

Public order public safety - Guidance overview

This page is from APP, the official source of professional practice for policing.

First published 23 October 2013

Public order public safety (POPS) covers a wide range of events and operations – including protests, festivals, sporting events and disorder – where there is a reasonably foreseeable risk to public order and/or public safety.

POPS authorised professional practice (APP) is aimed at those involved in the planning, policing and command of POPS events and operations. It provides a framework for planning and managing POPS events and operations, as well as for deploying resources at a local, regional or national level.

The POPS APP:

- provides guidance on the command, training, tactical options, role profiles and legislative framework in relation to POPS events and operations
- supports interoperability and the delivery of consistent standards across forces

The POPS APP does not seek to be prescriptive in terms of content, however where the term:

- ‘must’ appears – it is to be interpreted as to mean ‘has to’ or is ‘required by law or code of practice’
- ‘should’ appears – it is to be interpreted as to mean it is a strong recommendation based on a high evidence base
- ‘consider’ appears – it is to be interpreted as to mean ‘suggested advice or guidance’

This APP does not provide guidance for event organisation or management, which is the responsibility of the event organiser.

Use of discretion

Use of discretion by forces

If a chief officer determines it necessary to deviate from the 'must' requirements in this APP and issue separate instructions, due to the operational context or legal provisions appertaining in a specific jurisdiction, they should ensure that this decision aligns to their POPS strategic risk assessment (SRA) and that the rationale is recorded.

Use of discretion by individual officers

Situations involving the policing of POPS events and operations often involve a set of circumstances that are constantly evolving. The POPS APP does not intend to restrict police officers from taking innovative actions that are not included in this guidance to resolve incidents, as long as those actions are lawful, comply with human rights and have been adequately risk assessed.

Further information

In the interest of transparency, most of this APP and associated links are publicly accessible. Some areas of the APP are restricted, due to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements and/or the sensitivity of the information. Hyperlinks to those specific sections are restricted and are accessible only to authorised individuals and organisations.

Where they are not the organisers of an event, police forces may want to identify who has responsibility and what they are responsible for during an event.

Defining a POPS event

A POPS event or operation can be described as any of the following.

- Any event or operation (spontaneous or pre-planned) where the available information and/or intelligence indicates that there is a reasonably foreseeable risk to public order and/or public safety.
- Where the range and scope of the event or operation is above and beyond that of day-to-day policing requirements and requires dedicated, trained and accredited POPS policing resources.
- Events such as concerts, festival and VIP visits, which may not require the deployment of public order tactics but may require the police to perform public safety roles.

Police forces should not assume the roles, responsibilities and associated liabilities of event organisers. They should focus on the core policing roles of maintaining the peace, preventing crime and disorder, and keeping the public safe.

When planning and policing a POPS event or operation, all staff involved in planning, command and operational deployments should treat each event as unique and distinct. Any associated documentation, such as policy/command logs and operation orders, should reflect this.

Tags

Public order Public safety