



# Academy for Venue Safety & Security

A Path to Professional Excellence in Public Assembly Venue Safety and Security

*Prepare, Prevent, Respond & Recover*

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## In the News



### Major League Baseball Plays It Safe with Preparedness Planning

The opening of the baseball season typically signals months of summer fun at stadiums around the country. For Major League Baseball (MLB) and stadium managers, preparing for opening day also means ensuring comprehensive preparedness so that fans have an enjoyable and safe experience.

For an inside look at MLB preparations, AVSS E-Update asked Dan Mullin to discuss what's done at stadiums nationwide to get ready for the coming season.

Mullin was MLB's Senior Director of Security Operations until being named Senior Vice President of MLB's new Department of Investigations in January 2008. As head of the new department, he has primary responsibility for conducting all investigations into violations of MLB rules and policies, including the use, possession or distribution of performance-enhancing substances by Major League or Minor League players, and other threats to the integrity of the game. As the former head of security operations, he had oversight of security planning at six All-Star games and dozens of World Series games, as well as at international events in Japan, China and Mexico.

Mullin also serves as the Chair of the Department of Homeland Security's Sports Sector Critical Infrastructure Advisory Council; Senior Fellow at the Homeland Security Program at Long Island University; and a member of the Board of Advisors, University of Southern Mississippi. He is also on the faculty of the U.S. State Department's Anti-Terrorism Assistance Program. Mullin has helped train law enforcement officials in Brazil in preparation for the Pan Am Games and in South Africa in preparation for World Cup Soccer. Prior to joining MLB, he served for 23 years with the New York City Police Department, retiring as a deputy chief with responsibility for more than 3,000 officers.

With IAAM, Mullin is a member of the Life Safety Council and serves as the chair for the Professional Sports Leagues Sub-Sector Council.

**In your roles with Major League Baseball (MLB), what are your top three directives, among many, to ensure that stadiums nationwide are effectively prepared to open for the new season?**

We try to direct as little as possible and prefer a collaborative process. We have a Stadium Operations Advisory Board that consists of some of our most senior stadium professionals. Prior to opening day, we have a lengthy conference call to discuss opening day procedures and review concerns. Issues like employee background screening, bag checks, crowd control and alcohol management are frequent topics.

**How important is safety and security training for individual stadium managements? Without revealing any trade secrets, how does MLB approach its training programs, focus areas and customer service? What role do the individual teams play in safety and security training?**

Safety training is critical for stadium managers. Two years ago, MLB, in partnership with IAAM and the other professional leagues, produced "24/7," a first-rate training video specifically targeted at game day employees. We also host an annual three-day seminar for our stadium managers, drawing on their collective expertise as well as bringing in outside safety and security professionals. The managers take an active role in setting the agenda and keeping it topical. MLB has also taken a leadership role in the TEAM coalition, to promote effective alcohol management. At the end of the day, individual clubs bear the ultimate responsibility for keeping their staffs on top of their game.

**How do MLB stadiums educate patrons about issues like appropriate crowd behavior, procedures in case of emergencies, and so on? What can other venues learn from MLB processes and procedures to communicate with guests and patrons?**

All of our clubs produce a fan information guide, which includes a fan code of conduct. Most of our clubs have also produced videos that feature popular players explaining to the fans what the code of conduct is, and warning them about possible ejection for inappropriate behavior. Hearing the message from someone whom they admire has an impact. These videos are shown prior to, and during the game. Many of our clubs have also produced custom evacuation videos that detail the evacuation plan section by section.

**How does MLB deal with bad fan behavior? What are some of the key strategies you'd recommend to other venue managers to deal with this problem?**

It's important to try and prevent problems before they happen. To that end, we try our best to flag inappropriate behavior early, and warn the fans that they are subject to ejection if they don't change their behavior. Some of our clubs have adopted an anonymous texting system that allows fans to report inappropriate behavior.

**Severe weather also is a common problem during the baseball season: What preparedness planning does MLB undertake? What are some critical ways for large outdoor venues to be prepared for such events?**

All of our stadiums have sophisticated weather forecasting equipment. With rare exception, we shouldn't be caught totally off guard. Last year, our ballparks in Arlington and St. Louis had severe weather events. Within days, we had conference calls with all of our stadium professionals so that the people who had managed the events could share their experiences and offer advice. Simple things like securing mobile vending cards make a big difference. IAAM's Mega-Shelter Best Practices Guide has been a valuable resource in helping our facilities stay prepared.

**How does today's troubled national economy change the environment for venue managers? What else (or more) should they be prepared for?**

Like everybody else in the private sector, stadium managers are, in some cases, being asked to do more with less. It's an economic reality. They have done an excellent job of maintaining and providing an enjoyable and safe fan experience. A trip to the ballpark should be a welcome respite from tough times.

**As a member of the IAAM Life Safety Council and the chair for the Professional Sports Leagues Sub-Sector Council, you are very familiar with IAAM's Academy for Venue Safety & Security (AVSS). For those who haven't yet participated in AVSS, what do you feel is AVSS' value and importance to the public assembly industry?**

IAAM's AVSS is a quite simply the best training in the industry. AVSS offers five full days of training in security and safety management. The curriculum is timely, topical and constantly evolving. The instructors have years of hands-on experience in a variety of disciplines.

AVSS is the West Point of our industry.

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