

EVENT SECURITY AND SAFETY TIP SHEET

Given the rise of Islamophobia and hate crimes targeting the Muslim community, it is important that event organizers be prepared to respond effectively to potential threats or disruptions. This tip sheet has been produced to help Muslim Council of Peel member organizations hosting events in the current climate consider security and safety in Islamic centres, schools, banquet halls, community centres and other public venues. It is also a helpful tool for any event organizer tackling a topic which may attract protests or disruptions from individuals motivated by anti-Semitism, Islamophobia or any other form of xenophobia.

Tips

Volunteers

1. Assign event manager and a strong master of ceremonies/MC. These roles cannot be filled by the same person. The Event Manager has to be in active communication with registration, ushers and guests. The MC has to be in control of the program, regardless of any disruptions and prepared to communicate instructions when a disruption happens.
2. Recruit appropriate number of volunteers and assign specific duties at the registration table and to usher guests.
3. Your volunteers should be clearly identifiable with badges, t-shirts, vests, etc. on the day of the event.
4. You should have a way in which to communicate with your volunteers. This can be radio, cell phones, or Whatsapp.

Registration

5. Your events are private in most cases, unless you are in a very public or open venue where you cannot control who attends. Because your events are private, you can restrict who attends. All events *should require* pre-registration. This can be by email, through your website, through online tools like Eventbrite, or by phone/fax.
6. Guests not pre-registered must sign-in with identification, If they refuse to show legal identification, you have the right to refuse them entry to the event.

Venue

7. Visit the venue in advance of the event. Meet with facility manager and inquire about security features of the facility and who to contact in case of an emergency or disruption.
8. Do a walkthrough of the facility prior to the event day.
 - Note all exits, washrooms, fire extinguishers, difibulators, garbage bins, security cameras, etc.
 - Minutes before the start of the event, do another walkthrough and ensure that everything is in the same place. Take note of any unusual objects and notify facility security

Security

9. Establish a written security protocol and communication strategy, including who to call and when and who takes charge and makes decisions in case of an emergency or disruption.
10. Identify potential risks to security or disruptions, including protestors and Islamaphobes.

11. For high profile or high risk events, depending on the topic and profile of presenters, hire police officers and external security company to pre-empt potential disruptions.
12. Provide training to all volunteers and ensure they are familiar with your security protocols and communication strategy.
13. Ensure that everyone on your volunteer team is familiar with any potential threats or disruptive persons.
14. If someone forces their way through registration and manages to enter the event or becomes disruptive at any point, the event manager can delegate ushers to escort the individual out of the room, call facility security to assist, or even contact police for help.
15. A volunteer should be designated to video record any potential incidents in case evidence is required.
16. The Master of Ceremonies should continue managing the program, and advise the audience to remain calm, to avoid engaging with the hecklers, and to maintain order in the room.

For further information or clarification, contact Rabia Khedr, Executive Director of the Muslim Council of Peel, at 647-760-9541. We welcome your feedback on this tip sheet. Please let us know of any errors or omissions that will help improve its usability. Email executivedirector@mcpeel.ca your specific comments.