

MSU - Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
EXTENSION

*Safety Tips:
Considerations for Spectator
Safety During Sporting Events*

I hope all will agree that repeating the above title again this year is prudent and will be beneficial for new employees who haven't seen it.

According to statistics, over 15 million people attend livestock shows, cattle shows, horse shows and rodeos. Injuries do occur but aren't too common. There is data available to show the number of deaths occurring from horse and motorcycle events. Head injuries are the most prevalent type of injuries nationwide in these two types of events. In our 4-H events throughout the state, we've had very few, if any, reportable events that I'm aware of.

While attending some of our 4-H events, formal safety and security folks are very scarce. I wish that we could assign an individual as a safety officer for each of our 4-H sporting events. He or she could monitor the safety and security of the events as they perform. The items involved in a safety/security officer could include a pre-show inspection list to check spectator seating facilities, show preparation areas and the general items of parking for show participants and regular spectators. An alternative idea is to meet with the local police and/or sheriff's departments to possibly use off-duty law enforcement personnel to perform these duties.

Following are some items to consider in formulating a pre-show inspection checklist:

SPECTATOR SAFETY –

- Stairs, aisles and walkways are clean and clear of debris and are in acceptable condition.
- Spectator seating is clean and in good condition.
- Spectator seating locations are a safe distance from the show area. Security barriers are installed to allow spectator protection from an errant animal.
- Proper signage is posted for directions to concession areas, restrooms and medical help.
- Signage is posted with explanations for video and camera use. (If there is a policy in effect).
- Signage is posted relating to allowing pets in various areas of the Arena.
- Signage is posted prohibiting alcohol and drugs.

ANIMAL SAFETY –

- Stalls are clean. Railings are clean of obstructions and protrusions.
- Pens and gates are in good working order.
- Doors are in good working condition.
- Grooming chutes are in good condition and non-slip pads are in place on the floor for protection for the animals and the handlers.
- Electrical wiring is in good condition with no frays, breaks, or abrasions.

- Lighting is adequate in the preparation and show areas.
- There are at least two exits in the building for emergency egress.
- Adequate fire protection exists in the building.
- GFCIs should be equipped in all wet or moist areas.
- Animals are immunized according to requirements.
- Medicines and drugs are stored in a clean and secure location.
- Provisions for personal protective equipment, such as safety glasses or goggles and nitrile gloves, are available.

OTHER GENERAL SAFETY TIPS –

- ✓ Spectators are prohibited from climbing over fences, gates or pens.
- ✓ ATVs, UTVs preparation and show areas.
- ✓ Abusive and vulgar language are prohibited in all areas of the event.
- ✓ Alcohol and drugs are prohibited in all areas of the event.
- ✓ In addition to signage, vocal announcements should be made informing participants and spectators of the pertinent policies regarding university policies, non-liability policies, directions to concessions, restrooms, medical locations, and exits from the building to reduce the potential for confusion and to aid in protecting all from harm's way.
- ✓ Physical violence won't be tolerated. Visitors will be turned over to law enforcement.
- ✓ The event committee should identify all 4-H and other sponsor personnel with CPR/First Aid certification.
- ✓ The Event Director should work with the local law enforcement officials to utilize their services to aid in safety and security for the event.
- ✓ The Event Director should work with the ambulatory service to have an emergency vehicle and personnel (EMTs) on site and on standby during animal events.
- ✓ Extension cords should only be used for temporary use.

According to observations and reports, we experience a minimum amount of problems, altercations or disruptions in all of our 4-H and other agriculture related events. In some of our counties the local Extension staff does the planning, scheduling, and controlling of the activities in the arena. In the larger county areas a staff is employed by the respective county to perform these functions.

Our endeavor is that the tips discussed above will further aid in the safety and security of all these spectator events.

**THINK SAFETY ><><>< ACT SAFELY
SAFETY <> DO IT FOR YOUR FAMILY
LEAD THE WAY <> SAFETY TODAY**