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Introduction

The Olympic Games is the largest of all world-class sporting events held in one location, and can be viewed as a model for how other large-scale events are planned and managed. Such events in the US include the World Series, the Super Bowl, visits from foreign religious and political dignitaries, political conventions, and even large music and rock festivals. On the world stage, economic and political summits, World Cup soccer and similar events would fit into this category.

Like the Olympics these are high-visibility events with large economic implications, ripe for social or political protest, and potential targets for terrorism and/or local violence.

This paper examines safety and security operations at the 2002 Winter Olympics, which serves as a platform for considering important issues that need to be addressed in managing other such large-scale events. Based on a similar experience at the 1996 Atlanta Summer Olympic Games, a team of criminologists implemented an assessment of safety and security issues at the 2002 Utah Winter Games. The observations of this event provide the basis for the evaluation presented in the present study. The purpose of the study was to build a better understanding of the complexities in developing temporary organizations that are responsible for delivering safety and security services in the context of such events.