

SEATTLE METRO  
CHAMBER PRESENTS...

# MEGA EVENTS READINESS PLAYBOOK

A GUIDE FOR WASHINGTON  
SMALL BUSINESSES



WOOSH

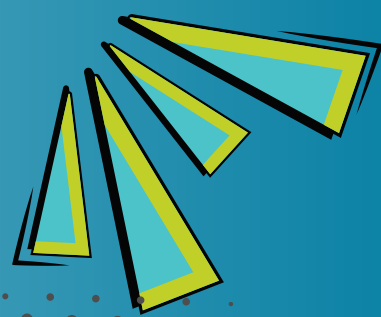
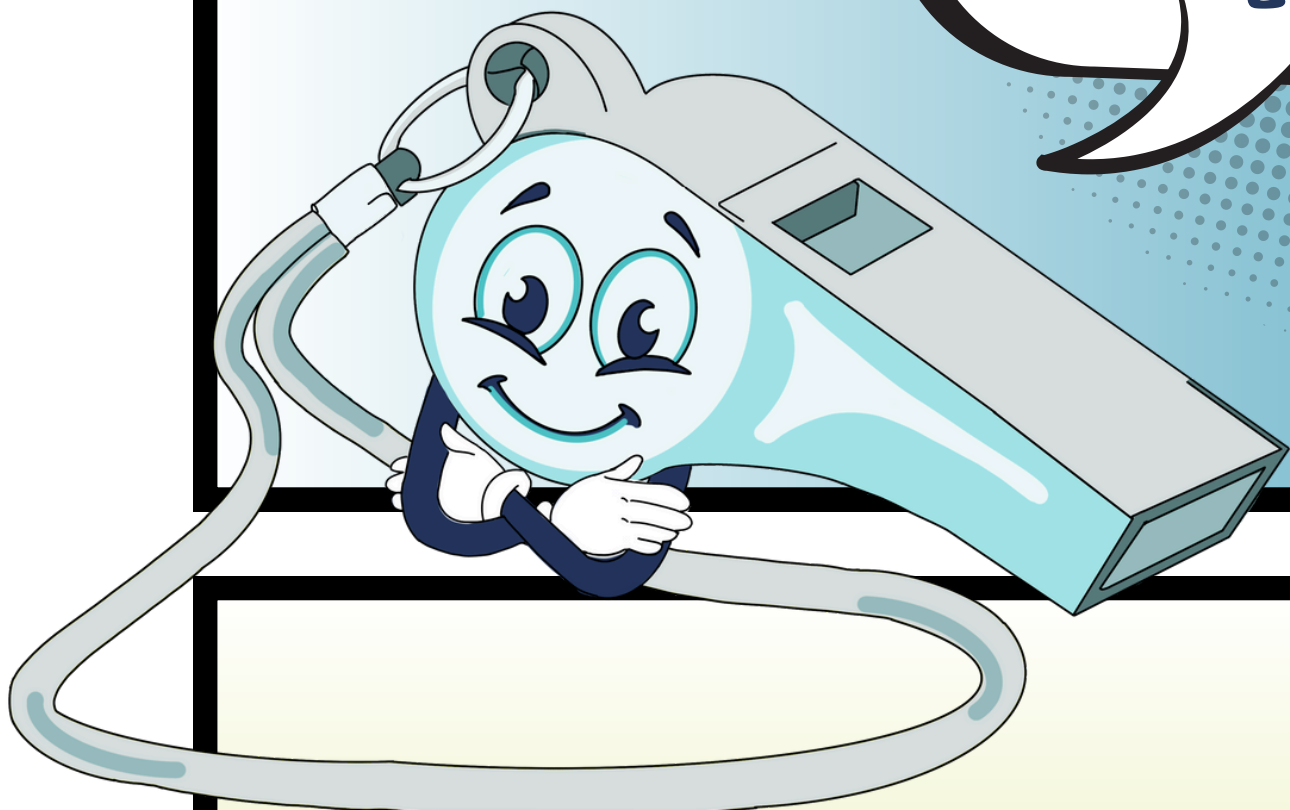
GOAL!





SEATTLE, WA

HI THERE!  
I'M COACH WHISTLE - HERE TO HELP  
WASHINGTON STATE BUSINESS OWNERS  
REAP THE ECONOMIC REWARDS AND  
AVOID POTENTIAL RISKS AS "MEGA  
EVENTS" ROLL INTO TOWN.



But... what is a

# MEGA EVENT



"MEGA EVENT" CAN DESCRIBE A VARIETY OF EVENTS,  
INCLUDING:



MAJOR SPORTS  
EVENTS...



STADIUM SIZE LIVE  
MUSIC EVENTS

+ OTHER  
LARGE  
GATHERINGS  
OR EVENTS  
SUCH AS:

WEATHER  
EVENTS



HOLIDAYS



& MUCH  
MORE



## THE PAST

Here are a few examples of Mega Events you might remember in Washington state....

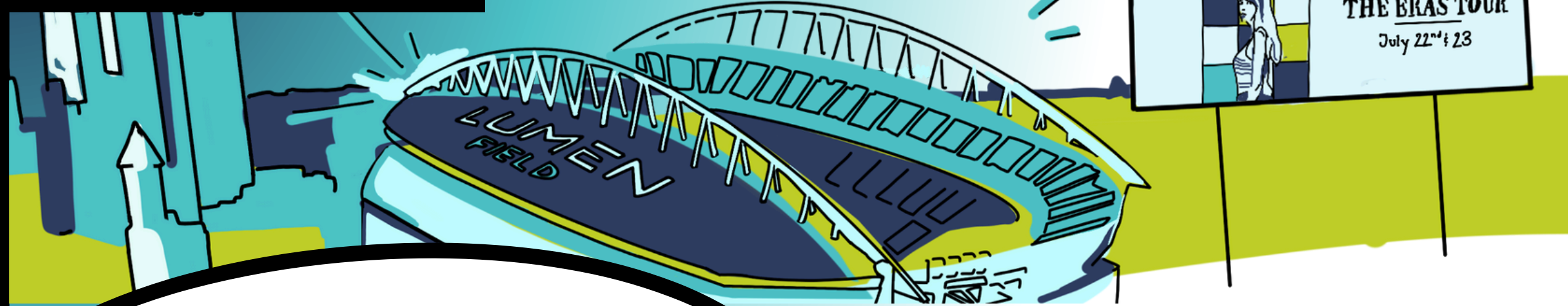
# ALL STAR GAME

2023



MLB ALL STAR GAME

## TAYLOR SWIFT'S ERA'S TOUR



AS A BUSINESS COMMUNITY, WE CAN LEARN FROM THE SUCCESSES AND PITFALLS OF PAST MEGA EVENTS.

WE LEARNED THAT THE MOST SUCCESSFUL, RESILIENT BUSINESSES GET PREPARED TO MEET THE MOMENT.





THE PRESENT

So, how can I get my business ready?

Overall, businesses benefit most from mega events when they PLAN AHEAD.



Start by considering some key aspects of the mega event.



How will your customers' needs change during this time?

Which areas of the city are likely to become "hot spots"?



Who is the main audience for this event? How can your business engage them and cater to their interests?





OKAY! WHERE SHOULD I START?

THAT'S EASY! FIRST YOU SHOULD DOWNLOAD THE FULL

**PLAYBOOK**

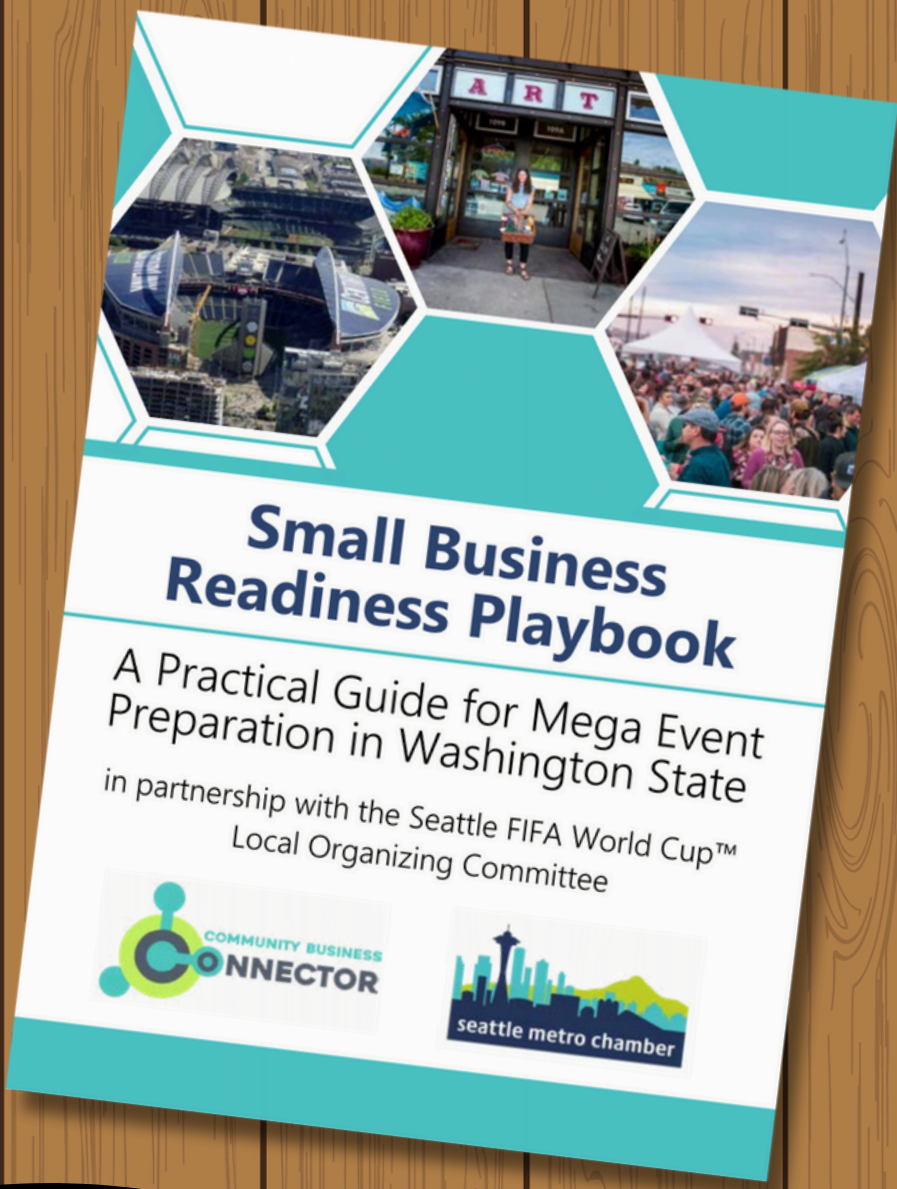
THE WHAT?

Meanwhile at Seattle Metro Chamber HQ

SURE HOPE FOLKS READ OUR SMALL-BIZ READINESS PLAYBOOK!

IT'S DESIGNED TO HELP SMALL BUSINESSES ACROSS WASHINGTON PREPARE FOR JUST ABOUT ANYTHING – EVEN GIANT MUTATED POP STARS AND FLYING SOCCER BALLS!

DOWNLOAD HERE!



Anywho! We've snagged a few of their **Business Readiness Checklists** right here. Plan ahead, and your small business will be unstoppable!

**MUAHAHAHA!!**

Was Coach Whistle evil all along?!?!

TO BE CONTINUED...



# Becoming ‘Business Ready’

Being business ready means your business can welcome visitors, handle higher demand, adjust quickly to changing conditions, and turn event-driven traffic into revenue without overwhelming your team or disrupting regular operations.

## What it Means to be Business Ready

- **You know who the visitors are and what they want:** Event crowds behave differently than regular customers. They arrive early and stay longer, travel in groups, follow rituals (friendship bracelets, tailgating, merch hunting, themed outfits), and spend across multiple neighborhoods.
- **Your operations can handle a surge:** Are you prepared for a line out the door? Can your Point-of-Sale run fast enough? Can your kitchen or back-of-house keep up? Do you have backups if a delivery is late?
- **Your staff is prepared and supported:** Make sure your team knows peak times and how to serve visitors quickly and clearly.
- **Your customer experience is easy for visitors:** Visitors don’t know your neighborhood. Clear signage and convenient options help bring them in the door.
- **Your financial and inventory planning matches demand:** Events bring both a revenue spike and a cost spike.
- **You can adapt quickly on the day-of:** Conditions can change fast, including transit delays, weather shifts, security adjustments, and last-minute closures.

## Quick “Business Ready” Checklist

### Staffing

- ☐ Add extra coverage for peak times
- ☐ Cross train staff
- ☐ Build Backup plan for delays and absences

### Cash Flow

- ☐ Prepare for higher upfront costs
- ☐ Keep extra change on hand
- ☐ Test POS, chip readers, and mobile wallets

### Inventory

- ☐ Order early for fast-moving items
- ☐ Check for over-stocking perishables
- ☐ Confirm backup suppliers

### Customer Experience

- ☐ Post clear signage + pricing
- ☐ Update Google listing & social media
- ☐ Check ADA access & other payment options
- ☐ Create short, simple menus for peak surges

### Beware of over-preparing (ordering too much stock, over-staffing)



To find the right balance, use city and tourism forecasts, coordinate with neighboring businesses, and scale inventory gradually. Focus on high-margin or flexible products, and lean on Washington State’s ORIA business liaisons for help planning your specific needs.



# Permits During Mega Events

During major events, cities often tighten enforcement and add event-specific requirements, so the first step for any business is to check with your local permitting office to confirm what applies. In general, expect to need a permit if you plan to operate outdoors, change your footprint, use sidewalks or streets, host an activation, serve food or alcohol in a new way, or add temporary structures.

## Common Permits and Licenses for Major Events

- Street Use / Sidewalk Café / Outdoor Display
- Special Event Permits
- Temporary Food Service Permits
- Alcohol service licenses, Liquor Endorsements / Special Occasion Licenses
- Fire & Safety Permits
- Temporary Signage or Banners
- Film & Photography Permits
- Temporary Vending / Pop-Up Operations

### Compliance Checklist

- ☐ Local and state business licenses active
- ☐ Health and alcohol permits valid
- ☐ Outdoor seating and sidewalk permits approved
- ☐ Fire, electrical, and tent permits secured
- ☐ Signage rules followed
- ☐ Noise/music permits checked
- ☐ Insurance current
- ☐ Accessibility requirements confirmed
- ☐ Waste and recycling plans finalized

### Docs To Have on Hand

- Food safety certifications, temporary food permits, and health documentation
- Alcohol service licenses (MAST), special-occasion permits, or extended-hours approvals
- Entertainment or amplified sound permits
- Sidewalk/street-use or temporary activation permits
- Fire/occupancy approvals
- Business license and insurance documentation
- Contact info for your property manager and any required inspectors

### Two Months

- Apply for street use or outdoor seating permits
- Apply for permits for temporary structures
- Ensure business, food, and alcohol licenses are active
- Check with your city’s permitting office for requirements

### One Month

- Apply for sidewalk displays, promotions, or pop-ups
- Get fire department approvals (propane, occupancy, heating, crowd management)
- Schedule required inspections
- Confirm waste and recycling requirements, especially for food businesses

### Two Weeks

- Confirm all approvals have been issued
- Print and post required permits
- Check occupancy signage and emergency exits
- Verify insurance covers planned activities

### Week Before

- Share permit conditions with staff (hours, footprint, safety rules)
- Walk the site to ensure layouts match approvals
- Prepare backup plans for weather, equipment, or staffing changes

### Don’t Assume: Get Approvals Early and Keep Them Handy



Common pitfalls during mega events include late applications, assuming approvals aren’t needed, letting licenses lapse, expanding without permission, and not posting permits. Inspectors are stricter on event days. Keep all documents in one central location and ensure two staff can access them.



# Freelancers & Independent / Solo Workers

Not every business affected by a mega event has a storefront. Freelancers, photographers, performers, consultants, designers, rideshare drivers, event crew, and technicians also need to plan ahead.

## Key Considerations:

- **Business Licensing:** All freelancers earning income in Washington must have a Washington State Business License and, if applicable, a city business license (e.g., Seattle’s Business License Tax Certificate).
- **Tax Reporting:** Check local B&O tax obligations if working within city limits during events (e.g., Seattle’s B&O Tax Rules).
- **Permits & Credentials:** Freelancers providing on-site services (photography, entertainment, mobile repair, pop-up booths) may need temporary credentials or background checks from the event organizer.
- **Insurance:** Carry general liability coverage; some venues require proof before issuing access badges.
- **Mobility:** Expect delays around venues; include travel time and parking fees in quotes.
- **Networking:** Large events often hire local freelancers. Contact city event offices, Chambers, and creative-sector networks for opportunities.

## Freelancer Readiness Checklist

- ☐ Washington State Business License through Department of Revenue
- ☐ City Business License if working within city limits (e.g., Seattle Business License Tax Certificate)
- ☐ Proof of Insurance (general liability or equipment coverage)
- ☐ Tax ID and Record System for invoicing and B&O reporting
- ☐ Event Credential or Pass if required by organizers
- ☐ Transportation Plan – build in extra time for road closures and parking
- ☐ Portable Payment Options – Square, tap-to-pay, or offline POS ready

## How Businesses Can Secure Contract Work

**Register** in event and city supplier/vendor portals.

**Track** procurement opportunities through city, county, and state postings.

**Attend** vendor fairs, event briefings, and outreach sessions.



# Day Of Readiness Routine

## Daily Monitor Checklist

- ☐ **Review** city and county event updates
- ☐ **Verify** transit and rideshare conditions (delays, reduced service)
- ☐ **Look** for police/fire/EMS advisories
- ☐ **Adjust** staffing arrival times based on access routes
- ☐ **Update** front-of-house team on expected peak time
- ☐ **Check** known road closures and new traffic advisories
- ☐ **Check** weather forecast and prepare for wind, heat, rain, or cold
- ☐ **Confirm** event schedules nearby (parades, games, concerts)
- ☐ **Reschedule** or reroute deliveries, as needed
- ☐ **Build** a group message thread (Signal, WhatsApp, Slack, or SMS) so the Daily Monitor can quickly inform all staff.

### Inventory & Supplies

- ☐ Refill all high-volume items (food, beverages, utensils, cups, most sold items)
- ☐ Restock paper goods, cleaning supplies, sanitizer
- ☐ Ensure grab-and-go items are prepped and displayed

### Staffing

- ☐ Confirm role assignments for peak periods
- ☐ Ensure staff breaks have coverage
- ☐ Identify a point person or shift lead

### During-the-Day Adjustments

- ☐ Conduct a mid-shift check-in
- ☐ Refresh restrooms and trash areas
- ☐ Rotate staff to prevent fatigue
- ☐ Monitor crowd size and adjust line management early

### Tech & Payments

- ☐ Test POS systems and reconnect devices
- ☐ Charge handheld devices and backup batteries
- ☐ Set up a backup for Wi-Fi outages (portable hotspot)
- ☐ Confirm mobile ordering platforms are working
- ☐ Prepare cash change bank

### Property & Safety

- ☐ Clean and restock restrooms
- ☐ Confirm emergency exits are clear
- ☐ Secure outdoor equipment (tents, heaters, fans)
- ☐ Review safety and emergency procedures



# Staff Communication and Coordination

Clear communication is critical on mega event days. Prioritize staff coordination, emergency readiness, and morale with quick pre-opening huddles to share updates and confirm roles.

## Team Checklist:

- ☐ Conduct morning huddle (share updates and assignments)
- ☐ Verify radios, headsets, or group messaging apps are working
- ☐ Share and post emergency contacts (owners, managers, local police, fire)
- ☐ Identify staff "point person" for quick decisions during the day if managerial staff are not around
- ☐ Confirm closing/clean-up responsibilities before shifts start
- ☐ Schedule brief mid-shift check-in for adjustments and morale

# Managing Crowds & Customer Flow

Crowds can build quickly during mega events. Clear pathways, signage, and smart queuing reduce stress and support accessibility and safety. Plan where lines form, how guests enter and exit, and how to avoid congestion at your front door.

## Crowd Management Checklist

### Signage & Wayfinding

- ☐ Mark "Order Here," "Pick-Up," "Enter," and "Exit"
- ☐ Keep signage large, clear, and weatherproof
- ☐ Provide multi-language or icon-based signs if possible

### Queueing

- ☐ Use stanchions, ropes, or tape to form guardrails
- ☐ Develop overflow plan if lines exceed storefront
- ☐ Avoid blocking ADA curb ramps or transit stops

### Staff Roles

- ☐ Assign a greeter during peak hours
- ☐ Adjust staff between roles (runner, register, line flow)

### Customer Experience

- ☐ Keep menus visible to people waiting in line
- ☐ Prepare express or grab-and-go items
- ☐ Encourage mobile ordering if available



# Marketing to Visitors

Large events bring diverse local and international visitors. Be clear about who you want to reach, and keep marketing simple and welcoming using inclusive language, imagery, and platforms visitors already use. Use the checklist below to attract event visitors and build lasting customers.

## Marketing Set-Up Checklist

### Claim your Google Business Profile

- ☐ Make it easy for visitors to find you in “near me” searches with accurate hours, location, and photos.
- ☐ Update it before and during the event so customers know you’re open and ready.

### Ask customers for reviews

- ☐ Post QR codes in your restaurant where customers can leave reviews on Yelp and Google.
- ☐ Reviews help visitors decide where to go and boost your visibility during high-traffic periods.

### Focus on 1 Social Media Channel

- ☐ Post event-week updates, hours, specials, and photos where visitors spend time

- ☐ Consistency on one platform is more effective than trying to manage several at once.

### Make Wifi Accessible to Customers

- ☐ Display a QR code so customers can connect to your Wi-Fi to make it easier to leave reviews and follow your business on social media.

### Translation Tools

- ☐ Google Translate and Microsoft Translator are free, easy tools for translating basic marketing materials.
- ☐ AI tools can also help bridge language gaps, especially for short descriptions, menus, or event promotions.



## Best Practices for Social Media During a Mega Event

### What to Post

- **Daily updates:** hours, specials, restocks, wait times, event-themed item
- **Quick photos or short videos;** keep it simple, friendly, and positive
- **Behind-the-scenes,** friendly staff moments, or customer highlights (with permission)
- **Helpful tips for visitors** (parking, nearby transit, how to find your entrance)

### How to Get Found

- **Use relevant hashtags** (event + neighborhood)
- **Tag business partner networks** (BIAs, organizing committee, nearby businesses)
- **Pin your hours, address, and directions;** keep your link in bio updated
- **Ask every visitor to post a review** on Google and Yelp

### Stay Active

- **Post at least once a day** during event windows
- **Repost customer content** (with permission)
- **Check Direct Messages (DMs);** visitors often use them like a customer-service line
- **Respond quickly;** people decide where to go based on who answers

### Where to Post

- **Instagram:** Best all-around tool — posts, Stories, Reels
- **Facebook:** Great for locals and neighborhood groups
- **TikTok:** Optional but high-reward for fun/visual brands
- **X/Twitter:** Best for super-fast updates (“Open late tonight!”)
- **Google Business Profile:** Update hours, photos, and respond to reviews — most visitors check Google before anything else.



## Privacy Considerations for Small Businesses

Large international events attract visitors from regions with strict privacy laws, such as the European Union. To avoid issues, don’t post identifiable photos of customers without their permission.

- Avoid showing identifiable faces unless you have explicit consent
- Get permission in writing if featuring a customer
- Use wide or back-of-crowd shots instead of close-ups
- Don’t post videos with clear audio of private conversations
- Be cautious with captions and avoid tagging customers without consent



# Safety and Security

Mega events offer opportunities but require extra attention to safety and preparedness. Large crowds, street closures, and public celebrations can create new risks for businesses and employees. Understanding safety plans and knowing where to find reliable resources is essential.

## Safety Check-List for Your Team

- ☐ Identify who on your team monitors local news/emergency alerts.
- ☐ Map primary and backup access routes for staff, deliveries, customers.
- ☐ Post emergency-access and evacuation instructions in the staff area.
- ☐ Update signage or online notices about possible delays or route changes.
- ☐ Review supplier agreements and inform them about possible access restrictions.
- ☐ Ensure staff know whom to contact if conditions change.
- ☐ Check that your property manager or landlord is aware of any event-security activation.

### Scams & Fraud Prevention

Large events can attract scammers. Warn staff to watch for fake vendors, unofficial partners, and phishing attempts.

- Watch for anyone asking for payment to “**reserve**” space, promote your business, or sell sponsorships.
- Scammers may pose as inspectors or city officials. Legitimate agencies **never** demand immediate payment or sensitive information by phone or email.
- **Train employees to:**
  - Verify IDs
  - Double-check payment requests
  - Avoid clicking unknown links

**When in doubt, confirm all communications through your official channels or known contacts before taking action**

### Human Trafficking Prevention

Major events can heighten human trafficking risks due to large crowds and temporary labor needs. Businesses can help by recognizing the signs.

**Train staff to recognize warning signs, such as:**

- Individuals who appear fearful or controlled
- Guests avoiding eye contact or lacking ID
- Someone speaking on behalf of another person.

**Report suspicious activity to trained professionals for safe intervention**