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STRUCTURED SANITARY PREPARATION TO MASS GATHERINGS

STRUKTURALNE UPORZĄDKOWANIE SANITARNO-EPIDEMIOLOGICZNYCH PRZYGOTOWAŃ DO ZGROMADZEŃ MASOWYCH

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STRESZCZENIE

Strukturalnie uporządkowane przygotowania do masowych zgromadzeń są oparte na zestawach punktów do sprawdzenia. W wielu krajach zastały opracowane specjalne formularze zawierające punkty, których sprawdzenie jest wymagane przed uzyskaniem pozwolenia na zorganizowanie imprezy masowej. Istnieją też znacznie obszerniejsze instrukcje, które mają za zadanie pomóc organizatorom w przygotowaniu bezpiecznych imprez masowych. Instrukcje te zawierają informacje dotyczące zagrożeń w czasie imprez oraz wskazania organizacyjne, które porządkują i systematyzują przygotowanie imprezy.

Polska ustawa w sprawie bezpieczeństwa imprez masowych poświęca wiele miejsca służbom porządkowym, natomiast bezpieczeństwo sanitarne pozostawia ocenie Inspektorom Państwowej Inspekcji Sanitarnej, bez sprecyzowania i ujednoczenia wymagań odnośnie przygotowań infrastruktury w miejscu imprezy. Autor podkreśla potrzebę zarówno ujednoczenia wymagań w tym zakresie jak i przygotowania instrukcji do przeprowadzania kontroli w miejscu imprez masowych, która to instrukcja zawierałaby wyraźne sformułowanie punktów, jakie należy przed wydaniem zezwolenia na zorganizowanie imprezy masowej sprawdzić.

Słowa kluczowe: *Masowe zgromadzenia, inspekcja sanitarna, normy sanitarne*

ABSTRACT

Structured sanitary preparation to mass gatherings is based on the set of instructions and legal requirements which are different for different jurisdictions. In many countries special checklists are used for itemized scrutiny of the sanitary preparation to the event. Those checklists are present in two forms. One is relatively short list of legal requirements necessary for obtaining permit to organize mass gathering event. Another is much larger set of questions which contains itemized comprehensive review of activities advisable for effective organization of the event. It includes safety measures as well as logistic structure of effective organization.

Polish legal bill on mass gatherings deals extensively with security measures, but sanitary supervision is left to Sanitary Inspection without any specifications of points to be checked and without clearly stated norms for sanitary infrastructure at the venues. The Authors stress the need for uniform instruction and checklist for use in scrutiny of sanitary preparation to mass gathering by State Sanitary Inspectors.

Key words: *Mass gatherings, sanitary inspection, sanitary norms*

INTRODUCTION

Mass gatherings bring to certain locations large numbers of people, who may require additional services securing food, lodging, sanitary and medical care needs beyond usual level expected for permanent dwellers of the area. Close proximity of the participants at the events may create increased risk of infectious diseases, notably air and food borne, but also sexually transmitted ones and occasionally also related to substance abuse. In contemporary world possibility of intentional use of infectious agents at mass gatherings has to be always

considered, although no such incident was so far reported at major sporting events.

Preparation of the mass gathering event needs coordination of different services which have to be performed by organizers. It also require continuous supervision of the pre event, during the event and post event activities aimed at safety and security of the participants and local dwellers.

Potential organizers should be well aware of the legal requirements regarding structured preparation to the event, which have to include necessary permits from municipal authorities. Those legal requirements form

initial necessary set of conditions. It is strongly advisable that those elementary requirements, that create basic framework, should be supplemented by additional more detailed elements, which would adjust general rules to particular conditions of the event including social type of the participants, local infrastructure, climate, weather and also political atmosphere surrounding the event.

Large part of the responsibility for the safety of the event participants rests on the administrative authorities which supervise local security services, firefighters, and also sanitary-epidemiological personnel. Their responsibility is in direct supervision of preparation for the event, performance at the event and cleaning up after it. Collection of data, reporting them and setting up control measures rest both on organizers and on local sanitary and epidemiological services, which should always have the upper hand.

Regarding the events, which are organized by municipal administration, natural system of supervision hierarchy does not apply. Whole system of organization, its logistic and structure of specific supervision frames as well as control measures should be included in the large comprehensive scheme.

So called checklists, which itemize preparation to the event may be roughly divided into two types: short ones aimed on basic requirements for obtaining official permit by organizers, and larger, comprehensive ones which provide insight into detailed elements of the preparation. The aim of this article is to review public health requirements in the content of checklists issued by different administrative authorities in order to grant permit for organization of mass gathering event and also of those which are prepared to serve organizers to maximize harmonization of the event.

LEGAL PERMITS TO ORGANIZE MASS GATHERING EVENTS

Detailed review of laws regulating organization of mass gatherings in different countries is beyond scope of this article. In different countries legal base for the supervision is introduced at different levels of judicial system and problems related to mass gatherings are frequently included in more than one bill. There are also marked differences in generality of the regulations and in subjects on which those regulations are focused.

In Poland special parliament bill is devoted to safety at mass gatherings (1).

It includes:

- principles of collecting and processing information concerning mass gatherings
 - principles of responsibility for damages and losses occurring at mass gatherings
- In this regulation Chapter 2, Art 5.1 put responsibility at mass gathering event solely on its organizer. Chapter 2, Art 5.2 states that organizer is obliged, among other security measures, to provide medical services. Though scope of those services is not mentioned. In Art.6.1 states that organizer provides medical help and sanitary facilities. It is also duty of organizer (Art 25.1) to obtain information from State Sanitary Inspection on the personnel and means adequate for sanitary needs of the particular event. The bill itemizes information on the event and available facilities, which has to be included in the application for the permit. The bill includes obligation of administrative authorities to supervise preparation to the event as well as its conduct.
- Numerous Polish local municipal authorities included excerpts from that regulation in the application forms for potential organizers of mass gathering events (2-5). Keeping close to the legal base those applications usually include open questions regarding description of sanitary and medical facilities and requirement of opinion from local Sanitary Inspectorate. It is left to administration to judge whether those descriptions are satisfactory. What is characteristic for the legal bill and local municipal requirements in Poland, that security measures take large part of the documents, and medical and sanitary requirements are included as a minor part. On the other hand openness of the questions on sanitary preparation put no limit on the content of application in this section.
- In the USA preparation to mass gatherings may differ from state to state but in many states it is regulated by Departments of Human Services, Public Health Division. In some, like in Texas is regulated under Health and Safety Code. Set of documents submitted to the court is send by county judge to fire authorities, health authorities, county sheriff office and after receiving their opinions judge proceeds hearings of the applicant and then takes decision on granting the permit (6).
- Another example is document included in Oregon Administrative Rules (7): "Regulation Governing Health and Safety at Outdoor Mass Gatherings". It contains detailed description of water supplies including requirements for laboratory test for numerous toxic substances including Arsenic, Cadmium, Copper and Cyanide, instruction on construction of water tanks, disinfection of water installation and requirements concerning placement of faucets and seepage pits. The regulation also describes drainage, sewage facilities, refuse storage and disposal, food and sanitary food services, emergency medical facilities, fire protection, security personnel and traffic.

- rules of conduct to secure safety of mass gatherings
- conditions of safety at mass gatherings
- principles and procedure of granting permits to organizers

In Oregon State permit applications for mass gathering event are issued at county level and submitted to County Planning Division. Application forms include all sections listed in the Regulation, with notes of necessary approvals from appropriate authorities.

Numerous application form, from different states and countries, may differ in details, but almost always cover following elementary points:

- Identification of organizer and contact data to responsible person
- Specificity of the event (sporting, entertainment, religious et c.)
- Expected number of participants
- Location (usually with a map)
- Duration of the event

In some cases application form contains additional questions, which otherwise are left for approvals granted by specific agencies. Those questions may concern use of alcohol, fireworks, or expected noise level.

Number of specific plans which are required to be included in application package depends on organization of administrative bodies, which cover different sections of the safety spectrum at mass gatherings (8-22). Those specific plans invariably include:

- Fire protection approval
- Health and medical plans
- Public safety plans which cover crowd control and security services
- Parking and traffic control plan
- Lodging of participants, camping sites (if applicable)
- Sanitary plan
 - Type, number and location of toilets and washing facilities
 - Water supply
 - Food preparation and food service facilities
 - Solid waste collection and disposal system
- Insurance certificate

It is up to administrative authorities to evaluate sufficiency of submitted plans according to the local law. In most cases problem remains with precision of legal regulations and subjectivity of their interpretation.

Administrative supervision of the organization and the course of the event has two aspects. One is testing compliance of organizers to legal requirements and their own commitments, another should be surveillance of health events which may or may not depend on the organization of the event. Harmonious cooperation between organizers and administrative supervisors may help with setting up of the framework for enhanced surveillance at the event, but certainly there are limits of the responsibility of the organizers for preparation and operating of the surveillance system. Legal requirements form basic set of necessary conditions focused on rights of the administration and obligations of the organizer.

Much wider and more detailed set of guidelines is advisable to minimize probability of harm to participants at mass gathering event.

GUIDELINES FOR THE COORDINATED ORGANIZATION OF MASS GATHERINGS

Out of many documents of this type, two require special attention. One is “Communicable disease alert and response for mass gatherings” prepared by experts of World Health Organization (23). This publication covers planning of the surveillance system, its implementation and operation with special reference to alert and response and to international exchange of information according to International Health Regulations. It is primarily designed for the use of governments as a sort of base for state legislation. It also provides model structure for organization of health care. Three major fields with further subdivisions are indicated:

- Population health
 - Surveillance
 - Food, water& sanitation
 - Disease control
 - Health promotion
 - Training
 - Laboratories
 - Environmental health
- Health services
 - Emergency medical services
 - Prehospital care
 - Spectator care
 - Trauma centers
 - Field teams
 - Drug testing
 - First aid
- Disaster planning and response
 - Training
 - Exercise
 - Surge capacity
 - Command and control of the public health and medical responses

Within proposed by WHO classification of mass gatherings fundamental distinction is between planned and spontaneous or more accurately those for which application was submitted in proper time and those which occurred unexpectedly for administrative authorities. Improvised gatherings put strain on all municipal services and may take unexpected course. It may create unexpected risks, cause nervousness among participants and also among security forces.

Another manual “Safe and Healthy Mass Gatherings” is part of Australian Emergency Manual Series. It covers wide spectrum of problems related to planning and operating of the mass gathering events (24). Concise

structure and itemization of the elements of preparation to the event may prevent overlooking of some issues, which are of importance or may become important if adverse situation occurs. Document is divided into eight chapters:

- Pre-event planning
- Safety issues
- Additional [safety] considerations
- Spectator management and crowd control
- Public health
- Medical care
- The psychological dimension
- Special planning for high risk events

In addition document includes 17 annexes. Some of them contain additional information of definitions (crowd types, crowd catalysts, critical crowd densities, stages of behavior, manual to the provision of first aid), other are checklists focused of specific elements of the preparation to the event:

- Planning checklist for safe and healthy mass gatherings.
- Promoter checklist
- Authorizing body checklist
- Food vendor information sheet
- A checklist for food vendors

Rationale of this approach is obvious. Different bodies have different areas of responsibility and any attempt of preparation of universal “risk assessment checklist” would produce irrationally long questionnaires and people filling it would have to leave large parts if it untouched. The most comprehensive out of listed above is “Planning checklist for safe and healthy mass gatherings”, which still leaves many particular out of its scope. Promoter checklist and authorizing body checklist have substantial parts overlapping since promoter has to overview safety measures to be prepared for scrutiny of authorizing body. But in general organizational logistics of the event is crucial for promoter, but for authorizing body only its final result in the form of material base and properly placed and trained personnel is of importance.

In Australian set of documents regarding “safe and healthy mass gatherings” health issues are mentioned in several places. Large chapter 5, Public Health contain list of risk factors, recommendations for monitoring of health risks including detailed hygienic requirements on personal hygiene, food and water safety (food sources, transportation, storage, food handling staff consideration). It also includes Australian norms for the number of toilets, water taps for hand washing and drinking water sources in relation to the number of patrons. With a similar precision Australian document describes requirements for medical care at the venue and out of venue including hospital base. Checklist listed

above refer to those instructions as for bullet points to be looked over.

Polish law on mass gatherings leaves decision on sanitary conditions at the venue to State Sanitary Inspection (1). It does not refer to any special norms which would outline general requirements adaptable to the particular event. There are numerous safety regulations present in different governmental documents, but particular elements for safety testing would have to be prepared by Sanitary Inspector for the individual case. It would be highly advisable for Chief Sanitary Inspectorate to prepare clear and comprehensive checklist, adaptable for the size of the event which would provide nationwide tool for scrutiny of sanitary preparation to mass gathering events. Such a checklist should be accompanied by a booklet which should provide short overview of safety issues and basic technical norms required for sanitary security at mass gatherings.

It has to be stressed, that equally important as preparation to the event and performance during the event is sanitary cleaning after the event. It has to be itemized and signed by the responsible organizer as his or her legal obligation under control of Sanitary Inspection.

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