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Teen Takeovers: An Enterprise Risk Management Framework for Public Entities

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In recent years, teen takeovers have resulted in significant public safety concerns highlighting the need for coordinated prevention and preparedness efforts across public agencies. Teen takeovers are large, spontaneous or rapidly organized gatherings of predominantly teenagers or young adults that are typically coordinated through social media or other digital communication platforms. Many teen takeovers may remain peaceful, but their unpredictability and potential to escalate distinguish them from planned public events and underscore the need for an enterprise-wide approach to preparedness and response. By viewing teen takeovers as an enterprise-wide risk, entities can proactively identify vulnerabilities and implement coordinated mitigation strategies before an incident occurs.

A comprehensive prevention strategy begins with a formal risk assessment. Public agencies should identify locations that are vulnerable to large, unplanned gatherings such as parks, beaches, parking structures, shopping areas, and more. These locations should be periodically evaluated for physical and operational vulnerabilities. Knowledge of these vulnerabilities prior to an event will be conducive to implementing effective prevention and response strategies.

Interdepartmental collaboration is one of the most effective prevention strategies available to public agencies. Risk managers should facilitate regular communication among departments and with other agencies to coordinate efforts. By sharing information and jointly evaluating emerging risks, agencies can develop consistent prevention strategies and clearly define their respective responsibilities. Establishing routine coordination meetings will promote a common operating picture and improve organizational readiness to implement preventive measures.

Community engagement can also reduce the likelihood of disruptive gatherings. Public agencies should work together and partner with business owners to encourage early communication

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regarding emerging concerns. Public information campaigns that promote safe recreational opportunities, explain the consequences of unlawful behavior, and encourage responsible use of public spaces can complement enforcement efforts. During periods of increased risk, agencies should provide timely, accurate information to residents and businesses to improve public awareness.

The most successful responses to teen takeovers begin long before the event occurs. Early intelligence, cross-department coordination, strategic communications, environmental design, and community engagement can substantially reduce the likelihood that a planned gathering escalates out of control. By integrating these strategies into the agency's enterprise risk management framework, entities can reduce exposures while improving the overall safety and security of the communities they serve.

If you have any questions about prevention strategies for teen takeovers, contact [PRISM Risk Control](#).