

# The New Standard in Sports Security

BY BRET BECTON AND ELIZABETH VOORHEES



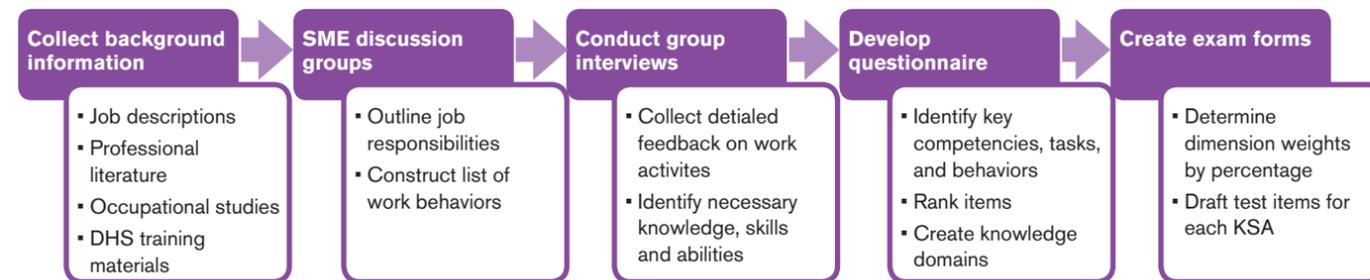
While the safety and security of spectators at sporting events has always been a concern, the tragic events of September 11, 2001, heightened the need for security measures at sports venues across the world, especially in the United States. Accordingly, sports and events operators have devoted increasingly more attention to safety and security measures to prepare for and mitigate consequences of potential incidents through an all-hazards approach. After all, sport security is big business. More than \$2 billion is spent on sports security efforts every year, with this figure rising to \$6 billion during years of international mega sporting events such as the Olympics or the World Cup. Increased attention to sports safety and security has led organizations to employ more individuals devoted to the management of these

partners — NCS4 has become a recognized leader in addressing potential threats and risks to the safety and security of sporting events. As part of its mission, NCS4 developed a certification program specifically for security professionals who manage and/or operate sports and special events. The Certified Sport Security Professional (CSSP) program is designed to establish standard competency requirements for individuals who are responsible for the planning and overall security operations of sports venues and events. These individuals create security-related policies, procedures and operating plans; create and administer training; and oversee the selection of other venue and event personnel and/or event-personnel providers (vendors). The CSSP is the first certification for sports safety and security professionals, and possession of this certification communicates a

operations. As with many evolving specialty occupations, formal education and training programs to prepare job incumbents for their positions often lag behind industry needs. To address this gap, the National Center for Spectator Sports Safety and Security (NCS4) at the University of Southern Mississippi was established in 2006 to provide leadership in research, education and outreach efforts in sport event security. Due to its close links with Southern Miss academic and research centers — as well as with other institutions of higher learning, professional associations and corporate

high degree of competency and professionalism to employers. Attainment of the CSSP is a valuable asset to the career development of sports safety and security professionals, and to the organizations that employ them. The certification helps professionals to chart the course of their career by engaging in continuing education and professional development activities. Throughout the three-year certification term, CSSP participants must make meaningful contributions to the sports security industry through service and outreach, attendance at conferences and authoring of articles, among

If you are a sports safety and security professional looking to advance your career by pursuing CSSP certification, contact [Elizabeth.Voorhees@usm.edu](mailto:Elizabeth.Voorhees@usm.edu), call **601-266-6099** or go to [www.NCS4.com/CSSP](http://www.NCS4.com/CSSP).



other requirements. The ongoing requirements of the certification accelerate learning, create new opportunities and help professionals acquire new skills to keep them at the forefront of the profession. The CSSP is an important development in the realm of sports safety and security, as the profession is an emerging field that continues to evolve rapidly. As the profession becomes more complex and the knowledge base more expansive, it is critical that the people overseeing safety and security operations have the opportunity to gain knowledge and improve their understanding of key principles and practices in sports security. NCS4 has identified what the sports safety and security profession is today, and developed a program to prepare individuals for leadership roles that impact safety and security operations at sporting events and special events.

## CREATING THE CSSP

The goal of the CSSP program is to ensure that individuals responsible for the secure and safe operation of sports venues and events have the requisite knowledge, skill and ability (KSAs) to successfully perform their duties. In order to develop a certification exam that measures the requisite KSAs, a comprehensive occupational analysis was conducted. The occupational analysis process involves a series of important steps (Figure 1). First, background information was collected and reviewed, including relevant job descriptions from a variety of sports organizations; articles in professional literature and technical reports from similar occupational studies; and guidelines and training materials issued by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and NCS4.

The information was examined to obtain specific details regarding the type of work performed by incumbents in the classification, industry norms, and the training and supervision workers received. Next, group discussions with subject-matter experts were held to provide a comprehensive picture of the job. A diverse group of practitioners was selected to evaluate incumbents in a variety of assignments, and provide a comprehensive picture of the general job responsibilities. Group interviews were conducted over a period of two and a half days to collect more detailed information concerning the work required of incumbents employed in the target classifications, and to identify the KSAs necessary for the performance of those work activities. Based on the group meetings, a list of work behaviors, tasks, competencies, skills and abilities was generated. This list was then converted into a questionnaire in which respondents were asked to rate characteristics, such

as performance, importance, frequency, level of recall, requirement at time of hire, etc. The questionnaire was disseminated among 946 sports security professionals, with approximately 25 percent of those individuals completing the questionnaire. The resulting data was analyzed and interpreted. The top-rated tasks and KSAs collected via the questionnaire dictated the following knowledge domains and associated dimension weights (in percentages):

- Emergency management (21)
- Crowd management (19)
- Legal and regulatory (18)
- Security principles and practices (16)
- Business and facility management (13)
- Emergency planning (13)

These weights were used to determine how many test items were developed to measure each KSA, and how many items measuring each dimension were included on final forms of the exam (Figure 2).



NCS4 staff worked with experts to develop multiple-choice test items designed to measure each KSA. The process resulted in multiple forms of the CSSP examination, which are administered by computer at testing centers conveniently located throughout the U.S. Additionally, NCS4 developed a certification handbook and a set of CSSP preparation courses to help candidates prepare for the examination. NCS4 is committed to ensuring that the CSSP becomes the standard for sports safety and security professionals across the U.S., and believes that those with the credential will be viewed as best-in-class, distinguishing themselves in the marketplace. Establishing certification standards for industry professionals is a critical step in advancing the security profession — one that can make a significant difference in how large stadiums and arenas are operated.

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