

4.3.18 Mass Gathering

4.3.18.1 Location and Extent

The Lehigh Valley is home to numerous regularly scheduled and unscheduled gatherings of large numbers of individuals. A mass gathering of individuals may range from peaceful assembly of populations that join for a common cause, to large groups of people seeking to form a protest against or disrupt any jurisdictional or agency function. The scope of gatherings within the Lehigh Valley varies widely based on the group, intent, and location within the region. Within the region, pre-planned events such as sports gatherings, college ceremonies, and public festivals draw large numbers of individuals that are considered mass gathering events. Additionally, the location of government facilities, new construction, and higher educational institutions within the region may draw the attention of protest organizations looking to voice their message and/or disrupt local operations. These facilities are generally located within the larger, more urban environments found within the City of Allentown, City of Bethlehem, and City of Easton.

4.3.18.2 Range of Magnitude

Mass gatherings range from small groups of individuals joined together with a common purpose to large quantities of individuals intent on disruption of services, access, and/or operations. These gatherings generally range from annual planned events such as jurisdictional festivals, sporting events, and college graduations to peaceful or violent assemblies of large numbers of individuals.

In 2011, Lehigh University rented their facilities out to a company that hosted a rave party for the college students. During the event, a student became ill, followed by numerous others. Local responders quickly arrived and determined the event to be a Mass Casualty Event (MCE). In total 44 students were transported from the event and taken to local hospitals for a variety of injuries and illnesses.

4.3.18.3 Past Occurrence

The Lehigh Valley is home to annual pre-planned events that meet the criteria set forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Health as a mass gathering. The list of events shown in Table 4.3.18-1 is a partial compilation of annual events that draw large numbers of individuals together with peaceful intent. Due to the number of events being hosted by each jurisdiction throughout the Lehigh Valley, a full listing of events is unable to be maintained. The information identified below was provided by the County Emergency Management Agencies, and was noted to be events that require assistance from county and municipal agencies due to location and number of attendees.

Table 4.3.18-1. Mass Gathering Pre-Planned Events

County	Jurisdiction	Event	Date	Estimated Population
Lehigh	Allentown	DCI Eastern Classic	August	Unknown
Lehigh	Allentown	Coca-Cola Stadium	Varies	seating up to 10,000
Lehigh	Allentown	Great Allentown Fair	August	Unknown
Lehigh	Allentown	Mayfair Festival of Arts	Memorial Day Weekend	Unknown
Lehigh	Allentown	Coca-Cola (Iron Pigs)	Up to 88 Games	Seating up to 10,000
Lehigh	Allentown	Ag Hall Events	Year Round	Unknown
Lehigh	Breinigsville	Valley Preferred Cycling Center	Weekly	Up to 2,000
Lehigh	Cementon	Cementon Fair	June	Unknown
Lehigh	Macungie	Paws for Fun Pet Festival	October	Unknown
Lehigh	Macungie	Truck Show	June	Unknown
Lehigh	Macungie	Das Awkscht Fest	August	Unknown
Lehigh	Macungie	Wheels of Time Car Show	August	Unknown
Lehigh	Macungie	Lehigh & Berks County Dog Show	September	Unknown
Lehigh	Schnecksville	Schnecksville Community Fair	June	Unknown
Lehigh	Upper Saucon	2003 US Woman's Open	9-Jun	Unknown
Lehigh	Varies	Lehigh Valley Sportsfest	Varies	Unknown
Northampton	Bethlehem	Musik Fest	August	Unknown
Northampton	Bethlehem	Eagles Football Camp	June	Unknown

Source: Pennsylvania Emergency Incident Reporting System (PEIRS); Knowledge Center, County 9-1-1 Databases

Past occurrences of non-planned gatherings within the Lehigh Valley have been for the most part peaceful, with only one incident being associated with any type of violence. Table 4.3.18-2 below is a list of non-planned mass gatherings of individuals as provided by the County Emergency Management Agencies.

Table 4.3.18-2. Non-planned Mass Gatherings

County	Jurisdiction	Event	Date	Estimated Population
Lehigh	Allentown	Anti-War protestor group at the Courthouse	7-Feb	Unknown
Lehigh	Allentown	Disruption of traffic due to a local march for "Day without immigrants"	6-May	400
Lehigh	Allentown	Occupy Allentown	Fall/Winter 2011	Unknown
Lehigh	North Whitehall	Riot (Large group of juveniles fighting)	7-Jul	30-40
Northampton	Bethlehem	Occupy Bethlehem	Fall/Winter 2011	Unknown

Source: Pennsylvania Emergency Incident Reporting System (PEIRS); Knowledge Center, County 9-1-1 Databases

4.3.18.4 Future Occurrence

Based upon the Risk Factor Methodology Probability Criteria, the likelihood of a pre-planned mass gathering is considered “*Highly Likely*” due to the annual scheduling of jurisdictional events throughout the Lehigh Valley. Mass gathering incidents, or events that are not planned and are based solely on the public uprising, are considered “*Unlikely*” (see Table 4.3.18-3).

Table 4.3.18-3. Likelihood of Future Occurrences of Mass Gathering

County	Avg. #/Year	% Probability	Category
Pre-Planned Events			
Lehigh	15+	100	Highly Likely
Northampton	3+	100	Highly Likely
Non-planned Mass Gathering Incidents			
Lehigh	<1	30%	Unlikely
Northampton	<1	10%	Unlikely

Source: PEIRS; Knowledge Center, County 9-1-1 Databases

4.3.18.5 Vulnerability Assessment

The vulnerability of a jurisdiction to a non-planned mass gathering is difficult to measure due to the unknown target or topic that is causing the group to gather. Past occurrences have led to little if any loss measured by financial or property damage.

Pre-planned events are generally coordinated with local jurisdictions, response agencies, and county agencies to ensure the safety of the jurisdiction, county, and the general public attending. Costs associated with loss due to damage or other adverse incidents during or related to the event are generally covered by the organization hosting the event. Pre-planned or non-planned events may result in road closures, which in turn may delay the provision of emergency services.