



County of Los Angeles
**Anti-Racism,
Diversity,
& Inclusion**

CREATING AN LA COUNTY
WHERE WE ALL THRIVE



Community Sensitive Site Safety Blueprint

Compiled by the County of Los Angeles Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion (ARDI) Initiative



The County of Los Angeles supports the coordination of community gatherings as ways to publicly provide information, engage with community in important dialogue, promote community and interagency collaboration, and provide opportunities to celebrate community diversity. During these interactions, the safety and security of attendees is of high priority and steps are needed during the planning of each event to ensure the safety of participants are considered and addressed. Unfortunately, a recent increase of identity-based violence and hate crimes occurring at rallies and demonstrations have led to the interruption and cancellation of several community events in Los Angeles County and posed a threat to public safety. This document is intended to provide general safety guidelines for anyone organizing community events, including LA County employees, community and faith-based organizations, non-profits, and families.

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If you need immediate assistance due to an emergency, please contact 911.

Contacting 9-1-1

In case of an emergency, call 911 to reach out for help from law enforcement, the fire department, or medical professionals. If you find yourself in a life-threatening situation in LA County where you are unable to make 911 calls or dialing on your phone may put your life in danger, text to 911. Your emergency text message will be routed to the local 911 call center who will coordinate an emergency response to your location.

For more information regarding text to 911, visit the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) website: <https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/what-you-need-know-about-text-911>.



General In-Person Preparedness Protocols: Prepare for the Unexpected

As a community event organizer, always prepare for emergencies and disasters to protect the wellbeing of all attendees. The Los Angeles County region is subject to earthquakes, floods, landslides, wildfires, tornadoes, urban fires, tsunamis, hazardous material releases, terrorism, and civil unrest¹. It is extremely important prior to any event to document and communicate information about emergency exits and evacuation plans in anticipation of any emergency; however, much more goes into emergency preparedness and should be part of your event planning.



Plan for Potential Disasters During Community Events

Emergency situations become disasters when they overwhelm the resources needed to protect our community. In a disaster, County departments and first responders will do everything possible to save and protect lives, property, and the environment. However, large disasters may completely overwhelm law enforcement, fire, medical, and other safety personnel when responding to multiple incidents and competing public safety needs. First responders will need to focus their efforts in the areas where they can have the greatest impact by helping severely endangered people and heavily impacted areas first. It is possible, even likely, that some areas may not get professional assistance for days after a disaster has occurred.

The LA County Office of Emergency Management has identified four steps to preparedness that can help inform specific emergency and disaster preparedness strategies. These steps are relevant to community events in any setting:

1. [Have a Plan](#). This includes documenting evacuation routes, important contact information, and more.
2. [Keep Supplies](#). It is important to have basic first aid supply kits.
3. [Stay Informed](#). Register to receive notifications from relevant sources such as Alert LA County and others.
4. [Get Involved](#). Know the neighborhood and identify necessary training such as the [Community Emergency Response Teams \(CERT\)](#) training taught by local fire and law enforcement agencies.

To learn more, visit the Ready LA County [website](#).

¹ Ready LA County: Have a Plan. <https://ready.lacounty.gov/have-a-plan>

Emergency Team

Establish a dedicated emergency team for every event. Assign defined roles to each team member, depending on event size, type, and location. Some roles will need to be active prior and during the event. Examples of roles include:

- **Emergency team lead:** The emergency team lead oversees the implementation of the emergency and disaster strategies designed to protect event attendees. The person in this role must know the event's emergency plan and have the necessary information for contacting local law enforcement agencies, including which emergency agencies have jurisdiction over the event location. This person will also communicate with local law enforcement agencies prior to the event to ensure law enforcement representatives are aware of when the community event will take place. The emergency lead will also take other precautionary steps such as knowing about the security system available at event (e.g., where emergency exits, fire extinguishers, and security cameras are located, the layout of the location, and potential risks specific to the venue or communities in attendance).
- **Point of Contact:** This person is identified as the event organizer, and on some occasions, can also serve as the emergency team lead. Representatives of partner agencies participating in the event should have the necessary information to be able to communicate with the event's point of contact via cell phone, email, text, radio, and other various forms of communications. The point of contact can also have a backup email address in case main email address is hacked by people who want to interrupt the event.
- **Social Media/News Monitor:** This role is crucial to understanding if there are groups of people coordinating a demonstration or planning to interrupt the event. This is especially relevant to organizations, communities, and/or events with a prior history of being protested or receiving violent threats. Follow social media accounts of people or groups that could have an interest in disrupting or interrupting the event.
- **De-escalation team:** Assign this role to one or more people. It is important for security staff members to have knowledge about de-escalating dangerous or difficult situations involving people exhibiting angry, agitated, violent, or aggressive behavior. People that can be a good fit for this role include mental health professionals and social workers, as well as people with expertise in other disciplines. The Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Agency (CISA) has published [de-escalation tactics](#) that can be valuable to people assigned to an event's de-escalation team. CISA's recommendations include tips on taking purposeful actions, verbal communication techniques, and body language awareness.



Special Event Security Considerations for Organizations

Event planners should consider the following factors to help determine the appropriate venue and emergency team configuration for community meetings:

Life Safety

- Does the facility have fire and smoke detectors?
- Where are the fire extinguishers, defibrillators, first aid kit, and other life safety equipment located?
- Describe the emergency exits of the facility.



Facility Security

- Does the facility have operating security cameras and if so, is the footage accessible? How long is the footage retained?
- Describe the access control for the event.
- Consider when and how public to make the event location and time.
- Can guests purchase tickets at the door, or do they need to be vetted ahead of time?
- Describe the guest check-in process, including guest list, identification verification, and bag check protocols.
- Is the facility providing security guards, and, if so, how many? Have they been properly trained in crowd management, de-escalation methods, and managing unruly persons?
- Is the facility providing security detection equipment?

Organizational Considerations

- Does the planning organization plan to provide security guards or other trained safety personnel?
- Will staff members/volunteers work the event? If so, where will they be physically placed?
- Who is the staff member designated as the lead during the event?
- Who is the staff member designated as the liaison for any security concerns?
- Has the organization informed law enforcement of the event in advance and if so, what department?
- Has the organization's security team conducted a site walk?
- Have relevant staff discussed security in advance of the event?
 - If staff and/or volunteers will be on-site, are they properly trained to deal with disruptive/unruly persons or protestors? Are they trained and informed on how to respond to and/or elevate security or safety threats that may arise during the event?
- Are there any other security considerations?
- Does the organization (or the facility) have an incident response plan? Are staff and volunteers trained on that plan?



Bomb Threats

Bomb threats involve any communication that indicates the presence of, or intent to detonate, an explosive device. While these threats can be connected to actual acts of violence in which explosives are used, they are increasingly used as a tactic to disrupt, distract, or harass locations or organizations². Gain insight into how to plan for, assess, and respond to bomb threats at a specific location. Bomb threats are mostly received via phone but are also made in person or via email, social media, written note, or other means.

Retain all information regarding the incident (such as usernames, email addresses, websites, phone numbers, or names of platforms, etc.) and report it to local law enforcement. If a suspicious item is discovered or the threat is elevated, treat it as an emergency by contacting 911. CISA has a page dedicated to understanding and planning for a bomb threat. To access this information, visit the [CISA website](https://www.cisa.gov/bomb-threats).

Crowd Control

There are steps that you can take to manage crowds at an event:

- **Have a registration system** (e.g., Eventbrite, Google Forms, Microsoft Forms). This will ensure you have contact and any other necessary information about the people who are signing up to attend.
 - Set up a registration table for in-person meetings to ensure people entering the event have completed the necessary registration. Determine, depending on the event type, if people can register in person the day of the event (e.g., a person coming to represent someone else who was registered).
- **Security Checkpoints:** Depending on the type of community meeting, consider hosting the event in facilities that have security capabilities at the entrance to check for dangerous items in purses, bags, and backpacks of people entering the event.
- **Consider the relevance of having equal or similar representation from various organizations or communities attending an event.** Depending on the meeting type, this practice can help prevent attendees feeling underrepresented and undervalued. It can also prevent some groups from feeling empowered to dismiss the opinion of others due to their overrepresentation, contributing to possible hostile or violent behavior.



2 Bomb Threats. <https://www.cisa.gov/bomb-threats>

Secure Virtual Events

Video conferencing has emerged as a pervasive tool for business continuity and sustained social connection. Although increased telework and online collaboration tools provide necessary capabilities, video conferencing has increased the attack points exploited by malicious actors³. The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has compiled recommendations for virtual meetings to help maintain the security of meeting attendees:

- Follow your organization’s policies for virtual meeting security.
- Limit the reuse of access codes; if you’ve used the same code for a while, you’ve probably shared it with more people than you can imagine or recall.
- If the topic is sensitive, use one-time PINs or meeting identifier codes and consider multi-factor authentication.
- Use a “green room” or “waiting room” and don’t allow the meeting to begin until the host joins. This can also help ensure people joining the meeting have registered. You may also consider assigning staff to individually verify the names and email addresses of registered attendees in the waiting room before allowing entry into the meeting.
- Don’t record the meeting unless it is necessary.
- If it is a web meeting with video:
 - Disable features you don’t need (e.g., chat, file sharing, or screen sharing).
 - Especially for events with high numbers of attendances, consider using “seminar” or presentation mode, which limits features to attendees.
 - Consider using a PIN to prevent someone from crashing your meeting by guessing your URL or meeting ID.
 - Limit who can share their screen to avoid any unwanted or unexpected images. Before anyone shares their screen, remind them not to share sensitive information inadvertently.



Visit the NIST [website](#) for more information.

Additionally, CISA has compiled recommendations specific to popular video conferencing platforms to consider in this [document](#). Regardless of the platform that you use for virtual meetings, make sure the application is up to date with its latest updates to ensure the latest security protections available are applied.

³ Guidance for Securing Video Conferencing. https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/CISA_Guidance_for_Securing_Video_Conferencing_S508C.pdf

Safety Tips for Event Attendees

Attending community events can be a joyful and empowering experience. Consider these tips to help you stay safe while enjoying the event:

Before an Event

- **Plan Ahead:** Research the event location, schedule, and any entry requirements. Know the layout of the area, including exits, first aid stations, and safe zones. Identify nearby safety resources, including health facilities, law enforcement stations, and safe reunion sites where you can meet with others if you are separated during an emergency or evacuation.
- **Tell Someone:** Inform a friend or family member about your plans, including where you're going and when you expect to return.
- **Check Weather Conditions:** Dress appropriately for the weather, and bring sunscreen, water, and weather-appropriate clothing.
- **Charge Your Phone:** Fully charge your phone before leaving home and consider carrying a portable charger or extra battery pack.
- **Share Your Location:** Consider using location-sharing features on your phone to keep friends and family updated on your whereabouts.
- **Backup Data:** Especially at large gatherings, cellular service may be disrupted or unreliable. Consider downloading any important data onto your phone so you may access it offline, including event information. This may include using offline map features on [Google Maps](#) and [Apple Maps](#) to download geographic information and enable navigation support even without internet service.
- **Emergency Contacts:** Have emergency contact numbers saved in your phone, including local authorities and event organizers.



During the Event

- **Stay Hydrated:** Drink plenty of water, especially if you're outside in the sun.
- **Keep Belongings Secure:** Use a secure bag or fanny pack. Avoid carrying valuables and keep your phone and wallet in a safe place.
- **Stay Connected:** Use a buddy system. Stay with friends or a trusted group and have a designated meeting point in case you get separated.
- **Be Aware of Your Surroundings:** Stay alert to what's happening around you. Avoid distractions like excessive phone use.
- **Look Out for Others:** Be an ally and look out for others who might need assistance. If you do not feel comfortable intervening in a situation you may witness, identify event staff or other attendees who may be able to assist.
- **Protect Your Personal Information:** Be cautious about sharing personal information with strangers, including by accessing accounts or information on your phone that may be visible to others around you. Avoid wearing a work badge or other identifying markers. Do not feel pressured to reveal any personally identifiable information with strangers.
- **Leave If You Feel Unsafe:** If at any time you feel unsafe, leave the area immediately and find a safe place or contact someone you trust.

Personal Safety

- **Self-Defense Tools:** Carry small self-defense items like a whistle, pepper spray, or a personal alarm if you feel comfortable doing so. Know how to use these items properly before you go, and confirm whether such items will be allowed into the event.
- **Respect Personal Boundaries:** Respect others' personal space and boundaries and expect the same in return.
- **Recognize Safe Spaces:** Identify safe spaces, such as event organizers' booths or designated help points, where you can go if you feel unsafe.



Health Considerations

- **Follow Public Health Guidelines:** Stay up to date on ways to protect yourself from COVID-19, flu, and other relevant illnesses. This might include wearing masks, practicing social distancing, and using hand sanitizer.
- **First Aid Knowledge:** Familiarize yourself with basic first aid, including CPR and wound care. Know where to find first aid stations.

After the Event

- **Confirm Your Safety:** Check in with friends or family to let them know you're safe. Avoid leaving without the people who came with you before knowing they're safe (e.g., have a ride with a trusted person).
- **Monitor Your Health:** After gatherings, monitor your health for any signs of illness and get tested or seek medical care if necessary.
- **Reflect and Share:** Reflect on your experience and share any safety concerns or positive feedback with event organizers.

If You Get Arrested or Detained

- **Stay Calm:** Keep your emotions in check. Staying calm can help you think more clearly and avoid escalating the situation.
- **Know Your Rights:** In many places, you have the right to remain silent. Politely inform the arresting officer that you are exercising this right. You also have the right to ask for a lawyer. Clearly state that you want to speak to an attorney.
- **Do Not Resist:** Do not physically resist arrest. Even if you believe the arrest is unjust, resisting can lead to additional charges.
- **Provide Identification:** Provide your name and basic identification if asked, but you are not required to answer questions beyond that without a lawyer present.
- **Contact a Lawyer:** Ask to contact your lawyer immediately. If you don't have one, request a public defender.
- **Document the Incident:** If possible, remember or write down details about the incident, including the officers' names, badge numbers, and any witnesses.





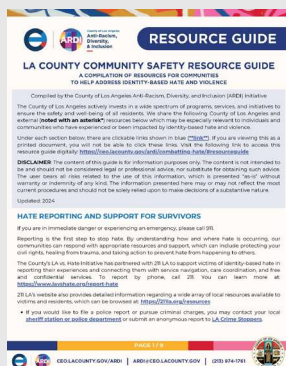
- **Use Your Phone Call Wisely:** You may be allowed one phone call. Use it to contact someone who can help you, such as a family member, friend, or lawyer.
- **Do Not Sign Anything:** Do not sign any documents without your lawyer present.

By following these tips, you can help ensure a safe and enjoyable event experience for yourself and others. Celebrate with and take care of each other.

Training

There are various types of training available that can be beneficial to build capacity in your emergency teams.

- **First Aid:** The American Red Cross offers in-person and on-line first aid classes to help you gain the skills you need to help others during times of crisis and recognize the signs that someone needs help and administer the right type of care. Certification courses are available for the public and medical professionals alike. Visit their [page](#) for more information.
- **Hands-Only CPR:** Many people who survive a cardiac emergency are helped by a bystander. You can learn how to perform Hands-Only CPR to help deliver life-saving care until professional responders arrive. Visit the American Red Cross [website](#) for more information.
- **Bystander Intervention:** LA vs Hate is partnering with [Right To Be](#) to provide free bystander intervention training to LA County employees and residents. Take the training and share it with your network, so you can advocate for others in the face of hate. These trainings are free, and there are other useful training topics available at the Right To Be website, including Preventing and Responding to Harassment, Conflict De-escalation, Resilience, and How to lead discussions.



Learn more

Compiled by the Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion (ARDI) Initiative, this guide serves as a resource for communities to help address identity-based hate and violence. The County of Los Angeles invests in a wide spectrum of programs, services, and initiatives to ensure the safety and well-being of all its residents. In this guide, we share both County of Los Angeles and external resources which may be especially relevant to individuals and communities who have experienced or been impacted by identity-based hate and violence. To view and download the guide, click [here](#).



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