



Sports Venue Bag Search Procedures Guide

Commercial Facilities Sector Specific Agency
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**Homeland
Security**





Sports Venue Bag Search Procedures Guide

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Introduction

This guide provides suggestions for developing and implementing bag search procedures at public assembly venues hosting major sporting events. Venue owners, operators, and event organizers should use additional resources (e.g., consult law enforcement) to implement the procedures outlined in this guide.

The bag search procedures delineated in this guide are for guidance purposes only; they are not a requirement under any regulation or legislation. In addition, due to the wide variation in the types, sizes, and locations of public assembly venues and the sporting events held in these venues, not all suggested procedures will be relevant or applicable.

Photos for this Guide were generously provided by Major League Baseball (MLB), the National Football League (NFL), the U.S. Tennis Association (USTA), the U.S. Golf Association (USGA), and the U.S. Open.



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1. Purpose

The purpose for establishing bag search procedures is to control items that are hand carried into the venue. The bag search procedures should be a part of the venue's overall security plan and should be tested and evaluated as stated in the security plan. The bag search procedures should include information on:

- Interacting with those individuals who are having their bag(s) searched;
- Identifying the items that are of interest during the bag search;
- Outlining the procedures to conduct a bag search; and
- Responding to items discovered during the bag search procedures.

2. General

Bag searches should be required of everyone entering the venue on those days associated with the preparation for and execution of an event. This should include employees, contractors, teams/performers, media and official guests, as well as the ticket bearing public.

- The venue should establish bag search procedures that state the actual implementation of bag search procedures. The level of search detail will depend upon the threat to the venue as determined by the venue's security manager or appropriate venue representative.
- All bags and containers that are hand carried into the venue are subject to search for items that are not permitted in the venue.
- Bag searches should occur at a level of detail commensurate with the threat (e.g., from a simple glance into the bag all the way to emptying the contents of the bag).
- Venue employees, contractors, and event staff should be trained in the overall bag search procedures and have knowledge of those items not allowed in the venue (see section 6) during nonevent and event days.
- Trained bag search staff and bag search supervisors should perform the bag searches in the safest manner possible so that they identify and respond appropriately to items not permitted in the venue.

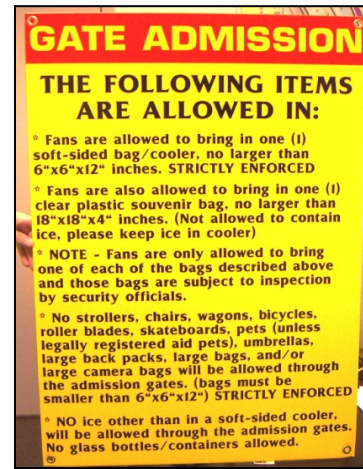


Figure 1: Event Notice (MLB)





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3. Consent and Right to Refuse

The venue should notify prospective employees and contractors that bag searches are a requirement of employment. Bag searches of ticket holders are voluntary, however, the venue should draft explicit language so that potential ticket purchasers are aware that their bags will be searched at the venue prior to entry, and failure to allow a bag search will result in denial of entry. This language must be made available through every means utilized by the venue to sell tickets (i.e., signage, pre-recorded gate messages, Web sites, etc.).

4. Addressing Adverse Mindset and Threatening Statements

The venue should prepare a list of questions that the ticket holders may ask, along with appropriate responses that address concerns relating to the venue's bag search program. Each bag searcher should rehearse these responses as part of their bag search training program. This rehearsal preparation will prepare the bag searcher to address ticket holders' concerns and help diffuse any potential animosity toward the bag searcher along with providing a consistent message justifying the venue's bag search program. There is often a degree of impatience among the crowd entering a venue for an event. Those responsible for conducting bag searches should ensure that they maintain control at the bag search locations without feeling pressured to rush through their bag search responsibilities.

Ticket holders making threatening statements (e.g., "I have a bomb") should be taken seriously. The bag searcher should be certain of what the ticket holder said by asking the ticket holder to repeat the statement if necessary. The ticket holder should be informed that their statements are taken seriously. The bag searcher should immediately notify event security, supervisors, and law enforcement of such statements.

5. Refusal of Bag Search

If a ticket holder refuses to comply with the bag search, bag searchers should contact the bag search supervisor to reinforce the bag search procedures as a requirement for entry into the venue. This process should be conducted in a non-combative manner by asking the ticket holder to stand aside from the bag search line to allow others to pass through while waiting for the supervisor to arrive. An exit lane should be available to allow ticket holders who do not wish to have their bags searched to leave the venue.



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6. Item Descriptions

Items that are not permitted in the venue can be classified three ways: illegal, prohibited, and suspicious. Government entities usually specify illegal items. The venue selects prohibited items for safety, event experience, and contractual reasons. The suspicious item category may include a list of items, but can also include items that raise suspicion because of the quantity of item(s), the weight of the item, or any unusual alteration of the item. The venue should prepare a list of illegal and prohibited items for distribution to employees, contractors, event staff, and ticket holders.

- **Illegal items** are any items that are illegal at the city, county, State, and Federal level and are, therefore, prohibited in the venue (e.g., explosives, narcotics, or drug paraphernalia).
- **Prohibited items** are items that may be legal to possess outside of the venue, but are specifically prohibited within the venue either because of the item itself, its size, or its function (e.g., firearms or knives with blade over a specified length, such as greater than 3.5 inches, glass bottles, alcohol, hard coolers, umbrellas, backpacks and multipocketed bags over a specified size, pepper spray containers, or air horns). The venue's policy should consider when exceptions to the prohibited items list may be made for medical reasons (i.e., syringes, inhalers, etc.).
- **Suspicious items** are items that are generally not on the prohibited items list or illegal within the venue, but may be considered suspicious due to the quantity of the item or the uniqueness of the item (e.g., a large roll of wire, a large quantity of batteries, a screwdriver, an alarm clock, an odd smelling item, or a large amount of merchandise from a sporting goods store).



Figure 3: Suspicious Items (DHS)

NOTE: It is *not* recommended that the bag searcher intentionally sniff items within a bag.

Bag searchers should be alert to suspicious items that may be assembled within the venue after being brought into the venue by multiple ticket holders. These items may not seem harmful alone, but when combined with other items inside the venue could produce an illegal item (e.g., disassembled gun parts, electrical tape, crimpers, or wire cutters, could be used with other components for assembling an improvised explosive device). A good rule of thumb is that suspicious items usually have no real place in the possession of the ticket holder entering the venue.



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Bag searchers who identify illegal or prohibited items should have one of the bag searchers accompany the ticket holder and the item(s) to the bag search supervisor and law enforcement, if appropriate, for final disposition of the item(s) (e.g., return to ticket holder's vehicle, place in temporary storage area (see section 10), or confiscation by law enforcement). Ticket holders with suspicious items can be allowed into the venue, but should be watched by event staff and confronted if suspicious activity (e.g., passing the item off to another person or placing the item in a secluded location) is suspected.

7. Nonevent Day Bag Searches

Bag search stations should be established at all entrances where nonevent personnel routinely enter and leave the venue.

- Bag searches should occur at a level of detail commensurate with the threat (see section 11).
- Items that are not permitted during an event may be allowed during nonevent days (e.g., multipocket bags, small coolers, computers, or food).
- A listing of items that are not permitted during non-event days should be posted at personnel entrances.
- The venue should consider providing a secure storage space for venue personnel to leave items that are not permitted in the venue.
- The venue may also choose to conduct bag searches on personnel as they exit the venue due to problems with theft or to control event related items.



Figure 4: Nonevent Notice (NFL)

8. Event Day Bag Searches

In order to provide timely outreach to promote awareness of the venue's bag search procedures, a public awareness program should be implemented, expressly stating on the venue's Web site and tickets, and conspicuously posting outside the venue, notification of the venue's bag search procedures and a list of items not permitted in the venue. There should also be a description of criteria for those items that *are* permitted in the venue (i.e., limit one bag per ticket holder, not larger than a certain size, only contain one compartment, etc.).

- The venue should strive to ensure that security procedure notices with information on the venue's bag search procedures are included in any advertising media that are sent in advance to season ticket holders and to mass transit system operators.
- Ticket holders should be informed that bag searches may result in a time delay of entering the venue and advise early arrival.

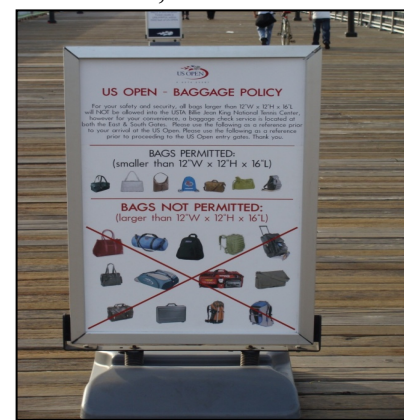


Figure 5: Visual Notice (USTA)



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- Every effort should be made to post signs and distribute leaflets at the venue, at all “park and ride” or shuttle pick-up points, other mass transportation locations, and parking lots.
- Bag search information should be provided in the predominate languages of those ticket holders expected at the event, in order to accommodate the multicultural nature of event attendees.



Figure 6: Media Search (USGA)

- Loop announcements and multilingual employees should be posted at key locations to provide information concerning bag search locations, and items not permitted in the venue.
- Use visuals (e.g., pictures of permitted and prohibited items) to complement written guidance and facilitate awareness for foreign-language attendees.
- The hours of bag search operations should be posted to coincide with the event time schedule, if there is a time element associated with the event.
- If it is the policy of the venue to conduct bag searches, then the venue should enforce this policy throughout the entire event, from gate opening to gate closing.

- The expected attendance at an event, based on ticket sales, should determine the number of bag search lines.
- Although it may be the tendency of ticket holders to enter the venue shortly before the start of an event, this influx of guests should not cause deviations in standard bag search procedures.
- Bag searches should be conducted regardless of the wait time.
- The venue’s public affairs/marketing office should provide information encouraging ticket holders to arrive early in order to avoid the possibility of a long wait time associated with bag searches.

9. Bag Search Locations

The venue should establish bag search locations at all entrances.

- Entrances used by venue personnel and event staff (e.g., concessions staff, media, players or performers) should have bag search tables located in the immediate area where credentialing occurs prior to allowing entrance.
- Bag search locations at public entrances should occur prior to ticket collection and distinctly from other security activities (e.g., personal searches).



Figure 7: Signage (USTA)



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- Bag search areas should be located in areas with sufficient room for crowd movement and consist of an appropriate number of search lines, tables, and bag search staff commensurate with the anticipated flow of persons through each of the venue's entrances.
- If entrances are provided for individuals with special needs, ensure that bag search procedures are employed at those entrances.



Figure 8: Entrance to Bag Search Location (USTA)

- A template (figure 12) to show the permissible bag size should be at each bag search location and should be accessible leading to all bag search lines so that ticket holders can quickly decide whether their bags are permissible or not.
 - Signage describing the hours of operation, and identifying restricted and permissible items should be posted at each bag search location.
 - Bag search locations should be set up in areas that will not impede foot traffic around the entrances for those ticket holders without bags.
- Perimeter railing or portable fencing should be used to separate areas where ticket holders' bags have been searched and where they have not. This will prevent individuals from moving from one area to another in an effort to avoid the bag search process.
 - Rotation of bag searchers should occur routinely to preclude complacency of the searchers.
 - Likewise, "roaming bag searchers" can help direct ticket holders to less crowded tables, troubleshoot any issues, and fill in if needed to keep congested lines moving.

10. Non-Bag Search Lines

In order to expedite the entrance processing and to avoid back up or overcrowded access lines, a separate line for individuals not carrying bags should be provided.

- Individuals without items requiring a bag search should be allowed to bypass the bag search area.
- These individuals should be directed through security and to the ticket collection area. This arrangement will streamline the inspection process and will help improve in processing times.



Figure 9: Non-Bag Search Lines (MLB)



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- Small hand-carried items (e.g., camera cases, purses, or waist packs) may be checked if the event is not crowded and the bag searchers maintain the “non-bag search line’s” security and integrity.

In order to use the “non-bag search lines” ticket holders may attempt to place small items and bags in their pockets (e.g., pocket stuffing) in order to have their hands free and thereby avoid the security staff at the bag search lines.

- Event staff working in the bag search area should be aware of this “pocket stuffing” activity and be alert for actual concealment of prohibited items.
- Suspicious activities (e.g., not making eye contact when spoken to by bag searcher(s), acting extremely nervous, or attempts to avoid security) by ticket holders, along with concealing items underneath clothing, may warrant a one-on-one discussion with that individual and event security staff or law enforcement.

A separate exit line should also be established to provide a clear exit for ticket holders who wish to leave the venue or remove themselves from the bag search process.

11. Temporary Storage Area

Although the goal of the public awareness program is to educate ticket holders about the venue’s bag search procedures and criteria for items not permitted in the venue prior to entering the bag search location, there are times when restricted items and bags are still brought to the bag search location.

- The ticket holder should either return the item or bag to their vehicle, or be allowed to store the bag or item in a temporary storage area using a claim fee process.
- Depending on the type of venue (e.g., outdoor or indoor), the temporary storage area may be located outdoors away from the venue, or indoors in an area away from the event and the venue’s operational systems.
- The type of items and bags allowed in this temporary storage area and the inspection of such items and bags should occur at the discretion of the venue and at a level of detail commensurate with the threat.



Figure 10: Temporary Storage (USTA)



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12. Conducting a Bag Search

Bag searchers should consider the following when conducting a bag search:

- Bag searchers should always greet and make eye contact with each ticket holder and they should remain courteous to the ticket holder at all times.
- The bag owner should be asked whether it is okay for their bag to be searched. If they refuse, they should be informed of the bag search policy. If they still refuse, they should be directed away from the venue via a separate exit line.
- If possible, bags should be searched in full view of the owner.
- For safety reasons, the bag searcher must be extremely cautious when placing his or her hands in and around bags.
- The bag searcher should ask the owner whether the bag contains any sharp objects, needles, or similar items before the search begins.
- Items inside a bag should be handled in a careful manner.
- When removing items from a bag, they should be placed, not dumped, on the bag search table.
- Bag searchers should not make comments regarding the ticket holders' property or bag contents.
- Bag searchers should pay attention to odd odors that may bring attention to a particular bag. Odd odors may imply potential hazards, so care should be taken when conducting a thorough search of that bag.

Bag search procedures should be in place to address special needs ticket holders. Inspection of bags attached to wheel chairs, and bags belonging to the visually impaired may require special treatment such as describing the actual bag search process as it is occurring to a visually impaired ticket holder. Preprinted cards outlining the bag search procedures should be available for the hearing impaired.

In the case of sports team events and other multi-bag events, the venue should have an arrangement with each visiting team/event organizer that relies on the visiting team or event organizer to search and control the equipment and bags brought by the team/event into the venue. For example, color coded tags should be numbered and applied to each bag with the tag number documented to include the owners name and contact information.

12.1 Bag Search Equipment

There are several pieces of equipment that can be used by bag search staff (e.g., stick and disposable rubber gloves). The stick allows the bag searcher to move items around inside the bag without making physical contact with the items in the bag. The stick can also be used to tap the bottom and sides of the bag to aid in determining whether there is a false bottom or compartment. When manipulating items inside a bag, many bag searchers prefer to wear disposable rubber gloves.



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Regardless of the location of a security check point and bag search area, particular items are needed for staff to safeguard themselves while conducting an effective bag search. The following is a list of a few items that should be available to bag search staff at all bag search locations:

- Disposable rubber gloves – appropriate sizes and consideration of allergies (e.g., non-latex disposable gloves).
- Flashlight – to be used during all bag searches regardless of time of day.
- Stick/Rod – to move items around within a bag without actually coming in contact with items. The stick/rod could also be substituted with a ruler, paint stirrer, or other similar object.
- Containers/Bins – to confine and sort items if items must be removed from a package or bag.
- A Template/Bin – to illustrate permissible bag size (see figure 12).
- Communication equipment – cell phones, radios (with instructions on when to use and not use them depending upon the items discovered during a bag search).

Tables used for bag searches should be located in front of the ticket collection area and other security checkpoints (e.g., personal searches).



Figure 11: Bag Search Items for use by Venue Staff (DHS)



Figure 12: Template (NFL)

12.2 Bag Search Procedures

The following procedures should be followed when conducting a bag search:

- Bag searches should be performed only on bags that meet the size and construction criteria. Ticket holders with oversized bags or bags that do not meet construction criteria (e.g., only contain one compartment) should be asked to return their bag to their vehicle or store the bag at the temporary storage area, if available (see section 11).
- Have the ticket holder place the bag on the inspection table.
- Upon inspecting the outside of the bag, it is important to notice whether the weight of the bag is consistent with the size and contents of the bag. The searcher may also hold the bottom of the bag to help determine whether heavy or cylindrical items are present inside the bag.





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- An inspection of the outside of the bag should be conducted to ensure that the construction of the bag has not been altered. Does the bag have a false bottom? Does the bag have rigid sides when they should be flexible?
- The bag searcher should feel the top, sides, and bottom of the inside of the bag for any signs that the interior of the bag has been altered to create a hidden compartment (see figure 13).
- The bag searcher must look for any signs that could indicate the bag has been tampered with (e.g., mismatched hardware, re-sewn, or glued seams).
- The bag searcher should check the outside of “soft” bags by feeling for any out of the ordinary bulges or bumps.
- The bag searcher should have the ticket holder open the bag so the bag searcher can inspect the inside of all exterior pockets and zipper compartments, if applicable.
- Ticket holders must hold open their own property for visual inspection.
- Whenever possible, bag search staff should avoid handling items directly unless the items are unique, suspicious, or of questionable purpose.
- If an item is wrapped, the ticket holder should un-wrap the item for inspection.
- When items need to be moved for a clearer view, bag search staff should use a non-metallic/non-magnetic stick or tool to move items around inside the bag.
- The bag searcher should examine the interior and contents of the bag from top to bottom, clearing each area before continuing, in a sequence that ensures a complete search.
- Searches should be conducted systematically, layer-by-layer, so that the bag searcher knows precisely what he or she is inspecting and all parts of the bag are searched.



Figure 13: Evidence of Bag Tampering (DHS)



Figure 14: Bag Inspection (DHS)



Figure 15: Move clockwise or counter clockwise throughout the bag (DHS)

- A search method should be created (e.g., going clockwise or counter clockwise throughout the bag), beginning with the pockets on the outside, then the pockets on the inside, then the space(s) in the middle of the bag (see figure 15).
- The bag searcher must check the side, top, and bottom walls and seams of the bag to ensure that item(s) are not concealed. Systematic search patterns reduce the risk of missing critical observations about the bag and its contents.





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- Heavy items tend to be in the lowest portion of the bag. Items may be concealed in places such as within rolled clothing (e.g., sweatshirts or ponchos) or cases designed for other items (e.g., cameras or eye glasses). Stuffed or padded items could prevent a bag searcher from detecting a concealed item.
- Bag searchers must also rely on the weight of an object to determine whether any restricted item is concealed.
- Large items should be removed from bags by the ticket holder so that all contents within the bag can be observed.
- Blankets and hand-carried clothing (e.g., jackets) should be unfolded by the ticket holder and clothing pockets patted down by the bag searchers.

Instances may occur where specific articles look suspicious. In such instances, extreme care should be taken and, if suspicion persists, bag searchers should immediately notify the supervisory staff. Likewise, it should be venue policy that if a bag searcher discovers evidence of possible criminal wrongdoing (e.g., controlled substances or drug paraphernalia), the bag searcher should request that the ticket holder remain in the area with their bag, then immediately notify the event security staff and law enforcement.

During event day searches, color-coded tags should be applied to all media and employees' bags that are searched and allowed into the venue. The color coded tags should be numbered and applied to each bag with the tag number documented to include the owner's name and contact information. The color-coded tags should be changed for each event, and all previous tags must be removed from the bag before affixing the current color-coded security tag.

13. Amnesty Boxes

The venue management should coordinate with law enforcement to determine whether the use of an amnesty box is appropriate for the disposition of items voluntarily surrendered by ticket holders.

- Law enforcement personnel should dictate whether an amnesty box will be provided and whether they will be responsible for its use and its contents.
- If an amnesty box is utilized, the venue should ensure that all bag searchers are well trained on the policies and procedures associated with the use of the amnesty box, and that this information is clearly communicated to ticket holders.

14. Findings

Clear procedures should be prepared for event security staff when items from each of the three aforementioned categories (e.g., illegal, prohibited, and suspicious – see section 6) are discovered as a result of a bag search. The disposition of the item and the level of law enforcement involvement will depend upon the category of item discovered and their presence at the venue, respectively.





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14.1. Notify Supervisor / Law Enforcement

The venue's bag search procedures should clearly define the actions that should be taken once an item from any of the three categories is discovered. Bag searchers should immediately notify supervisory staff, security staff responsible for the event, and law enforcement personnel (if on the premises) of the discovery of a suspect item. This notification process should consider:

- Providing verbal notification to supervisory staff, event security, and law enforcement in the quickest manner.
- Training bag search staff when to use and not use mobile communication devices to notify supervisors. Depending on the item discovered, hand-held radios or cellular phones should not be used, because certain devices (e.g., improvised explosive devices) can be triggered by radio frequencies. Maintain a 50-foot standoff distance for radios and cellphones.
- Coordinating between bag search locations around the venue to determine whether suspicious items have been identified that may complement or be used in some harmful way with other items discovered.
- Following these procedures:
 - Do not leave the illegal or prohibited item unattended at the bag search area when making notification.
 - Switch out the search staff that discovered the item with other search staff at the bag search location in order to continue the simultaneous bag search process of other ticket holders.
 - Have event security relocate the bag owner and the bag searcher to a supervisory location to further investigate the discovered illegal or prohibited item.
- Removing unnecessary or high levels of attention toward the suspect bag/item(s).
- Monitoring the activities of the owner of the suspicious item until it can be determined that the item does not pose a threat.

14.2. Item Handling Procedure

The venue's bag search procedures should be developed in coordination with law enforcement.

- The search procedures should align with those procedures recommended by law enforcement and be applied as appropriate.
- The procedures should specifically state which items should be temporarily stored or surrendered in order for the ticket holder to enter the venue.
- The bag searcher's primary mission is to prevent illegal and prohibited items from entering the venue. Illegal and prohibited items that need to be investigated further should be retained by law enforcement officials for final disposition.



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- Supervisory personnel (e.g., bag searchers or event security) and uniformed law enforcement personnel should always be consulted once illegal items are discovered.

14.2.1. Illegal Items

The venue's bag search procedures should specify that the discovery of illegal items should result in immediate notification of supervisory staff, the security staff responsible for the event, and law enforcement.

- Notification procedures may vary depending on whether law enforcement is or is not present at the venue.
- If law enforcement is present at the venue, they should have the lead in determining the proper disposition of the illegal item(s).
- If law enforcement is offsite, then the event security staff should escort the ticket holder with the illegal item(s) away from the bag search area to a supervisory location until law enforcement arrives.
- At the discretion of law enforcement, the disposition of the illegal item(s) may be through the use of an amnesty box, or returning the item(s) to some location of the ticket holder's choice away from the venue (e.g., temporary storage, if available; or the ticket holder's vehicle).

14.2.2. Prohibited Items

Prohibited items should be specifically identified and itemized in a log by the venue staff. It is the responsibility of the venue's security staff and bag searchers' supervisory staff to properly dispose of those items.

- Options may include the use of an amnesty box, storage of the item(s) at a temporary storage facility, or returning the item(s) to the ticket holder's vehicle.
- The venue's security staff should ensure that all prohibited items are disposed of properly and not left unattended or placed in the trash.

14.2.3. Suspicious Items

The disposition of suspicious items will depend on the item(s) discovered. For safety purposes, bag searchers' supervisory staff, event security, and law enforcement should be contacted when suspicious items are discovered.

- Coordinate between bag search locations around the venue to determine whether suspicious items have been identified that may complement or be used in some harmful way with other items discovered.



Figure 17: Disallowed Items Holding Area (USGA)



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- If it is determined, through observation or some suspicious activity on the part of the ticket owner of the suspicious item, that the item may be used to cause harm at the event, then it may be necessary to dispose of the item by using an amnesty box, storing the item at a temporary storage facility, or returning the item to the ticket holder's vehicle.
- In some instances, law enforcement may confiscate suspicious items.
- If confiscated, the venue's security staff should ensure that all suspicious items are disposed of properly (e.g., temporary storage area or amnesty box) and not left unattended or placed in the trash.

14.3. Intervention by Law Enforcement

Most bag search situations will not call for the assistance of law enforcement; however, whenever available, law enforcement assistance should be used.

- When onsite, uniformed law enforcement should be located between the bag search locations and the ticket collection area. This positioning will allow the uniformed officer to observe the bag search procedures and the in-processing of the ticket holders while still being an effective presence.
- The venue's bag search procedures should be developed in coordination with law enforcement and should align with the procedures recommended by law enforcement.
- When necessary, law enforcement should confiscate illegal or prohibited items not permitted in the venue.
- Some ticket holders may refuse to surrender items; during these situations, law enforcement personnel should be able to diffuse the situation and provide additional guidance and information to the ticket holder regarding their property and the venue's instituted bag search procedures.
- If law enforcement is not located onsite, venue policy should consider how to handle illegal items in accordance with guidance provided by law enforcement officials.



Figure 18: Law Enforcement Placement in Front of Ticket Collection (DHS)

14.4. Intervention by Venue Staff

In the event that law enforcement is not available, bag searchers should practice extreme caution when dealing with suspect items.

- Bag searchers should remain calm at all times and present a professional demeanor with high regard for customer service.





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- Efforts should be made immediately to contact supervisory personnel and the security staff responsible for the event, though not in a fashion that will create unnecessary or high levels of attention toward the suspect bag/item(s).

15. Training

All sports venue personnel, regardless of position or job title, should have bag search procedures awareness training. Individuals whose duty it is to conduct the bag searches should be trained in the actual bag search procedures, the equipment needed, item identification, and the appropriate response when discovering items that fall into the three categories listed in section 6 of this Guide (e.g., illegal, prohibited, and suspicious). As part of a training exercise, restricted items may be intentionally placed in bags to assess bag searchers' effectiveness (depending on the event and number of ticket holders entering the venue). Training in customer relations and law enforcement protocol is also recommended in order to respond appropriately to possible adverse reactions from the owner of a disallowed item.

In some instances, wait time to enter a venue can be significant because of the number of persons entering and the amount of time it takes to perform a proper bag search. Event staff and law enforcement working outside the bag search area should be trained to interact with ticket holders to create a positive “wait” experience by initiating upbeat conversations with ticket holders about the event, the sports teams participating, and local issues, etc. This interaction also affords the event staff and law enforcement an opportunity to indirectly question people who may appear or act suspiciously.

Due to their location within the outer perimeter of the venue, bag searchers should also be trained in suspicious behavior detection, potential coordinated attempts by ticket holders to circumnavigate venue security, and procedures to coordinate suspicious item identification between bag search stations and the venue's command post.

Training should be provided in the identification of harmful substances (e.g., explosives are especially important with respect to bomb-making materials) and other substances/items that pose a threat to personnel and staff. Examples of harmful items should be outlined in the venue's security plan and guidelines for identification, retention, transfer of ownership, and disposal should be provided if applicable.

Bag search procedures should be conducted by the venue staff prior to every event with observation by supervisory staff. Any deficiencies should be corrected prior to entrance by the employees, media, ticket holders, etc. Bag search procedures may change from event to event at the same venue; therefore, it is important to practice the appropriate bag search procedures prior to each event.

Many free Federal training courses are available online through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Emergency Management Institute at <http://training.fema.gov/>. Additional training resources may be found on the secure Homeland Security Information Network portal (<http://www.dhs.gov/hsin>).





Sports Venue Bag Search Procedures Guide

References

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