’s emergency services. In 1999, only a year after the first 30 full time firefighters were hired, the department responded

to a few more than 6000 emergency responses. Fast forward to 2013 and the number of incidents is 12,768 and is expected to continue rising (2014, p. 23).

Forsyth County Ordinance 34 requires a Special Event Permit any time three or more participants wish to use public property or public roads for the purposes of holding a race, parade, assembly, or other similar activity. (Forsyth County Georgia website, n.d.) If the event involves the use of any county public road or right-of-way, a traffic control plan with an event route map must be provided with the application. The Forsyth County Sheriff's Office will review all applications and make recommendations for the need of off-duty deputies for traffic control. Off-duty deputies may be coordinated through the Sheriff's Office. Once the application is complete, it is returned to the County Manager for review. Applicants must allow a minimum of 15 days for the application to be processed. After review, the application is mailed to the applicant. It is the responsibility of the permittee to remove all trash left by participants of the event. The County Manager forwards a copy of each approved application to the several department heads including the Fire Chief as a courtesy. The Fire Chief in-turn forwards a copy of the permit to each member of the fire department for information as applicable.

The county ordinance does not apply to events that take place entirely on City of Cumming property and roads. These events are handled by the City of Cumming and take place almost exclusively at the city fairground site. A meeting with the Fairground Event Coordinator (T. Helms, personal communication, February 19, 2015) discovered that 38 events had been approved and held at the fairgrounds during 2014. The 2015 calendar of events for the fairground already has 38 events scheduled with future dates available. Records received from the County Manager's office (C. Haag, personal communication, February 19, 2015) showed that 44 special event permits were issued in 2013 and 47 of the permits were issued in 2014.

There is a definite link between the research problem and Unit 2 of the Executive Analysis of Fire Service Operations in Emergency Management (EAFSOEM) student manual. The community hazards emergency response – capability assurance process (CHER-CAP) addresses community all-hazard planning by assessing community hazards, improving emergency plans, involving key community members, assessing response capabilities, exercising emergency plans, and continuing to improve preparedness (U.S. Department of Homeland Security [DHS], 2014, p.2-4).

This research directly relates to two of the goals of the United States Fire Administration (USFA). The first goal is to “reduce risk at the local level through prevention and mitigation” (USFA, 2010, p. 14). The USFA understands that every disaster or emergency is local and personal, and being prepared is both an individual and collective responsibility. Prevention has to be a part of the public consciousness: automatically applied, regularly practiced, and always respected. The USFA’s second goal is to “improve local planning and preparedness” (USFA, 2010, p. 14). The USFA understands that fire and emergency medical services (EMS) personnel are part of the foundation of our Nation’s local first response capability and have a critical role to play in local planning and preparedness. The effectiveness an incident is handled at the local level is a direct result of the preparedness of the local responders and the communities they serve.

#### Literature Review:

##### **a) What national standards exist regarding planning for special events?**

In the summer months, there are a huge number of celebrations, festivals, concerts, fairs, outdoor sporting activities, and numerous other events that draw large crowds – and, largely for that reason, present difficult challenges. Under normal conditions, these events generally proceed



smoothly, and with few problems. However, local emergency managers must be ready when something does go wrong, which can happen as a result of either a natural, a technological, or a human-caused hazard (Goss, 2012, p. 5). Planning is the key to being ready. Organizations have ready access to several national standards to help with the process.

Goss (2012) points out that one of the key sets of guidelines for special events is the “Management of Domestic Incidents,” spelled out in Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD)-5 – which stipulates that the National Incident Management System (NIMS) be used in such events, just as it would during any other national-emergency situation.

NIMS integrates existing best practices into a consistent, nationwide, systematic approach to incident management that is applicable at all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector, and across functional disciplines in an all-hazards context. Five major components make up this systems approach: Preparedness, Communications and Information Management, Resource Management, Command and Management, and Ongoing Management and Maintenance (*NIMS*, 2008, p. 7). It is specifically the preparedness component that addresses special event planning.

Within NIMS, preparedness focuses on the following elements: planning; procedures and protocols; training and exercises; personnel qualifications, licensure, and certification; and equipment certification. Effective adoption, implementation, and training of all NIMS components in advance of an incident or planned event will facilitate collaborative emergency management and incident response activities. Preparedness is a foundational step in emergency management and incident response; therefore, the concepts and principles that form the basis for preparedness are an integration of the concepts and principles of all NIMS components (*NIMS*, 2008).

The training and qualification of response personnel is critical to the success of NIMS implementation nationally and should be considered a “national standard”. The NIMS Training Program lays out a framework that maintains a systematic process for the development of training courses and personnel qualifications (U.S. Department of Homeland Security [DHS], 2011). Most responders and planners will be required to take the following courses throughout their careers:

- ICS-100: Introduction to the Incident Command System
- ICS-200: ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents
- ICS-300: Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents
- ICS-400: Advanced ICS
- IS-700: National Incident Management System, An Introduction
- IS-701: NIMS Multiagency Coordination System (MACS)
- IS-702: NIMS Publication Information Systems
- IS-703: NIMS Resource Management
- IS-704: NIMS Communication and Information Management
- IS-706: NIMS Intrastate Mutual Aid – An Introduction
- IS-800: National Response Framework, An Introduction

Greatly simplified, IS 700 and ICS 100 are considered baseline courses; ICS 200 is next and ICS 300, ICS 400 and IS 800 are considered advanced courses. Personnel qualification as a whole consists of a combination of training, operational experience (during exercises or incidents), job shadowing, and other administrative requirements, such as agency association and criminal background checks (DHS, 2011). Most of these courses include scenarios that require

students to develop an incident action plan for a disaster/emergency that has already occurred and a special event that is planned for the future.

Texas A & M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) developed the Sports and Special Events Incident Management (MGT 404) course using funds from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) (Texas Engineering Extension Service/U.S. Department of Homeland Security [TEEX/DHS], 2014). Although the participant manual is not designed as a standard, the training it provides would be instrumental for an organization planning for special events. The course provides students with the skills to manage an incident using a multi-disciplinary management team approach as described in NIMS. It's designed to develop those involved in sports/special event management to better manage incidents that could occur during events.

Course topics include:

- The importance of partnerships in sports and special events management
- Risk identification and mitigation strategy development for sports and special events management
- Incident management for crises at sports and special events
- Resiliency strategies and post-incident actions for sports and special events
- An interactive role-playing exercise

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) developed the Special Events Contingency Planning, Job Aids Manual (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], 2010). The purpose of this manual is the prevention of injury, suffering, or death that may occur as a result of poor planning or preventable incidents at public events. The manual is intended to provide guidance for the management of risks

associated with conducting events that involve mass gatherings of people and assist planners and organizers in making such events safe and successful.

FEMA states the manual is for use by anyone planning or conducting a special event or mass gathering and anticipates that this manual will be distributed to event promoters, managers, public and private organizations, emergency service personnel, government bodies, and any individual or organization that contributes to the planning of events (FEMA, 2010).

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) develops national standards for fire departments. NFPA 1620: Standard for Pre-Incident Planning provides criteria for developing pre-incident plans to help responders effectively manage emergencies so as to maximize protection for occupants, responding personnel, property, and the environment. (National Fire Protection Association [NFPA], 2014) This document was approved as an American National Standard on December 1, 2014. Chapter 10 of the standard specifically addresses mass gatherings. It states “the pre-incident plan shall identify and document mass gathering events recognized by the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) that present life safety challenges, operations challenges, or other challenges to emergency responders. The AHJ is required to identify the need for, and level of detail for addressing mass gatherings in the pre-incident plan. When the pre-incident plan is determined necessary, the following items shall be included in the pre-incident plan and coordinated with other applicable agencies: access and ingress/egress, evacuation, weather, emergency medical services, security, traffic, crowd management, fire protection, food operations, pyrotechnics, aeronautical operations, communications, fuels, safety data sheets, contingency plans, special operations, temporary structures, and unified command post (NFPA, 2014).

Interestingly, during the first draft meeting in San Angelo, Texas the week of April 16-18, 2013 a major event occurred. On April 15, 2013, in Boston, Massachusetts, two bombs were set off near the finish line of the Boston Marathon. The NFPA 1620 committee discussed this event and included information on mass gatherings into the standard (NFPA, 2014).

Another national standard that specifically applies to mass gatherings, although specific to motorsport venues, is NFPA 610: Guide for Emergency and Safety Operations at Motorsports Venues. This document provides racetrack owners, operators, promoters, first responders, insurers, and sanctioning agencies with comprehensive guidelines for implementing safety and emergency response strategies. Guidelines apply to both indoor and outdoor motorsports events--at temporary or permanent facilities--with emphasis on planning and training as a means of ensuring that personnel are equipped with the appropriate resources to handle emergency situations. A sample emergency action plan and a checklist help personnel responsible for running simple events develop a comprehensive emergency action plan. NFPA 610 does not apply to non-motorsports events conducted at a motorsports venue (NFPA, 2013).

In summary, several guidelines or national standards exist for organizations to utilize in planning for special events. HSPD-5 gives direction directly from the U.S. President and stipulates that the NIMS be used in such events, just as it would during any other national-emergency situation. NIMS integrates existing best practices into a consistent, nationwide, systematic approach to incident management that is applicable at all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector, and across functional disciplines in an all-hazards context. The components of NIMS are adaptable to any situation, from routine, local incidents to incidents requiring the activation of interstate mutual aid to those requiring a coordinated Federal response, whether planned (e.g., major sporting or community events),

notice (e.g., hurricane) or no-notice (e.g., earthquake) (NIMS, 2008). A NIMS training plan is in place to ensure that personnel are trained in a systematic manner from the basic IS 700, ICS 100 through advanced courses ICS 300/400 and IS 800 (DHS, 2011).

FEMA offers the Special Events Contingency Planning, Job Aids Manual to provide guidance for the management of risks associated with conducting events that involve mass gatherings of people and assist planners and organizers in making such events safe and successful (FEMA, 2010).

NFPA 1620: Standard for Pre-Incident Planning contains a chapter dedicated to mass gatherings. It states “the pre-incident plan shall identify and document mass gathering events that present life safety challenges, operations challenges, or other challenges to emergency responders (NFPA, 2014).

Finally, NFPA 610: Guide for Emergency and Safety Operations at Motorsports Venues only applies directly to both indoor and outdoor motorsports events--at temporary or permanent facilities. However, a sample emergency action plan and a checklist help personnel responsible for running simple events develop a comprehensive emergency action plan (NFPA, 2013).

#### **b) How do other organizations prepare for special events?**

Organizations conduct special event planning at all levels. On an international level, one of the most witnessed special events is the Olympic Games. Russia’s 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics was an especially challenging event. One reason any Olympic Game is challenging is the fact that the dates and locations of the Games are made public years in advance of the games. Secondly, depending upon the location of the games, coastal or inland, and the time of year, winter or summer games, the complexity level of security grows exponentially. Sochi is located on the northeast coast of the Black Sea. Shadowed by the North Caucasus Mountains that tower

over the seaside resort, Islamist insurgency presented a daunting threat from all directions (Evancoe, 2013).

A robust emergency response capability is a major element required for all successful national-level and international special events. Guards, guns and gates are undeniably necessary measures. However, when things go wrong, the key to a successful outcome is to be able to respond appropriately, effectively, and in a timely manner to mitigate bad acts. Emergency response seems to be the conundrum that most conventional security efforts fail to recognize or adequately address (Evancoe, 2013).

Emergency response planners usually look backwards before looking forward. They often use after action reports and historical trends to scope their response assets' operational role. They also rely heavily on their many inter-agency and international partners for information (Evancoe, 2013).

Successful emergency response is the product of pro-active planning refined through countless after-action assessments conducted on both successful and unsuccessful operations. Conversely, when critical emergency response assets are misaligned or not adequately organized, equipped, trained and exercised, that crucial element will usually fail miserably when it is operationally applied (Evancoe, 2013).

Barack H. Obama was sworn in during the Fifty-Sixth Inaugural Ceremonies held in Washington D.C. on January 20, 2009. This event had the largest attendance of any Presidential Inauguration in U.S. history and had the largest attendance of any event in the history of Washington, D.C. (Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies [JCCIC], 2009, p. 1).

The District of Columbia's Homeland Security Emergency Management Agency (HSEMA) served as the lead D.C. agency in the planning effort. However, HSEMA planners realized that they would have to collaborate with other agencies throughout the National Capitol Region (NCR) due to the scope and size of the event. To prepare for the event, agencies throughout the region worked together on plans for communications, mass care, public health, sheltering, transportation, and the many other factors and situations involved. Although a single, all-inclusive NCR plan was not created, the collaborative agency plans effectively provided a safe and successful event for the approximately 1.8 million attendees (Smither, 2010, p. 22).

The District of Columbia Fire Department's (DCFD) inauguration planning began as far back as June 2008 when a committee made up of various agencies began meeting with the Secret Service, before the identity of the new president was even known (Thompson, 2009).

The DCFD used the previous inauguration plan as a guide to get them started, but realized that they may have to change things once the candidate had been selected. One of the department's major tasks for the inauguration ceremony was producing a mass evacuation plan, which outlined a string of considerations and measures which included:

- Enhanced signage, electronic message boards and 1,000 National Guardsman to help direct and control the flow of people.
- Most of the entire downtown area being closed to vehicular traffic, which helps deconflict pedestrian vs. vehicle issues.
- Fourteen fire stations along evacuation routes were used to treat injured people or to help in unification efforts. These stations were supplied with extra EMS supplies (Thompson, 2009).

The DCFD also took the following steps to ensure a safe event:



- Engine companies were placed inside secure areas to reduce the amount of time it would take to respond to an emergency.
- Personnel had to ensure they carried their ID at all times and were checked every time they left or entered one of these areas
- Every hotel in the city was inspected along with all inauguration ball sites leading up to inauguration, while metro systems also underwent extensive checks.
- Ensured the standpipe systems in tunnels worked, that the emergency power-down buttons were operating, and that the emergency exit shafts opened up.
- Mandatory inspection of all nightclubs and encouraged nightclub owners to police themselves in adhering to fire codes.

DCFD director of public information and community affairs, Billy Hayes, stated that “the plans that were put in place were phenomenal and the resources we had were pretty amazing” and “he was delighted with the role the department played in ensuring its success” (Thompson, 2009)

The St. Patrick’s Day Parade in Savannah is the second largest in the US, right behind New York. More than 300,000 people are expected to visit and enjoy the city-wide festivities (Six, 2015). Planning for the 2015 event started months ago. Past event planners have included representatives from various city departments, the St. Patrick’s Day Parade Committee, Chatham Area Transit, the Chatham Emergency Management Agency, the Army and Coast Guard, the Chatham County Sheriff’s Office, the Georgia State Patrol and other agencies (Coleman, 2014).

Southside Fire/EMS had 12 ambulances in six locations, golf cart-style emergency vehicles at four additional locations, and seven two-EMT bicycle teams assigned to different locations in the downtown area. The Savannah Police Department encouraged social media,

asking parade attendees to follow Savannah PD and a special St. Patrick's Day-themed city account on Twitter to stay updated on matters of public safety (Coleman, 2014).

Learning from past parades, event planners decided to change the parade route for the 2015 parade. Everyone in the parade will make left turns when they come to a square. This change will allow people to be able to get to portable toilets easier without having to cross the parade route. It will also allow trash crews to monitor the squares during the parade and for police access after the parade. Another lesson learned from past experiences involved underage drinking. Vendors will sell wrist bands to attendees allowed to purchase alcohol. Police are warning everyone about the crackdown and adults providing alcohol to minors could be cited and arrested (Davis, 2015).

In summary, organizations at all levels prepare for special events. The Olympic Games is one of the most known international recurring special events. The games have had their share of problem in history like the 1972 Munich Games and the 1996 Atlanta Games. These incidents were surely on the minds of the planners for Russia's 2014 Sochi Games as they understood that a great emergency response capability is the product of pro-active planning refined through countless after-action assessments of both successful and unsuccessful operations (Evancoe, 2013). Planners prepared a robust emergency response capability in addition to the guards, gates and guns required for security. They understood that when things go wrong, the key to a successful outcome is to be able to respond appropriately, effectively, and in a timely manner to mitigate bad acts (Evancoe, 2013).

Nationally, Barak Obama's swearing in at the Fifty-Sixth Inaugural Ceremonies was the largest attended of any Presidential Inauguration in U.S. history and had the largest attendance of any event in the history of Washington, D.C. (Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural

Ceremonies [JCCIC], 2009, p. 1). The District of Columbia's HSEMA served as the lead D.C. agency in the planning effort. To prepare for the event, agencies throughout the region worked together on plans for communications, mass care, public health, sheltering, transportation, and the many other factors and situations involved. The collaborative agency plans effectively provided a safe and successful event for the approximately 1.8 million attendees (Smither, 2010).

The District of Columbia Fire Department's (DCFD) inauguration planning began as far back as June 2008 when a committee made up of various agencies began meeting with the Secret Service (Thompson, 2009). They used a previous inauguration plan as a guide to get them started, but made necessary changes once the candidate had been selected. A major task for the ceremony was producing a mass evacuation plan. Other plans included relocating engine companies, building/systems inspections, adherence to fire codes and employee credentialing (Thompson, 2009).

Within the State of Georgia, one of the largest recurring special events is the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Savannah. It is the second largest in the US, right behind New York. More than 300,000 people are expected to visit and enjoy the city-wide festivities (Six, 2015). Planning begins months prior to the event. Event planners typically include representatives from various city departments, the St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee, Chatham Area Transit, the Chatham Emergency Management Agency, the Army and Coast Guard, the Chatham County Sheriff's Office, the Georgia State Patrol and other agencies (Coleman, 2014).

Southside Fire/EMS placed ambulances, golf cart-style emergency vehicles, EMT bicycle teams in the downtown area. The Savannah Police Department encouraged patrons to follow social media for public safety updates (Coleman, 2014).

Savannah St. Patrick's Day Parade planners learned from past parades and decided to change the parade route for the 2015 parade. The change assisted with crowd control, clean-up and security. Another change, intended to curb underage drinking, had vendors sell wrist bands to attendees allowed to purchase alcohol (Davis, 2015).

**c) What criteria determine the need for an event action plan?**

Every community faces the risk of incidents occurring that cause injuries or the loss of life of their citizens, property loss, and damage to their environment and economies. Most incidents caused by nature are reasonably predictable. Other incidents, whether human error or malice are less predictable, but do occur. These risks are always present at special events. Therefore, conducting pre-incident planning provides an opportunity to mitigate some of the consequences when such incidents occur. Lives and property may be saved as a result of effective pre-event planning (TEEX/DHS, 2014).

An event is a scheduled nonemergency activity such as a sporting event, concert, parade, etc. An incident is an unexpected occurrence that requires immediate response actions through an incident command system (ICS) organization (U.S. Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency [DHS/FEMA], 2013). Events provide planners with the benefit of foreknowledge. They have time and the ability to completely plan for the event while the situation is stable. They also have complete information and their limitations and restrictions are known. For incidents, time is of the essence. There is limited time for planning as the situation is unstable and rapidly expanding. Information is often incomplete (TEEX/DHS, 2014).

To plan effectively, the planner must be knowledgeable about the event. Important considerations include:

- The type of event
- The event participants
- The location, size, and expected duration
- Whether it is single or multi-jurisdiction/agency
- Command staff personnel needs (information, safety, or liaison)
- The kind, type, and number of resources required
- Staging areas required
- Other facilities required
- Logistical support needs
- Known limitations or restrictions
- Potential risks or threats to the event and implications for continuity of operations

Event planning provides a blueprint for managing both an event and any incident that may occur during the event. If the ICS system planning process and forms are used to develop the event plan, the transition from event management to incident management is significantly easier (TEEX/DHS, 2014)

NFPA 1620: Standard for Pre-incident Planning is written for emergency responders. The specific purpose is to develop pre-incident plans to assist personnel in effectively managing incidents and events for the protection of occupants, responding personnel, property and the environment (NFPA, 2014). Basically, if the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) determines that a mass gathering event presents life safety challenges, operations challenges, or challenges to emergency responders, a pre-incident plan should be documented.

Besides addressing the use of an incident management system, the following items shall be included and coordinated:

- Access and ingress/egress
- Evacuation
- Weather
- Emergency medical services
- Security
- Traffic
- Crowd management
- Fire protection
- Food operations
- Pyrotechnics
- Aeronautical operations
- Communications
- Fuels
- Safety data sheets
- Contingency plans
- Special operations
- Temporary structures
- Unified command post

(NFPA, 2014, Chapter 10).

In summary, it is the risk of incidents occurring at an event that drives the need for an event action plan. Events offer plenty of time to plan and emergency responders should take advantage of the training opportunity. If responders utilize the ICS system and forms in the planning process to develop the event plan, the transition from event management to incident management is simplified. If the authority having jurisdiction has determined that an event presents challenges to life safety, operations, to emergency responders, an event action plan should be written.

### **Procedures**

This research project began upon return from the Executive Analysis of Fire Service Operations in Emergency Management course at the National Fire Academy. The author provided two Forsyth County Fire Department (FCFD) Division Chiefs with a list of proposed topics. Technical Services Division Chief, Jason Shivers responded and narrowed the list to two topics that represented real problems within the department. With the concurrence of Chief

Shivers, the author then selected the topic with the purpose of determining the need to develop a (written) plan to deal with potential incidents at special events in Forsyth County, Georgia.

An extensive literature review was performed using the internet to provide the majority of information. The author began by checking the U. S. Fire Administration's (USFA) database of Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP) applied research projects for previous research papers that had been completed on the topic. Next, the Google search engine was used to gain further information. Several key words and or phrases used included: planning for special events, national standards, mass gatherings, fire department preparedness, etc. Countless articles, reports, web sites and web pages were read to gain a better understanding of the research topic.

The following procedures were used to answer the research questions:

- a) What national standards are available regarding planning for special events?

To determine the national standards that are available regarding planning for special events, the Google search engine was used with the key words: national standards, planning, special events, mass gatherings, National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), National Incident Management System (NIMS). Several research papers found in the USFA database were used to cross reference standards for event planning.

- b) What steps are taken by other organizations to plan for special events?

Research to determine the steps taken by other organizations to plan for special events began with a broad to narrow methodology. First, an international perspective was gathered by looking for a planned event that occurs often and in multiple countries. The web browser Google was used to search key words or phrases: International events, 2014 Olympic Games, lessons learned, Olympic tragedies, planning for large events, and emergency response plans for Olympic Games.

Next, a search for a large planned event inside the United States was initiated. The Google web browser was used with key words or phrases including: largest planned events in the United States, 2012 Presidential Inauguration, lessons learned, and fire department plans for inauguration.

Thirdly, a search was conducted for a large planned event within the State of Georgia. The Google web browser was used again with the key words or phrases: Largest planned events in Georgia, Savannah prepares for St. Patrick's Day parade, emergency planning, St. Patrick's Day parade attendance, Savannah Fire Department, and Southside Fire Department.

Related EFOP applied research papers from former students were also helpful to guide research methodology. The most recent writings were sought for all searches.

Finally, a "planning for special events" survey was created and sent to 75 members within the Georgia Association of Fire Chiefs (GAFC), the Metro Area Training Officers Association (MATO), the Northwest Georgia Fire Chiefs Association, and the Southeast Georgia Fire Chiefs Association. Recipients were asked the following questions on the survey:

- Q1 Does your department/organization initiate a written plan for special events such as parades, fairs, 5/10k races, food events, etc.?
- Q2 Who initiates the plan? (Host, LE, FD, EMS, etc.)
- Q3 Who is typically involved with the planning? (Host, LE, EMS, DPW, stakeholders, etc.)
- Q4 Are ICS or similar forms used such as an Event Action Plan or Incident Action Plan?
- Q5 What criteria is used to determine the decision to initiate a special event plan (crowd size, traffic, VIP presence, location, etc.)?



- Q6 Please list the name and estimated crowd size for each event requiring a plan?
- Q7 What benefits have resulted from your planning? (Safer event, orchestrated response, event organization, etc.) Please explain...
- Q8 When does the planning begin?
- Q9 Has your community experienced an “incident” during a planned event? Please describe.
- Q10 Do you follow a SOP/SOG? How often is it updated?
- Q11 Do you believe it would be a good idea to initiate a plan for future special events even if the only contingencies planned for involved your department, whether FD, LE, EMS, etc.?

c) What criteria determine the need for an event action plan?

To answer this question, the Google web browser was again used. Key words and phrases included: event action plan, planning for special events, mass gatherings, pre-incident planning, and NIMS. The author registered and attended the Sports and Special Events Incident Management course (MGT 404) hosted by a nearby Emergency Management Agency. The participant manual was beneficial in determining the need for an event action plan. The “planning for special events” survey was used to answer “what criteria determine the need for an event action plan.” Question five: “What criteria are used to determine the decision to initiate a special event plan (crowd size, traffic, VIP presence, location, etc.)?” and question six: “Please list the name and estimated crowd size for each event requiring a plan?” were specifically used to answer this research question.

d) What special events take place in Forsyth County?

Personal correspondence and personal interviews were conducted to identify the special events that take place in Forsyth County. First, the author emailed Carol Haag, Assistant to the County Manager (C. Haag, personal communication, February 20, 2015). She was able to supply a list of each approved special event for the past two years. Next, the author visited with Tracy Helms, Event Coordinator for the City of Cumming Fairgrounds (T. Helms, personal interview, February 25, 2015). He provided the 2014 and 2015 calendar of events for the Cumming Fairgrounds. Additional research was conducted using the Google web browser. Key words and phrases included: Cumming, GA, Forsyth County, GA, attendance at special events, Fourth of July, fireworks, and parade.

e) What other agencies should be involved in planning for special events in Forsyth County?

A personal interview was conducted with FCFD Field Operations Division Chief, Kevin Wallace, FCFD Technical Services Division Chief, Jason Shivers, FCFD Fire Marshal's office Division Chief, Barry Head and Fire Lieutenant, Greg Chapman. Each of the division chiefs are head of their respective divisions and report directly to the fire chief. The lieutenant is an officer in the operations division and leader of the special events bicycle team. Each member was asked the question: "What agencies should be involved in planning for special events in Forsyth County?"

One limitation of the research was a low percentage of surveys returned. The special events planning survey was emailed to 75 members and only 33 departments returned the survey. It could be considered that a limitation of the research was the fact that the special event planning survey was only emailed to departments within Georgia.

## Results

### **a) What national standards are available regarding planning for special events?**

The research found that there are a good number of national standards or guidelines that can be utilized for special event planning. Events occur every day in communities all over the country and usually end without incident. But local planners must be ready when something does go wrong. Goss (2012) points out that one of the key sets of guidelines for special events is Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD)-5 – which stipulates that the National Incident Management System (NIMS) be used in such events, just as it would during any other national-emergency situation.

NIMS is applicable at all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, and across functional disciplines in an all-hazards context (*NIMS*, 2008). Within NIMS, the preparedness component focuses on planning and training. The training portion is very important in preparing individuals to effectively manage an incident should one occur during a planned event. Most emergency response personnel (fire departments, law enforcement and emergency medical services) utilize the NIMS training like a national standard to prepare their personnel for incidents including those that may occur at planned events.

IS-700: National Incident Management System, An Introduction, and ICS-100: Introduction to the Incident Command System are considered the baseline courses for every responder. ICS-200: ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents is taken next. Most personnel that will be in command of an incident will then take IS-800: National Response Framework, An Introduction, ICS-300: Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents and ICS-400: Advanced ICS as advanced courses (DHS, 2011). Most courses include scenarios that require

students to develop an incident action plan for a disaster/emergency that has already occurred and a special event that is planned for the future.

Texas A & M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) developed the Sports and Special Events Incident Management (MGT 404) course (TEEX/DHS, 2014). The course focus is on large sporting events; however the principles can be used for any planned event. Key topics include the importance of partnerships, risk identification and mitigation, strategy development, incident management, resiliency strategies and post-incident actions. The course ends with an interactive role-playing exercise.

Another type of national standard developed by the federal government is the FEMA Special Events Contingency Planning, Job Aids Manual. The manual is for use by anyone planning or conducting a special event or mass gathering. FEMA anticipates the manual will be distributed to event promoters, managers, public and private organizations, emergency service personnel, government bodies, and any individual or organization that contributes to the planning of events (FEMA, 2010).

Next, research uncovered standards from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). NFPA 1620: Standard for Pre-Incident Planning provides criteria for developing pre-incident plans to help responders manage emergencies so as to maximize protection for occupants, responding personnel, property, and the environment. It was recently updated and approved as an American National Standard in December 2014. The update added a chapter to the standard to specifically address mass gatherings as a direct result of the Boston Marathon bombings of April 2013. Chapter 10 titled Mass Gatherings, states “the pre-incident plan shall identify and document mass gathering events that present life safety, operational, or other challenges to emergency responders (NFPA, 2014). When the pre-incident plan is deemed

necessary, the following items shall be included and coordinated with other applicable agencies: access and ingress/egress, evacuation, weather, emergency medical services, security, traffic, crowd management, fire protection, food operations, pyrotechnics, aeronautical operations, communications, fuels, safety data sheets, contingency plans, special operations, temporary structures, and unified command post (NFPA, 2014, Chapter 10).

NFPA 610: Guide for Emergency and Safety Operations at Motorsports Venues provided some insight to mass gatherings as well. The standard provides racetrack owners, operators, promoters, first responders, insurers, and sanctioning agencies with comprehensive guidelines for implementing safety and emergency response strategies. It applies to both indoor and outdoor motorsports events with emphasis on planning and training to ensure personnel are equipped with the appropriate resources for emergency situations. A sample emergency action plan and a checklist help personnel responsible for running simple events develop a comprehensive emergency action plan. (NFPA, 2013).

#### **b) How do other organizations prepare for special events?**

The literature review resulted in an overview of planned events on three levels; international, national, and state level. The international event studied was the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia. Evancoe (2013) stated that Olympic Games are challenging events due to the fact that the dates and locations of the games are made public years in advance of the games. Additionally, the location of the games and the time of year increase the complexity of security exponentially.

International and national-level events require a robust emergency response capability. Evancoe (2013) also points out that while guards, guns and gates are undeniably necessary, when things go wrong, the key to a successful outcome is to be able to respond appropriately,

effectively, and in a timely manner. He adds that emergency response seems to go unrecognized or is inadequately addressed by most conventional planners.

Emergency response planners often use after action reports and historical trends and rely heavily on inter-agency and international partners for information. Pro-active planning along with countless after-action assessments of successful and unsuccessful operations will result in successful emergency response. Conversely, when critical emergency response assets are misaligned or not adequately organized, equipped, trained and exercised, emergency response will usually fail miserably when operationally applied (Evancoe, 2013).

The Fifty-Sixth Inaugural Ceremonies held in Washington D.C. on January 20, 2009 was the national event studied. It had the largest attendance of any Presidential Inauguration in U.S. history and had the largest attendance of any event in the history of Washington, D.C. (JCCIC, 2009). Research determined that the District of Columbia's Homeland Security Emergency Management Agency (HSEMA) served as the lead D.C. agency in the planning effort. HSEMA planners collaborated with other agencies throughout the National Capitol Region (NCR) on plans for communications, mass care, public health, sheltering, transportation, and the many other factors and situations involved. Interestingly, a single, all-inclusive NCR plan was not created. Individual agency plans effectively provided a safe and successful event for the approximately 1.8 million attendees (Smither, 2010, p. 22).

The District of Columbia Fire Department's (DCFD) specific inauguration planning began in June 2008 when a multiple agency committee began meeting with the Secret Service long before the identity of the new president was even known (Thompson, 2009). They used a previous inauguration plan as a guide but allowed for change once the candidate was selected. DCFD produced a mass evacuation plan which included:

- Enhanced signage, electronic message boards and 1,000 National Guardsman to help direct and control the flow of people.
- Closing most of the downtown area vehicular traffic.
- Utilizing 14 fire stations as treatment/unification centers (Thompson, 2009).

The DCFD also took the following steps to ensure a safe event:

- Engine companies placed inside secure areas to reduce response time
- Full ID checks when entering secure areas
- Inspecting every city hotel and inauguration ball site
- Operational checks of fire protection systems in tunnels
- Inspection of all nightclubs

On a state level, the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Savannah was studied. With more than 300,000 people expected, it is the second largest in the U.S. (Six, 2015). Planning for the 2015 event started months earlier and included representatives from various city departments, the St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee, Chatham Area Transit, the Chatham Emergency Management Agency, the Army and Coast Guard, the Chatham County Sheriff's Office, the Georgia State Patrol and other agencies (Coleman, 2014).

The responsibility for emergency medical services fell on the Southside Fire/EMS. They staffed 12 ambulances, four golf cart-style emergency vehicles, and seven EMT bicycle teams. The Savannah Police Department updated the attendees on public safety concerns through the use of social media (Coleman, 2014).

The St. Patrick's Day Parade planners utilized lessons learned from previous parades in their planning. This led to a change in the parade route and changes to the way alcohol was sold to attendees (Davis, 2015).

Finally, a special events planning survey was created and sent to 75 members within the Georgia Association of Fire Chiefs (GAFC), the Metro Area Training Officers Association (MATO), the Northwest Georgia Fire Chiefs Association, and the Southeast Georgia Fire Chiefs Association. Of the 75 members that received the survey by email, 33 members responded over an eight week period, totaling a 44 percent return. Surveys were returned from each region of the state; however most were received from the Atlanta metropolitan area and the northern region of Georgia. Populations represented by survey departments varied from 2,500 to 900,000. In total, the 33 departments that responded to the survey served a population of 4.4 million residents in Georgia. Several survey questions helped answer the research question “How do other organizations prepare for special events.”

Survey question one asked: “Does your department/organization initiate a written plan for special events such as parades, fairs, 5/10k races, food events, etc.?” Twenty-five (76 percent) of the 33 departments answered that they or did initiate a written plan for special events. The other eight departments indicated that their departments were not involved in any planning for special events within their jurisdiction. One department was hopeful that they would start a planning process after June, 2015.

Survey question two asked: “Who initiates the plan?” Fire department initiated plans made up 10 of the 25 or 40 percent of departments that are involved in planning for events. Several more departments, seven of the 25 or 28 percent, joined with law enforcement or emergency management agencies to prepare plans jointly. Emergency management alone and the event host alone were answered by two departments each. Other single agencies responsible for initiating the plan included the department of planning and community affairs, law enforcement alone, recreation department, and planning and zoning.



Survey question three asked: “Who is typically involved with the planning?”

Overwhelmingly, 24 out of 25 (96 percent) respondents indicated that they used a shared or community approach to planning for special events. Those agencies that shared in the planning included the fire department, law enforcement, emergency management, public works, public health, department of community affairs, state police, event host, community stakeholders and various city and county leaders. One department shares their incident action plan in coordinating with the largest public college in the state. In answering the question, one department indicated that the battalion chief for the particular response area is “involved with the planning.”

Survey question 4 asked: “Are ICS or similar forms used such as an Event Action Plan or Incident Action Plan?” Once again, an overwhelming 24 out of 25 respondents (96 percent) indicated that they use ICS or similar forms. A couple of the departments were specific that they used the NIMS forms while one department was specific in the fact that they used the ICS 202, Incident Objectives; ICS 205, Communication Plan; and ICS 206, Medical Plan. The single department that did not use ICS or similar forms indicated they would recommend their use this year.

Survey question seven asked: “What benefits have resulted from your planning?” One respondent answered “proper planning has ensured the safety of responders, visitors and participants.” This one statement sums up a lot of what the others indicated. Other key responses include: “better communication and cooperation between multi-discipline units, everyone knows where to report and what their duties are.” “Overall the event is safer for patrons to attend; in the event of a response, units posted are ready to respond and move patients to predetermined location or transport to medical facility; all units know their roles and responsibility for the event.” “Coordinated approach to all operational considerations; improved

safety and communications; ability to apply lessons learned to planning; buy in from all involved organizations and stakeholders.” “When we run into situations during the event, the plan is there so everyone knows how to respond.” Some general benefits of planning listed by most respondents include: safer event, better communications, command and control, coordination between agencies, organized mobilization, response and demobilization leading to a safer event and recovery.

Survey question eight asked: “When does the planning begin?” Most respondents agreed that planning should start early. Some departments indicated that planning begins immediately after the event or is ongoing for annual events. Many indicated that they began planning several months prior to the event. Some others stated that 20 minutes may be enough time for small events or a few weeks may be required for other events. Most departments indicated that the nature of the event dictated how early planning would begin. Four departments indicated that permits were required for events in their jurisdiction and that planning began as soon as the permit was requested.

Survey question nine asked: “Has your community experienced an “incident” during a planned event? Please describe.” Of the 25 departments that indicated they initiate or participate in a planning process, three stated that they had zero incidents during planned events. The vast majority, 20 departments stated their department had responded to some incident during a planned event. Incidents listed by the departments included: EMS calls, vehicle accidents, criminal activity, lost person, and structure fires. Two of the departments that do plan for events did not answer this question.

Survey question ten asked: “Do you follow a SOP/SOG? How often is it updated?” Yes was the response by 15 (60 percent) of the departments. All 15 stated that they do follow an

SOP/SOG and these procedures/guidelines are updated at least every two years and several departments updated annually. Another five departments indicated that they did not follow an SOP/SOG, but did follow the incident action plan that was developed for the specific event. The last five responding departments indicated that they did not have a SOP/SOG for planning for special events.

Survey question 11 was intended to be answered by the departments that did not plan for events. If they answered “no” to the first question, they were instructed to skip to question 11. Question 11 asked: “Do you believe it would be a good idea to initiate a plan for future special events even if the only contingencies planned for involved your department, whether FD, LE, EMS, etc.?” All eight departments that indicated they did not participate in planning for special events answered yes to the question. Other departments answered the question also. Some of their comments include: “I believe planning is the foundation to being prepared and protecting our community. We need more agencies plugged in and involved in planning before the significant incident happens.” “It is a good idea to plan. Sometimes we are the only entity (FD) there, such as a small 5/10k. PD may only be blocking intersections. We usually establish a communications plan and a staging area for EMS.” “Yes I do; if for no other reason than to gain additional practice in IAP development.”

### **c) What criteria determine the need for an event action plan?**

Potential risks or threats to the event and implications for continuity of operations can be the criteria to determine the need for an event action plan. Every community faces the risk of incidents occurring that cause injuries or the loss of life of their citizens, property loss, and damage to their environment and economies. Pre-incident planning provides an opportunity to

mitigate some of the consequences when such incidents occur. Lives and property may be saved as a result of effective pre-event planning (TEEX/DHS, 2014).

Research found that NFPA 1620: Standard for Pre-incident Planning lists some criteria for an event action plan. The standard states that a pre-incident plan should be documented if the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) determines that the mass gathering event presents life safety challenges, operations challenges, or challenges to emergency responders, a pre-incident plan should be documented. The standard encourages the use of an incident management system (NFPA, 2014).

A few of the questions on the event planning survey helped to answer the research question: c) What criteria determine the need for an event action plan? Survey question five asked: “What criteria are used to determine the decision to initiate a special event plan?” Results indicated that most departments use crowd size or event size as the number one criteria for an event plan. Crowd size was listed by 22 departments or 88 percent of respondents. One of the thoughts influencing crowd/event size as a response is that it can quickly overwhelm or disrupt service delivery. Traffic, location, important persons or dignitaries, and location were listed as well. Two of the departments stated that they utilize an incident action plan for all events.

Survey question six asked respondents to: “Please list the name and estimated crowd size for each event requiring a plan. All except one of the 25 responding departments answered the question. Most departments listed an event by name with an estimated crowd size. Responses varied in size and included: Saint Patrick’s Day Festival (750,000) Georgia National fair (450,000) Dobbins Air Show (300,000), Tomorrow World music festival (150,000), college football game (98,000), Tall Ships festival (75,000), Shrine Circus (50,000), North Georgia State

Fair (30,000), Stone Mountain Yellow Daisy Festival (10,000). Others various events included 5/10k races, bike races, parades, rodeos, and festivals where hundreds to thousands of participants gather. One respondent answered “Any event that requires escort or fire/ems services” and another stated “any event sponsored by a non-governmental agency.”

**d) What special events take place in Forsyth County?**

Forsyth County plays host to several special events throughout the year. Personal correspondence and personal interviews resulted in a long list of events. Carol Haag, Assistant to the County Manager (C. Haag, personal communication, February 20, 2015) supplied the list of approved special event permits for 2013 and 2014. There were 44 special event permits approved in 2013. This list included 36 - 5/10k race events and eight other events including: a tax day rally, the Forsyth County March for Babies, the Cumming Steam Engine Parade/Concert, the Alliance Ride, a law firm ice cream social, a high school band march-a-thon, a trail run and a half marathon. There were another 45 permits approved in 2014. The list contained 31 – 5/10k race events. The other 15 events included: a tax day rally, home builder protest, private block party, March for babies, Ride for Relay for Life, Forsyth Century Challenge, a law firm ice cream social, the Alliance Ride, two half marathons, a cycling event, Praying on the Public Square, a wedding, and two high school band march-a-thons.

Next, the author interviewed Tracy Helms, Event Coordinator for the City of Cumming Fairgrounds (T. Helms, personal interview, February 25, 2015). He provided the 2014 and 2015 calendar of events for the Cumming Fairgrounds. Calendar year 2014 resulted in 38 events held at the fairgrounds. Events included 16 quarter midget race car events, a plant sale, the Taste of Forsyth, Relay for Life, Keep Forsyth County Beautiful recycling event, a high school graduation, a church event, July 4<sup>th</sup> festivities/fireworks, Annual Steam Engine Parade, antique

car show, IPRA World Championship Rodeo, Cumming Country Fair and Festival, The National BBQ Cup, and the Christmas in Cumming Arts & Crafts Festival. The Cumming Fairgrounds 2015 calendar of events resulted in the same 38 events scheduled as the 2014 calendar.

**e) What other agencies should be involved in planning for special events in Forsyth County?**

To answer this question, the first person interviewed was FCFD Field Operations Division Chief, Kevin Wallace. Chief Wallace answered that planning should involve the fire department, sheriff's office, City of Cumming Police Department, parks and recreation and the host of the special event K. Wallace, personal interview, March 18, 2015).

Fire Lieutenant Greg Chapman was interviewed next. He is the team leader for the FCFD special events bicycle team. He answered that planning should include the battalion chief and lieutenant that supervise the special events bicycle team, sheriff's office, City of Cumming Police Department, EMS, and the host of the event (G. Chapman, personal interview, March 24, 2015).

Chief Jason Shivers, FCFD Technical Services Division Chief answered with the following agencies: fire department, emergency management agency, sheriff's office, City of Cumming Police Department, E-911 communications, city/county road departments, state department of transportation, hospital, EMS, the event host and a designee of the county manager's office (J. Shivers, personal interview, March 30, 2015).

The final interview was conducted with FCFD Fire Marshal's office Division Chief, Barry Head. His list of agencies that should be involved with planning included: the fire marshal's office, fire department, sheriff's office, police department, EMS, emergency

management, roads and bridges, and department of transportation (B. Head, personal interview, March 30, 2015).

### **Discussion**

The purpose of this research was to determine the need for developing a plan to deal with potential incidents at special events in Forsyth County. Forsyth County and other communities across the nation have their share of events. There are a large number of celebrations, festivals, concerts, fairs, outdoor sporting activities, and numerous other events that draw large crowds – and, largely for that reason, present difficult challenges. Under normal conditions, these events generally proceed smoothly, and with few problems. However, local emergency managers must be ready when something does go wrong, which can happen as a result of either a natural, a technological, or a human-caused hazard (Goss, 2012).

Several national standards or guidelines are available to assist communities with the planning process. Goss (2012) points out that one of the key guidelines for special events is the comes straight from Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD)-5 – which stipulates that the National Incident Management System (NIMS) be used by departments responding to incidents and in planning for special events.

NIMS is a systematic approach to incident management that is applicable at all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, and across functional disciplines in an all-hazards context. Its five major components are: Preparedness, Communications and Information Management, Resource Management, Command and Management, and Ongoing Management and Maintenance (NIMS, 2008). The preparedness component addresses special event planning.

NIMS preparedness focuses on the following elements: planning; procedures and protocols; training and exercises; personnel qualifications, licensure, and certification. Preparedness is foundational in emergency management and incident response; therefore, the concepts and principles that form the basis for preparedness are an integration of the concepts and principles of all NIMS components (*NIMS*, 2008).

The training and qualification of response personnel is critical to the success of NIMS implementation nationally. The NIMS Training Program lays out a framework that maintains a systematic process for the development of training courses and personnel qualifications (DHS, 2011). Most responders and planners across the nation will be required to take the following courses throughout their careers:

- ICS-100: Introduction to the Incident Command System
- ICS-200: ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents
- ICS-300: Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents
- ICS-400: Advanced ICS
- IS-700: National Incident Management System, An Introduction
- IS-800: National Response Framework, An Introduction

Greatly simplified, IS 700 and ICS 100 are the baseline courses; ICS 200 is next in line and ICS 300, ICS 400 and IS 800 are considered advanced courses. Personnel qualification consists of a combination of training, operational experience (during exercises or incidents), job shadowing, and other administrative requirements, such as agency association and criminal background checks (DHS, 2011). Most of the courses include scenarios that allow students to develop an incident action plan for a disaster and a special event.



Texas A & M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) developed the Sports and Special Events Incident Management (MGT 404) course. The course provides students with the skills to manage an incident using a multi-disciplinary management team approach as described in NIMS. It's designed to develop those involved in sports/special event management to better manage incidents that could occur during events. The participant manual for the course provides great information that is instrumental for any organization planning for special events (TEEX/DHS, 2014).

Another great resource for planners is the Special Events Contingency Planning, Job Aids Manual developed by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Its purpose is the prevention of injury, suffering, or death that may occur as a result of poor planning or preventable incidents at public events. The manual provides guidance for the management of risks associated with conducting events that involve mass gatherings and assist planners and organizers in making such events safe and successful (FEMA, 2010).

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) develops national standards for fire departments. NFPA 1620: Standard for Pre-Incident Planning provides criteria for developing pre-incident plans to help responders effectively manage emergencies so as to maximize protection for occupants, responding personnel, property, and the environment (NFPA, 2014).

New to the revised NFPA 1620 standard, chapter 10 specifically addresses mass gatherings as a result of the Boston Marathon bombings. The chapter states “the pre-incident plan shall identify and document mass gathering events recognized by the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) that present life safety challenges, operations challenges, or other challenges to emergency responders. The AHJ identifies the need for, and level of detail for addressing

mass gatherings in the pre-incident plan. The following items shall be included in the pre-plan and coordinated with the applicable agencies as necessary: access and ingress/egress, evacuation, weather, emergency medical services, security, traffic, crowd management, fire protection, food operations, pyrotechnics, aeronautical operations, communications, fuels, safety data sheets, contingency plans, special operations, temporary structures, and unified command post (NFPA, 2014).

Another NFPA standard that specifically applies to mass gatherings, although specific to motorsport venues, is NFPA 610: Guide for Emergency and Safety Operations at Motorsports Venues. This document provides racetrack owners, operators, promoters, first responders, insurers, and sanctioning agencies with comprehensive guidelines for implementing safety and emergency response strategies. Guidelines apply to both indoor and outdoor motorsports events with emphasis on planning and training as a means of ensuring that personnel are equipped with the appropriate resources to handle emergency situations. A sample emergency action plan and a checklist help personnel responsible for running simple events develop a comprehensive emergency action plan (NFPA, 2013)

The second research asked: “How do other organizations prepare for special events?” Special event planning is conducted by all levels of organizations. On an international level, one of the most witnessed special events is the Olympic Games. Russia’s 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics was an especially challenging event. One reason any Olympic Game is challenging is the fact that the dates and locations of the Games are made public years in advance of the games. Secondly, depending upon the location of the games and the time of year, the complexity level of security grows exponentially (Evancoe, 2013).

A robust emergency response capability is a major element required for all successful national-level and international special events. Guards, guns and gates are very important measures, but when things go wrong, the key to a successful outcome is the ability to respond appropriately, effectively, and in a timely manner. Emergency response planners often use after action reports and historical trends to determine their response assets' operational role. They also rely heavily on inter-agency and international partners for information (Evancoe, 2013).

Successful emergency response is the product of pro-active planning refined through countless after-action assessments. Conversely, when critical emergency response assets are not adequately organized, equipped, trained and exercised, that crucial element will tend to fail miserably when operationally applied (Evancoe, 2013).

The Fifty-Sixth Inaugural Ceremonies for Barak Obama in January 2009 had the largest attendance of any Presidential Inauguration in U.S. history. It was also the largest attendance of any event in the history of Washington, D.C. (JCCIC, 2009). The District of Columbia's Homeland Security Emergency Management Agency (HSEMA) served as the lead D.C. agency in the planning effort. HSEMA planners realized early that the scope and size of the event would require extensive collaboration with other agencies throughout the National Capitol Region (NCR). To prepare for the event, agencies throughout the region worked together on plans for communications, mass care, public health, sheltering, transportation, and the many other factors and situations involved. The collaborative agency plans effectively provided a safe and successful event for the approximately 1.8 million attendees (Smither, 2010).

The District of Columbia Fire Department's (DCFD) inauguration planning began as early as June 2008. A committee made up of various agencies began meeting with the Secret Service before the identity of the new president was even known (Thompson, 2009).

The DCFD used the previous inauguration plan to get them started, but realized some changes would be necessary once the candidate had been selected. DCFD was tasked with producing a mass evacuation plan. Other plans included relocating engine companies, building/systems inspections, adherence to fire codes and employee credentialing (Thompson, 2009).

The St. Patrick's Day Parade in Savannah is the second largest in the US with more than 300,000 people expected to visit and enjoy the city-wide festivities (Six, 2015). Planning for this event begins months in advance. Event planners usually include the various city departments, the Parade Committee, county transit system, the county EMA, the Army and Coast Guard, county sheriff's office, the Georgia State Patrol and other agencies (Coleman, 2014).

Southside Fire/EMS provided 12 ambulances, golf cart-style emergency vehicles, and EMT bicycle teams assigned to different locations in the downtown area. The Savannah Police Department kept the public updated on public safety matters through social media (Coleman, 2014).

Lessons learned from past parades led planners to change the parade route for the 2015 parade. Changes assisted with crowd control, clean-up and security. Another change, intended to curb underage drinking, had vendors sell wrist bands to attendees allowed to purchase alcohol (Davis, 2015).

The special events planning survey was emailed to 75 members of Georgia fire associations. A response was received from 33 departments. The surveys garnered the following information:

Twenty-five (76 percent) of the 33 departments answered that they initiated a written plan for special events. The other eight departments indicated that their departments were not

involved in any planning for special events within their jurisdiction. In 40 percent (10) of the responses, fire departments initiated plans themselves. Another 28 percent (seven departments) joined with law enforcement or emergency management agencies to prepare plans jointly.

Emergency management alone and the event host alone were answered by two departments each. Other agencies responsible for initiating the plan included the department of planning and community affairs, law enforcement alone, recreation department, and planning and zoning.

Overwhelmingly, 24 out of 25 (96 percent) respondents indicated that they used a shared or community approach to planning for special events. The planning information was shared between the fire department, law enforcement, emergency management, public works, public health, department of community affairs, state police, event host, community stakeholders and various city and county leaders. Another 24 out of 25 respondents (96 percent) indicated that they use ICS or similar forms.

When asked about benefits resulting from planning, one respondent answered “proper planning has ensured the safety of responders, visitors and participants.” This statement sums up a lot of what the others indicated. Other key responses included: “Overall the event is safer for patrons to attend; in the event of a response, units posted are ready to respond and move patients to predetermined location or transport to medical facility; all units know their roles and responsibility for the event.” “Coordinated approach to all operational considerations; improved safety and communications; ability to apply lessons learned to planning; buy in from all involved organizations and stakeholders.” Other general benefits listed by most respondents included: safer event, better communications, command and control, coordination between agencies, organized mobilization, response and demobilization leading to a safer event and recovery.

Most respondents agreed that planning should start early. Some departments indicated that planning begins immediately after the event or is ongoing for annual events. Many indicated that they began planning several months prior to the event. Some stated 20 minutes may be enough time for small events or a few weeks may be required for other events. Most departments indicated that the nature of the event dictated how early planning would begin. Four departments indicated that planning began as soon as the event permit was requested.

Of the 25 departments that indicated they initiate or participate in a planning process, 20 departments stated their department had responded to some type of incident during a planned event while only three stated that they had zero incidents during planned events. Most of the incidents listed by the departments were EMS responses, vehicle accidents, criminal activity, lost person, and structure fires.

Standard operating guidelines or procedures (SOG/SOP) were used by 15 (60 percent) of the departments and these. These SOG/SOP's are typically updated at least every two years and several departments updated annually. Five departments indicated that they did not follow an SOP/SOG, but did follow the incident action plan for the specific event. Another five departments indicated that they did not have a SOP/SOG for planning for special events.

All eight departments that indicated they did not participate in planning for special events believed that planning was a good idea even if their organization was the only one doing it. Other departments answered the question also. Some of their comments include: "I believe planning is the foundation to being prepared and protecting our community. We need more agencies plugged in and involved in planning before the significant incident happens." "It is a good idea to plan. Sometimes we are the only entity (FD) there, such as a small 5/10k. PD may only be blocking intersections. We usually establish a communications plan and a staging area

for EMS.” “Yes I do; if for no other reason than to gain additional practice in IAP development.”

The third research question asked: “What criteria determine the need for an event action plan?” Communities face risks daily including: incidents that cause injuries or the loss of life of their citizens, property loss, or damage to their environment and economies. The same risks are always present at special events. Conducting pre-incident planning provides an opportunity to mitigate some of the consequences when such incidents occur and may result in lives and property saved (TEEX/DHS, 2014). Some might say that just having the risk is enough criteria to have a plan.

NFPA 1620: Standard for Pre-incident Planning states that if the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) determines that a mass gathering event presents life safety challenges, operations challenges, or challenges to emergency responders, a pre-incident plan should be documented.

The planning for special events survey indicated that most departments use crowd size or event size as the number one criteria for an event plan. Twenty-two departments or 88 percent of respondents listed crowd size as criteria for initiating an action plan. One of the thoughts influencing crowd/event size as a response is that these two factors can quickly overwhelm or disrupt service delivery. Traffic, location, important persons or dignitaries, and location were also listed. Two of the departments stated that they utilize an incident action plan for all events.

Some of the specific events that respondents initiated an incident action plan or event action plan for included: Saint Patrick’s Day Festival (750,000) Georgia National fair (450,000) Dobbins Air Show (300,000), Tomorrow World music festival (150,000), college football game (98,000), Tall Ships festival (75,000), Shrine Circus (50,000), North Georgia State Fair (30,000),

Stone Mountain Yellow Daisy Festival (10,000). Others various events included 5/10k races, bike races, parades, rodeos, and festivals where hundreds to thousands of participants gather.

The fourth research questions asked: “What special events take place in Forsyth County?” Assistant to the County Manager, Carol Haag, supplied the list of approved special event permits for 2013 and 2014. There were 44 special event permits approved in 2013 and another 45 permits approved in 2014. In both lists, 5/10k races accounted for over 30 events. Other event permits requested included: a tax day rally, home builder protest, private block party, March for babies, Ride for Relay for Life, Forsyth Century Challenge, a law firm ice cream social, the Alliance Ride, two half marathons, a cycling event, Praying on the Public Square, a wedding, and two high school band march-a-thons (C. Haag, personal communication, February 20, 2015).

Tracy Helms, Event Coordinator for the City of Cumming Fairgrounds provided the 2014 and 2015 calendar of events for the Cumming Fairgrounds. The fairgrounds hosted 38 events in 2014 and the 2015 schedule has the same events. Events listed include 16 quarter midget race car events, a plant sale, the Taste of Forsyth, Relay for Life, Keep Forsyth County Beautiful recycling event, a high school graduation, a church event, July 4<sup>th</sup> festivities/fireworks, Annual Steam Engine Parade, antique car show, IPRA World Championship Rodeo, Cumming Country Fair and Festival, The National BBQ Cup, and the Christmas in Cumming Arts & Crafts Festival (T. Helms, personal interview, February 25, 2015).

The final research question asked “What other agencies should be involved in planning for special events in Forsyth County?” To answer this question, three FCFD division chiefs and a fire lieutenant were interviewed. The division chiefs report directly to the fire chief and the lieutenant is the team leader of the special events bicycle team. All of the members agreed that



the fire department, sheriff's office, city police, and EMS were essential to be involved in planning for special events. Chief Wallace (K. Wallace, personal interview, March 18, 2015) added parks and recreation to his list. Chief Shivers (J. Shivers, personal interview, March 30, 2015) added E-911 communications and a designee from the county manager's office as important agencies. Chief Head (B. Head, personal interview, March 30, 2015) added the fire marshal's office for life safety inspections, and Fire Lieutenant Chapman (G. Chapman, personal interview, March 24, 2015) added the special events bicycle team supervisors to his list.

Although there were minor differences in the agencies that each member listed to be involved in special event planning, all members agreed that planning should be conducted by the FCFD.

### **Recommendations**

The purpose of this applied research project was to determine the need for developing a plan to deal with potential incidents at special events in Forsyth County. The following recommendations should be considered by the FCFD administration with the goal of helping responders effectively manage emergencies while maximizing protection for occupants, responding personnel, property, and the environment.

1. Review NFPA 1620: Standard for Pre-Incident Planning, specifically chapter 10 for new information on pre-planning for mass gatherings. Educate department members on the contents of the standard and consider how this information will influence planning for future events.

2. Make a list of all potential stakeholders (based on past events) and contributing agencies (law enforcement, EMS, etc.). Stress the importance of planning for special events in order to be ready for any situation that may arise. Additionally, educate the stakeholders and

contributing agencies on where to find free NIMS training online or provide the training through FCFD.

3. Request the Sports and Special Events Incident Management (MGT 404) course developed by Texas A & M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) be delivered in Forsyth County. Suggested attendees include FCFD division chiefs, battalion chiefs, leaders of contributing agencies and potential stakeholders.

4. Work with county officials to update the special events permit process to include FCFD as a reviewing/approving agency. The Fire Chief or his designee should review events to determine the level of planning required by FCFD based on the risks involved and the impact to life safety, FCFD operations, and emergency responders. Coordinate information with the operation division chief and begin planning as soon as the permit is approved.

5. Develop an Event Action Plan/Incident Action Plan format based on best practices from other agencies. Use this plan for special events and update as needed.

6. Conduct table top and field exercises prior to major events. Create scenarios that involve all contributing agencies and use lessons learned to improve planning.

Future readers should consider these recommendations within their own departments based on the special events held in their communities.

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APPENDIX A

Special Event Planning Survey

Survey recipient, This survey is for my third year paper for the Exevutive Fire officer Program. My research subject is planning for special events. Most of our communities have special events ranging from 5K runs to county or regional fairs, music venues or sporting events. I appreciate you taking the time to complete this survey. If you received this survey and you are not someone that can answer the questions, please pass it along to the correct person. Your honest and speedy response is appreciated. Please call 404-452-0822 if you have any questions. Please save and rename your survey as follows: department name.your last name.epsurvey (example: *forsythcounty.parker.epsurvey*) and return the completed survey to ZLPARKER@forsythco.com.

Questions	Please answer in detail!
What is your rank/name?	
Contact phone/email:	
Name of department/organization?	
Type of department/organization? Career, volunteer, combination	
Population size served by your department/organization?	
Q1 Does your department/organization initiate a written plan for special events such as parades, fairs, 5/10K races, food events, etc.?	
IF your answer is YES to Q1 please continue with 2 thru 10... If NO skip to Q11...	
Q2 Who initiates the plan? (Host, LE, FD, EMS, etc.)	
Q3 Who is typically involved with the planning? (Host, LE, EMS, DPW, stakeholders, etc.)	
Q4 Are ICS or similar forms used such as an Event Action Plan or Incident Action Plan?	
Q5 What criteria is used to determine the decision to initiate a special event plan (crowd size, traffic, VIP presence, location, etc)?	
Q6 Please list the name and estimated crowd size for each event requiring a plan.	
Q7 What benefits have resulted from your planning? (safer event, orchestrated response, event organization, etc.) Please explain...	
Q8 When does the planning begin?	
Q9 Has your community experienced an "incident" during a planned event? Please	
Q10 Do you follow a SOP/SOG? How often is it updated?	
Q11 Do you believe it would be a good idea to initiate a plan for future special events even if the only contingencies planned for involved your department, whether FD, LE, EMS, etc?	

APPENDIX B

Special Event Planning Survey Analysis

<b>Q1 Does your department/organization initiate a written plan for special events such as parades, fairs, 5/10K races, food events, etc.?</b>	
Arcade Fire Department	Yes
Athens-Clark Fire Rescue	Yes and No (only develop plan for UGA football home games
Barrow County Emergency Services	Yes, for parades, festivals and special events as determined by planning section
Bartow County Fire Department	Yes
Calhoun Fire Department	No
Cartersville Fire Department	Yes, for larger events
Catoosa County Fire Department	Yes
Chatahoochee Hills Fire Department	Yes
Cherokee County Fire	Yes
Cobb County Fire	Yes on larger events, Most 5/10k are covered under blanket procedure using bike teams
Columbus Fire/EMS	No
Covington Fire Department	Yes, use an IAP and AAP. FD and LE work very well together
Dalton Fire Department	Yes
Dawson County	Yes
Dekalb County Fire Rescue	Usually atleast 30 days out
Donalsonville Fire Department	Not at this time, hopefully after June 1, 2015
Douglas County	Not sure, Yes (review)
Fairburn Fire Department	Yes, utilize WEB EOC
Forest Park Fire Department	No
Fort Oglethorpe Fire	No
Gordon County Fire Department	No
Griffin Fire Department	No
Gwinnett County Fire Department	Yes, if large enough. 5k only if traffic impacted,
Hall County Fire Department	Sometimes
Hinesville Fire Department	Yes
Houston County Fire Department	Yes
Johns Creek Fire Department	Yes
Milton Fire Rescue	No
Morrow Fire Department	Yes
Peachtree City Fire Department	No
Savannah Fire Rescue	Yes
Warner Robins Fire Department	Yes
Whitfield County Fire Department	Yes, limited - most events occur in city of Dalton

Q2 Who initiates the plan? (Host, LE, FD, EMS, etc.)	
Arcade Fire Department	Fire Chief, Police Chief
Athens-Clark Fire Rescue	FD
Barrow County Emergency Services	County EMA
Bartow County Fire Department	FD
Calhoun Fire Department	N/A
Cartersville Fire Department	FD
Catoosa County Fire Department	Planning and Zoning Dept
Chatahoochee Hills Fire Department	Initiated by host in conjunction with all others involved
Cherokee County Fire	Planning and Community Affairs section of County
Cobb County Fire	Everyone involved
Columbus Fire/EMS	N/A
Covington Fire Department	FD starts, LE and EMS assist with information
Dalton Fire Department	Committee / Unified command
Dawson County	Joint effort - FD/EMS/EMA and sometimes LE
Dekalb County Fire Rescue	Host, DEMA, Fire Rescue and PD (AHJ)
Donalsonville Fire Department	N/A
Douglas County	Host
Fairburn Fire Department	FD
Forest Park Fire Department	N/A
Fort Oglethorpe Fire	N/A
Gordon County Fire Department	N/A
Griffin Fire Department	N/A
Gwinnett County Fire Department	FD
Hall County Fire Department	FD
Hinesville Fire Department	FD
Houston County Fire Department	FD, LE, EMS together
Johns Creek Fire Department	LE, FD, Public Safety
Milton Fire Rescue	N/A
Morrow Fire Department	Fire Chief, Training Capt
Peachtree City Fire Department	Recreation Dept
Savannah Fire Rescue	EMA - Unified plan
Warner Robins Fire Department	LE
Whitfield County Fire Department	Fire, EMA on larger events



Q3 Who is typically involved with the planning? (Host, LE, EMS, DPW, Stakeholders, etc.)	
Arcade Fire Department	Fire Chief, Police Chief
Athens-Clark Fire Rescue	Share the IAP with PD, EMS, UGA
Barrow County Emergency Services	EMA uses the enterprise approach bringing all stakeholders together
Bartow County Fire Department	Host, FD, EMA, EMS, LE
Calhoun Fire Department	N/A
Cartersville Fire Department	FD, PD, EMS, PW
Catoosa County Fire Department	Planning/zoning, FD, EMS, EMA, LE, Public Health
Chatahoochee Hills Fire Department	Event host admin, Fire Chief, city leaders, Police, PW
Cherokee County Fire	LE, FD, EMS, Pub Health, Fire marshals office, Community affairs office
Cobb County Fire	Everyone involved, public and private
Columbus Fire/EMS	N/A
Covington Fire Department	FD, LE (city, county, state), EMS, city departments
Dalton Fire Department	All involved public safety, host, relevant stakeholders
Dawson County	Joint effort - FD/EMS/EMA and sometimes LE + stakeholders
DeKalb County Fire Rescue	Host, DEMA, Fire Rescue, and PD based on event
Donalsonville Fire Department	N/A
Douglas County	Host, LE, FD, EMS, EMA
Fairburn Fire Department	FD, PD, PW, ASMIN, AFCEMA
Forest Park Fire Department	N/A
Fort Oglethorpe Fire	N/A
Gordon County Fire Department	N/A
Griffin Fire Department	N/A
Gwinnett County Fire Department	The Battalion Chief in response area
Hall County Fire Department	FD, EMA
Hinesville Fire Department	LE, EMS, EMA, FD, DPW
Houston County Fire Department	FD, LE, EMS together
Johns Creek Fire Department	FD, LE, EMS, PW, Host
Milton Fire Rescue	N/A
Morrow Fire Department	FD, PD, PW, city manager, depending on event
Peachtree City Fire Department	All divisions of local govt and host
Savannah Fire Rescue	all city bureaus
Warner Robins Fire Department	LE, FD, EMA, EMS, other FD's wishing to participate
Whitfield County Fire Department	Sheriff, FD, EMA, PW, State Patrol and Host

Q4 Are ICS or similar forms used such as event action plan or incident action plan?	
Arcade Fire Department	IAP
Athens-Clark Fire Rescue	IAP (ICS 202) communication plan (ICS 205) and Medical plan (ICS 206)
Barrow County Emergency Services	IAP per operational period
Bartow County Fire Department	Yes
Calhoun Fire Department	N/A
Cartersville Fire Department	NIMS forms are used
Catoosa Coaounty Fire Department	Yes
Chatahoochee Hills Fire Department	No, will be recommended this year
Cherokee County Fire	If warranted (multi-day, large crowd, special needs, or high impact potential to citizens or service area needs)
Cobb County Fire	Varies by event, may be on WORD document or IAP
Columbus Fire/EMS	N/A
Covington Fire Department	All NIMS forms are used as applicable
Dalton Fire Department	IAP almost always developed/published
Dawson County	Yes
Dekalb County Fire Rescue	DEMA uses ICS forms, Fire rescue submist a IAP when assisting PD (AHJ)
Donalsonville Fire Department	N/A
Douglas County	IAP
Fairburn Fire Department	IAP
Forest Park Fire Department	N/A
Fort Oglethorpe Fire	N/A
Gordon County Fire Department	N/A
Griffin Fire Department	N/A
Gwinnett County Fire Department	IAP
Hall County Fire Department	Yes
Hinesville Fire Department	Yes
Houston County Fire Department	Yes
Johns Creek Fire Department	Yes
Milton Fire Rescue	N/A
Morrow Fire Department	Yes
Peachtree City Fire Department	Yes
Savannah Fire Rescue	Yes
Warner Robins Fire Department	Yes
Whitfield County Fire Department	IAP is written

<b>Q5 What criteria is used to determine the decision to initiate a special event plan? (crowd size, traffic, VIP presence, location, etc.)</b>	
Arcade Fire Department	Size of event and number of participants
Athens-Clark Fire Rescue	Size of crowd and traffic
Barrow County Emergency Services	Crowd, traffic, VIP presence, location
Bartow County Fire Department	Crowd size expected
Calhoun Fire Department	N/A
Cartersville Fire Department	Crowd Ssize, traffic interruptions, location
Catoosa Coaounty Fire Department	Crowd, effect on public, public safety involvement
Chatahoochee Hills Fire Department	Crowd size, location, traffic
Cherokee County Fire	Large traffic flow change, VIP's, large crowds, on-site services, temp. structures, when resources would be overwhelmed
Cobb County Fire	Nature of event (Air show at AF base), crowd size, traffic
Columbus Fire/EMS	N/A
Covington Fire Department	Crowd, traffic, VIP presence, location
Dalton Fire Department	Crowd size and traffic
Dawson County	Size, crowd, VIP, traffic
Dekalb County Fire Rescue	Crowd size (air show), traffic-Cinco de Mayo, VIP
Donalsonville Fire Department	N/A
Douglas County	Crowd, traffic, VIP presence, location
Fairburn Fire Department	Crowd size, location
Forest Park Fire Department	N/A
Fort Oglethorpe Fire	N/A
Gordon County Fire Department	N/A
Griffin Fire Department	N/A
Gwinnett County Fire Department	Crowd size and traffic. Impacts operations, or need for large FD response
Hall County Fire Department	Complexity of the event, risk level
Hinesville Fire Department	Crowd size
Houston County Fire Department	Use IAP for all events
Johns Creek Fire Department	Size of event, crowd, geographic area
Milton Fire Rescue	No
Morrow Fire Department	Location, size of crowd
Peachtree City Fire Department	All events require permit and coverage is detailed in application
Savannah Fire Rescue	Crowd, traffic, VIP presence, location
Warner Robins Fire Department	Large crowds, temperature
Whitfield County Fire Department	Size and factors involved - if it may overwhelm/disrupt service delivery

Q6 Please list the name and estimated crowd size for each event requiring a plan.	
Arcade Fire Department	Any event that requires escort or Fire/Ems services
Athens-Clark Fire Rescue	There are approximately 98,000 people in town for a football game, plus our day to day population of 120,000.
Barrow County Emergency Services	July 4th, Festivals, Parades which includes monitoring weather type issues
Bartow County Fire Department	Counterpoint Music Festival 25,000+
Calhoun Fire Department	N/A
Cartersville Fire Department	Parades through downtown-10,000 people, July 4th celebration festival-7,500, Founder's Day Festival-4 day event-30,000
Catoosa Coounty Fire Department	Any event sponsored by a non-governmental agency
Chatahoochee Hills Fire Department	TomorrowWorld music festival, 150,000 people over a span of 4 days
Cherokee County Fire	A 2 hour street run 5 K would not, however a local rodeo, multiday event at a highschool or college.
Cobb County Fire	Dobbins Air Show (300,000+ over 2 days), KSU Owl-O-Ween (40,000+ over 2 days), Shakey Boots County Music Festival (25,000+ over 2 days), Shrine Circus (50,000+ over a 10 day period), North GA State Fair (30,000+ over a 10 day period), Acworth 4th of July (15,000+)
Columbus Fire/EMS	N/A
Covington Fire Department	depending on type of event it could be from 200 to 8,000+. Bike races, Halloween, July 4th, 5/10 K's, Parades, etc.
Dalton Fire Department	Falcons football night in Dalton (pre-season scrimmage between Falcons & Titans) 25,000, Tour de Georgia 10,000, Prater's Mill Country Fair appx. 4,000/day various parades in downtown area appx. 2,000-4,000 each
Dawson County	Mountain Moonshine Festival - 250,000 / Sparks in the Park 4th of July Celebration - 7500 / Visit by VP Joe Bidden - 250 / 5 and 10K races
Dekalb County Fire Rescue	PDK Good Neighbor Day (Air Show) 10,000 +, Dunwoody Lemonade Days 10,000 +, Stone Mountain Yellow Daisy Festival 10,000 +, Emory University Events 5,000 +, Various 5K events
Donalsonville Fire Department	N/A
Douglas County	N/A
Fairburn Fire Department	Fairburn Fall Festival Est. 50,000, Mayoral Inauguration 10,000, Winter Christmas Tree Lighting 5,000
Forest Park Fire Department	N/A
Fort Oglethorpe Fire	N/A
Gordon County Fire Department	N/A
Griffin Fire Department	N/A
Gwinnett County Fire Department	City fireworks, Buford and Norcross Concerts, Duluth Fall Festival
Hall County Fire Department	GEAR full scale exercise. 300 people.
Hinesville Fire Department	100
Houston County Fire Department	Not a set amount, we started using it at the National Fair total for 10 days 450,000
Johns Creek Fire Department	5K+
Milton Fire Rescue	No
Morrow Fire Department	July 4 fireworks - 2500-3000 Torch Run 5K - 400-600
Peachtree City Fire Department	Great Georgia Airshow 15000 down to 5K walk with 100
Savannah Fire Rescue	Saint Patrick's Day Festival - 750,000 - 1,000,000; Rock n Roll Marathan - 25,000 - 50,000; Tall Ships - 75,000
Warner Robins Fire Department	July 4th fireworks- approx. 20,000. Southeast Little League games vary between several hundred to several thousands depending on teams. Local = more
Whitfield County Fire Department	Parades- usually based on how many streets and how long they will be closed. Sporting events- if crowd is larger than normal expectations.

Q7 What benefits have resulted from your planning? (Safer event, orchestrated response, event organization, etc.)	
Arcade Fire Department	Personel safety , Emergency response in case of accident
Athens-Clark Fire Rescue	Better communications, better coordination, better prepared to respond, opportunity to practice sharing information and working with surrounding fire departments.
Barrow County Emergency Services	Proper planning has ensured the safety of responders, visitors and participatance
Bartow County Fire Department	Safer event, better coordinated response, better logistics preparation in advance, and all emergencies are addressed in a timely manner
Calhoun Fire Department	N/A
Cartersville Fire Department	Safer event, less traffic congestion, minimized confusion if emergency occurs, faster response time during events
Catoosa Coaunty Fire Department	Crowd safety, multi-agency coordination.
Chatahoochee Hills Fire Department	Benefits include safer event, accountability, effective and efficient operations and ability for all involved to work as a team towards common goals
Cherokee County Fire	More preplanning by event planners. They are now made to think about service deliveires that they once did not think about.
Cobb County Fire	Better communication and cooperation between multi-discipline units, everyone knows where to report and what their duties are.
Columbus Fire/EMS	N/A
Covington Fire Department	All (safer event, orchestrated response, event organization, etc.). Also the City Seeing that we know what we are doing and are proactive and reactive in our operations. They love to see our IAP and AAP's for th events.
Dalton Fire Department	coordinated response and centralized command structure (through use of UC model), safer, more fluid access & egress for crowds/participants, defined responsibilities for all involved
Dawson County	Coordinated approach to all operational considerations / improved safety and communications / ability to apply lessons learned to planning / by in form all involved organizations and stakeholders
DeKalb County Fire Rescue	Overall the event is safer for patrons to attend. In the event of a response units posted are ready to respond and move patients if needed to predetermined location or transport to medical facility. All units know their roles and responsibility for the event.
Donalsonville Fire Department	N/A
Douglas County	Much Safer events, coordination between participating agencies, better coverage of events.
Fairburn Fire Department	Communications, Command and Control
Forest Park Fire Department	N/A
Fort Oglethorpe Fire	N/A
Gordon County Fire Department	N/A
Griffin Fire Department	N/A
Gwinnett County Fire Department	Besides the benefits you have listed to the side here, one of the biggest benefits is working with the cities and city leaders within our county. Our BCs have become liaisons for our department which have increased relations with our many cities in Gwinnett.
Hall County Fire Department	Increased safety, avoids duplication of efforts, most details get addressed, increased situational awareness.
Hinesville Fire Department	event organization and prestaging of equipment for response
Houston County Fire Department	When we run into situations during the event, the plan is there so everyone knows how to respond
Johns Creek Fire Department	Better communications, Emergency operations
Milton Fire Rescue	No
Morrow Fire Department	event safety, rapid response and extrication of patients
Peachtree City Fire Department	Our special events team can be on the same page with the host organization. The needs and required permits are orchestrated in these meeting. This organization allows the group to make the event safer and allows notice to the community.
Savannah Fire Rescue	More organized mobilization, response and demobilization leading to a safer event and recovery.
Warner Robins Fire Department	Everyone knows what their organizational assignments are and things are generally more organized from public safety perspective. Safer for
Whitfield County Fire Department	Our ability to access and egress site. Stage personnel and equipment, Identify additional needs such as 4 wheelers for access, LZ's etc.

Q8 When does the planning begin?	
Arcade Fire Department	Usually atleast 30 days out
Athens-Clark Fire Rescue	We develop each plan weekly and meet the Wednesday (same shift on duty that will be on duty game day) before the game to discuss potential challenges and anything unique happening. We conduct an informal table top on that Wednesday with the Battalion Chief using hypothetical scenarios and talking through how we would handle it.
Barrow County Emergency Services	at least 2 months prior to the event
Bartow County Fire Department	Months before the event
Calhoun Fire Department	N/A
Cartersville Fire Department	For events that are held annually the planning is ongoing, for events that are considered a one time event the planning phase starts once the event is announced
Catoosa Coaunty Fire Department	Permit requests must be submitted 90 days prior to event date.
Chatahoochee Hills Fire Department	Planning begins immediately after the end of the event for the next year. We are in the planning stages now for the concert in Sept 2015
Cherokee County Fire	Our county has an ordienance you must apply for a permit, this then is sent out to a set list of departments to review and check off on.
Cobb County Fire	Up to weeks or months before the event depending on the size.
Columbus Fire/EMS	N/A
Covington Fire Department	Depending on the event 2 to 6 months out.
Dalton Fire Department	depends on event size, but usually 2-3 months prior for larger events
Dawson County	Dependent upon the event and the ammount work needed to develop
Dekalb County Fire Rescue	Months in advance for the larger events.
Donalsonville Fire Department	N/A
Douglas County	We notify the host as soon as they request permits or make notice that they will have to provide an IAP along with all contact information of any private EMS services they contract for the event.
Fairburn Fire Department	2-3 weeks before the event
Forest Park Fire Department	N/A
Fort Oglethorpe Fire	N/A
Gordon County Fire Department	N/A
Griffin Fire Department	N/A
Gwinnett County Fire Department	Depends, usually at least 1 month out
Hall County Fire Department	Typically several weeks before.
Hinesville Fire Department	As soon as the event is presented.
Houston County Fire Department	Months in advance
Johns Creek Fire Department	Many months prior to the event
Milton Fire Rescue	No
Morrow Fire Department	dependant on event
Peachtree City Fire Department	This depends on the size and scope of the event. Some events may take 20 minutes others take weeks.
Savannah Fire Rescue	60 days prior to events
Warner Robins Fire Department	about two months out but been doing the same for long enough that doesn't require much time to prepare now.
Whitfield County Fire Department	Depending on the size of the event, minimum of a month so we can staff properly.

Q9 Has your community experienced an "incident" during a planned event? Please describe.	
Arcade Fire Department	Only EMS emergency while commanding a 5 k run
Athens-Clark Fire Rescue	Not what I would call a significant incident. We have experienced car/woods fires, and a high volume of ems calls within the stadium on very hot days.
Barrow County Emergency Services	No
Bartow County Fire Department	Yes, multiple medical emergencies, minor smoke scares, vehicle accidents, and code violation issues have been addressed
Calhoun Fire Department	N/A
Cartersville Fire Department	Yes
Catoosa Coounty Fire Department	Yes, Medical calls
Chatahoochee Hills Fire Department	Nothing that would be categorized as major
Cherokee County Fire	Nothing major, overheating, basic EMS . Did have an event stand have a
Cobb County Fire	Just some EMS calls. No major incidents or issues.
Columbus Fire/EMS	N/A
Covington Fire Department	LE chase out side the Secured area to Structure Fire outside the area.
Dalton Fire Department	none other than minor medical responses
Dawson County	Yes - medical calls, fire calls, and search and resuce (missing persons)
Dekalb County Fire Rescue	We have had patrons require emergency medical services during events.
Donalsonville Fire Department	N/A
Douglas County	N/A
Fairburn Fire Department	Yes, but minor
Forest Park Fire Department	N/A
Fort Oglethorpe Fire	N/A
Gordon County Fire Department	N/A
Griffin Fire Department	N/A
Gwinnett County Fire Department	Nothing large, usually just increased medical calls. Although several years ago a tree fell on a bunch of people at a car show in Norcross. I can't remember if it was from lightning or not?
Hall County Fire Department	Yes. structure fire during GSAR exercise, units that were pre-designated responded so that units involved didn't have to.
Hinesville Fire Department	Yes. During a concert, the ticket booth was robbed at gun point. Due to the prestaging of the resources, there was a quick response that lead to an arrest.
Houston County Fire Department	Minor nothing major.
Johns Creek Fire Department	No
Milton Fire Rescue	No
Morrow Fire Department	yes, Various EMS events that have proven to work well with the plan on removing and transporting patient.
Peachtree City Fire Department	Yes, We have medical issues and other problems that arise from the event. No major incident has occuriud during a scheduled event.
Savannah Fire Rescue	Yes - Typical incidents occur during any event held in Savannah such as cardiac arrest, MVAs, injurues, fires, suspicious packages, criminal activities, etc.
Warner Robins Fire Department	N/A
Whitfield County Fire Department	No

Q10 Do you follow a SOP/SOG? How often is it updated?	
Arcade Fire Department	No just IAP Developed by Fire Chief
Athens-Clark Fire Rescue	No, we prepare and plan around the IAP that is tweaked and updated after each game.
Barrow County Emergency Services	yes every operations reviews their own SOP's prior to the event
Bartow County Fire Department	No, we do not have an SOG for planned events
Calhoun Fire Department	N/A
Cartersville Fire Department	SOG and SOP and it is reviewed annually and updated as needed
Catoosa Coounty Fire Department	Each department involved follows individual policies and guidelines.
Chatahoochee Hills Fire Department	No. However, an SOP/SOG will be recommended for this years planning/event.
Cherokee County Fire	No
Cobb County Fire	Just the standard ICS recommendations for event planning
Columbus Fire/EMS	N/A
Covington Fire Department	Yes, they are updated annually per our Accreditation Process.
Dalton Fire Department	I believe the SOG that governs this type of planning is held by Whitfield County Emergency Management. DFD does not have an SOG for this type of IAP development; only for hazardous materials and/or large scale (real world) responses
Dawson County	Yes - typically every 2-3 years
Dekalb County Fire Rescue	We have SOGs in place. These are reviewed every 2 years and updated as needed.
Donalsonville Fire Department	N/A
Douglas County	Yes SOG and we review annually.
Fairburn Fire Department	We review annually and revise when we determine it is necessary
Forest Park Fire Department	N/A
Fort Oglethorpe Fire	N/A
Gordon County Fire Department	N/A
Griffin Fire Department	N/A
Gwinnett County Fire Department	We utilize an Incident Action Plan form
Hall County Fire Department	No we do not have a specific sog regarding this.
Hinesville Fire Department	Yes, annually
Houston County Fire Department	Yes. Every 2 years
Johns Creek Fire Department	Yes Annually
Milton Fire Rescue	No
Morrow Fire Department	no... planning by committee only
Peachtree City Fire Department	Yes, Annually or as needed
Savannah Fire Rescue	Yes, two year cycle
Warner Robins Fire Department	we follow the ones that are our department specific and generally review annually and update as needed.
Whitfield County Fire Department	We do, a full review has not happened in years but is underway as an annual event.



<b>Q11 Do you believe it would be a good idea to initiate a plan for future special events even if the only contingencies planned for involved your department, whether FD, LE, EMS, etc.?</b>	
Arcade Fire Department	
Athens-Clark Fire Rescue	I believe planning is the foundation to being prepared and protecting our community. We need more agencies plugged in and involved in planning BEFORE the significant incident happens.
Barrow County Emergency Services	Yes
Bartow County Fire Department	N/A
Calhoun Fire Department	N/A
Cartersville Fire Department	Yes it is a great benefit for our department. Also it gives everyone experience for the planned events and also this experience can be used for emergencies and unplanned events
Catoosa Coounty Fire Department	Yes, depending on the size and scale of the event
Chatahoochee Hills Fire Department	Yes, this will enhance efficiency and safeguard against complacency if such an incident were to occur. Planning is key and synergy between all parties make a better operation
Cherokee County Fire	Yes, this way you know that an event is going to happen and you can be better prepared.
Cobb County Fire	It is a good idea to plan. Sometimes we are the only entity there, such as a small 5/10K. PD may only be blocking intersections. We usually establish a communications plan and a staging area for EMS.
Columbus Fire/EMS	N/A
Covington Fire Department	Yes, it always good to be Proactive with a plan for an incident/event and not reactive with an incident/event or agnecies.
Dalton Fire Department	Yes, I do; if for no other reason to gain additional practice in IAP development.
Dawson County	Without a doubt!
Dekalb County Fire Rescue	There is never any harm in planning. In small event venues our normal response guidelines are set to handle these situations. Events that will see thousands of visitors where traffic plans need to be established, medical services need to be provided, transport may be necessary, and the event requires an IC command structure then the proper time should be devoted to pre-planning.
Donalsonville Fire Department	N/A
Douglas County	Yes I believe all events should have advanced planning in anticipation of needs.
Fairburn Fire Department	No, we like to involve all departments.
Forest Park Fire Department	N/A
Fort Oglethorpe Fire	N/A
Gordon County Fire Department	N/A
Griffin Fire Department	N/A
Gwinnett County Fire Department	Yes
Hall County Fire Department	Yes
Hinesville Fire Department	Yes
Houston County Fire Department	Yes
Johns Creek Fire Department	Always a good idea
Milton Fire Rescue	No
Morrow Fire Department	N/A
Peachtree City Fire Department	Yes, It has worked very well for our community.
Savannah Fire Rescue	Yes
Warner Robins Fire Department	Yes
Whitfield County Fire Department	Yes, would like it to involve all concerned parties, but if they do not want to participate it is our duty to be ready for these planned events. At a minimum it's a good training exercise to get less experienced staff some real experience.

APPENDIX C

Special Event Planning Survey Demographics

<b>Survey Demographics</b>	<b>Respondant rank</b>	<b>Type of Department</b>	<b>Population served</b>
Arcade Fire Department	Fire Chief	Volunteer	2,500
Athens-Clark Fire Rescue	Fire Chief	Career	120,000
Barrow County Emergency Services	Deputy Chief Operations	Career	75,000
Bartow County Fire Department	Deputy Chief	Combination	103,000
Calhoun Fire Department	Deputy Chief	Career	15,000
Cartersville Fire Department	Battalion Chief	Career	20,000
Catoosa Coounty Fire Department	Battalion Chief	Combination	145,500
Chatahoochee Hills Fire Department	Lt Training Div	Combination	2,500
Cherokee County Fire	Spec ops Chief	Combination	250,000
Cobb County Fire	Spec ops Div Chief	Career	717,000
Columbus Fire/EMS	Division Chief	Career	202,000
Covington Fire Department	Dep Chief Ops	Career	25,000
Dalton Fire Department	Training Coord	Career	40,000
Dawson County	Fire Chief	Combination	22,500
Dekalb County Fire Rescue	Dep Chief	Career	707,000
Donalsonville Fire Department	Captain	Combination	10,000
Douglas County	Dep Chief	Career	137,000
Fairburn Fire Department	Div Chief	Career	13,693
Forest Park Fire Department	Major	Career	17,000
Fort Oglethorpe Fire	Fire Chief	Combination	9,000
Gordon County Fire Department	Dep Chief	Combination	56,000
Griffin Fire Department	Lieutenant	Career	25,000
Gwinnett County Fire Department	Battalion Chief	Career	900,000
Hall County Fire Department	Battalion Chief	Combination	180,000
Hinesville Fire Department	Deputy Chief	Career	34,500
Houston County Fire Department	Asst Chief	Combination	52,742
Johns Creek Fire Department	Asst Fire Chief	Career	85,000
Milton Fire Rescue	Fire Chief	Career	36,000
Morrow Fire Department	Captain	Career	6,700
Peachtree City Fire Department	Asst Chief	Combination	36,000
Savannah Fire Rescue	Spec Ops Div Chief	Career	167,000
Warner Robins Fire Department	Fire Chief	Career	74,000
Whitfield County Fire Department	Fire Chief	Combination	105,000