

DOC 8

Statement of Graeme Mark Dixon

1. I am Graeme Mark Dixon
2. I am an Environmental Health Officer employed by Trafford Council. My duties include enforcement of legislation in relation to Food Hygiene, Public Health, Health and Safety at Work and Safety at Sports Grounds. As part of my role I am also consulted on premises license applications as Environmental Health are one of the responsible authorities.
3. On the 13th January 2022 the first multi-agency meeting for the concerts took place. As part of this meeting the required sub-groups were established and the date of the final multi-agency meeting set for the 10th May 2022. The aim for this meeting was for all plans to have been finalised and an agreement in principle reached for the issuing of the Special Safety Certificates, subject to final pieces of information being supplied which would not be available until the day of the concert, for example structural certificates.
4. The sub-group meetings which were established following the multi-agency meeting started on the 9th February 2022 and ran through until the 28th April 2022, with additional meetings taking place as necessary. As part of the Transport, Traffic and Zone Ex sub-group meeting on the 9th February 2022, the group was informed that Harry Styles fans turn up early and so a holding area would need to be established.
5. On the 29th April 2022 the first draft of the Event Management Plans for The Killers and the Red Hot Chilli Peppers were received. For The Killers concert this was 37 days before and for the Red Hot Chilli Peppers concert this was 48 days before. The first draft of the Event Management Plan for Harry Styles was received on the 9th May 2022 which was 32 days before the first night of concerts. Feedback was provided to Lancashire County Cricket Club by email on the 10th May 2022 on the Event Management Plans for The Killers, which was provided by Mrs Nicola Duckworth, and the Red Hot Chili Peppers, which was provided by myself.
6. On the 4th May 2022 an invite was received for a Microsoft Teams meeting on the 5th May 2022 at 10:30am. During the meeting the club informed us that they had been trying to approach different land owners to arrange for a holding area to be set up, but have been unsuccessful. An overview of 5 pieces of land was discussed and this was provided by email.
7. The second multi-agency meeting took place on the 10th May 2022 at 2pm. During the meeting it was determined that an agreement in principle could not be given for the issuing of the Special Safety Certificates as information in relation to the event management plans was still outstanding. During the meeting Mrs Clare Whittle (Regulatory Services Manger Trading Standards and Licensing) raised that it was a requirement of the premises license for the Event

Management Plan to be submitted to the licensing authority 3 months prior to the concert. Ms Laura Strong (Safety Officer for Lancashire County Cricket Club) stated that she was not aware of this condition in the license but that representatives from the council had been part of the sub-group meetings. During the meeting Ms Kelli Graham (Event Manager, SJM) stated that as the promoter they would aim to have plans finalised 28 days prior to the event.

8. On the 18th May 2022 a meeting took place to discuss the holding areas. As part of the meeting Ms Graham stated that, based on information from the tour taking place in America, there would be between 1,000 – 4,000 spectators camping overnight for each event, 80% of the audience would arrive before 1pm and 90% by 4pm. This was followed up in an email the following day.
9. On the 19th May 2022 Mrs Nicola Duckworth and I had a meeting at Lancashire County Cricket Club with Ms Laura Strong and Mr Steve Davies (Operations Director). As part of the discussions the club informed us that the majority of the required information in the emails on the 10th May 2022 had been completed, with the holding area plans for Harry Styles, structural testing of the compound barriers and confirmation of the steel shield remaining. The revised Event Management Plan were received later in the day.
10. On the 21st May 2022 the finalised version of the Event Management Plans, with the exception of the finalised plans for the holding areas, were received.
11. On the 24th May 2022, version 3 of the Holding Area plans were received and provided detail on how UA92 would be managed for overnight camping from 4pm on the 14th June 2022 and the management of Gorse Hill Park on the day of the concerts. Further plans were received on the 14th June 2022.
12. On the 25th May 2022 a final multi-agency meeting took place to discuss the amended procedures and plans that had been provided since the previous meeting. As part of the meeting the use of Gate 5 for egress was discussed and it was agreed the plans would be sent across later that day. Additional issues discussed included a request for a contingency to be in place to open the gates for The Killers at 4pm if crowd levels required it and confirmation from SJM that they are aiming for gates to open at 2pm for Harry Styles on both dates, subject to the site being determined safe to open. At the conclusion of the meeting it was agreed that an agreement in principle could be given for the concerts taking place.
13. As part of the staffing rota within Environmental Health I was scheduled to work the 2nd night of Harry Styles on the 16th June 2022 and the Red Hot Chili Peppers on the 22nd June 2022.

Harry Styles

14. On the 15th June 2022 I was informed by Mrs Duckworth that restrictions had been placed on persons working on the 3rd floor of the P&M building at the Cricket Club, which is where the councils control room was based, in relation to accessing the toilets situated on the same floor which had been implemented by SJM. A curtain had been set up on the third floor and we were not allowed access behind this curtain. To access the toilet the instruction was that we would have to take the lift to the ground floor, exit the building to re-enter through a different entrance and take the lift back up to the third floor. During the concert on the 16th June 2022, this area was stewarded and when I asked to access the toilets I was able to.

15. Prior to the support act coming on stage I began a walk around of the stadium with Mrs Duckworth and Mrs Whittle. Whilst carrying out checks of the barriers it was found that a number of Pedestrian Barriers, otherwise known as PED barriers, had been installed at the pods at either side of the stage as well as in front of C Stand. PED barriers are typically used for controlling crowd movements in a queueing system and obtain some degree of structural integrity when connected to other PED barriers using the manufacturer's fittings. They are not designed to take significant crowd load, such as those found at a concert, and can fall if not used for the intended purpose. Whilst at the left hand side of the stage as facing, which is closest to the Indoor Cricket Centre it was found that some of the PED barriers had not been secured to each other with one being connected to another barrier using white tape. Another barrier showed signs of damage due to a missing fixing point. I was told by Mrs Duckworth that the barriers were not present the night before. From observing the crowd behaviour it was found that customers were standing and they did not appear to be under any load. I took photographs of the barriers **which I exhibit as GDI 1.**

16. After viewing the barriers we headed over to the medical room to view the facilities in use, however, access to this was denied by staff employed by Showmed, the company who had been contracted by the promoter to provide the medical coverage. Whilst in this area it was noticed that the ambulances had been parked facing the building which would impact on the ability of the vehicle to drive out quickly should it have been required in an emergency. This was mentioned to Lancashire County Cricket Club by Mrs Duckworth and was resolved for the next concert. We then continued with the walk around of the stadium by walking behind the stage towards The Point. As we began to walk behind that stage I saw a gentleman who had been detained by the police and was in handcuffs being searched. I became aware via a group Whatsapp that the gentleman had been arrested for inappropriate behaviour with 3 victims identified and that he had gained access through Gate 8 by attaching himself to the safeguarding staff and so did not have a ticket for the event. The message also advised that an agency cleaner had been reported for asking females for their numbers whilst stood by the toilets.

17. At 18:45 I received a phone call from Mr Amit Manchha (Structural Engineer, Amey) to check if there were any issues as he was not on site, I requested he attend to assess the barriers. Mr Manchha arrived on site at approximately 19:15 and I accompanied him to view the barriers before we walked around the site to identify any other issues which may have been present. After completing the walk around we returned to council control room within the cricket club.
18. Prior to Harry Styles coming on to stage I left the council control room and went and stood on the first floor balcony at the Indoor Cricket Centre, ICC, with Mrs Duckworth and Mrs Whittle to observe the crowd movement when Harry Styles came on stage. This location was chosen as it would provide us with a good vantage point to identify any crowd surges as well as observing members of the public within the South Fan zones returning to the viewing area. We were prevented from doing this by a member of staff working in the welfare area who told us we had to stand inside a corridor of the ICC building and we were unable to leave the building until Harry Styles was on stage performing. This prevented us from observing the crowd movement as we had intended. After we left the building we returned to observe the crowd behaviour at stage left (as facing the stage) behind the PED barriers. It was noticed that crowd behaviour had changed with spectators observed climbing onto the barrier. Mrs Duckworth phoned Ms Strong to request that someone attends to review the situation. Mrs Duckworth then went to review the PED barriers over at stage right (as facing) and I stayed with Mr Manchha at stage left. After a few minutes a security guard approached the barriers and stood holding one of them one handed. No-one else arrived to view the barriers. We then proceeded to the top of 'B Stand' to view the number of people on Brian Statham Way listening and/or trying to view the concert before returning to the council control room.
19. As the end of the concert was approaching we returned to the balcony at the ICC to view crowd egress through Gate 8 onto Great Stone Road. Again the member of staff who had prevented us from viewing the crowd movement at the start of the set tried to prevent us from standing in this location until Harry Styles had left the site. On this occasion we did not follow this instructions to enable us observe the crowd movement.
20. Once the viewing area was mostly cleared we walked along the front row of seats in 'C Stand' towards the merchandise stall that had been open on the pitch in front of the Players and Media building to check that it had been closed. As we walked along the front row of 'C Stand' it was found that the grates in the floor were loose and could be easily lifted. We arrived at the merchandise stall at approximately 10:45 and it was found that it was still open with people still entering the queue. Mrs Duckworth informed us, after a phone call to Ms Strong, that the instruction had been given to close the stall and was therefore operating contrary to the Safety Officers instructions.

21. At approximately 11pm we arrived at the merchandise stall in the north fan zone where it was found that the merchandise stall was still open with it being busy and there was an argument taking place between two gentleman, one from Show and Event and one from merchandise, over closing the stall. This argument only stopped when Mrs Whittle stood in the middle of them and introduced herself, asked the gentlemen to calm down and explained that the instruction had already been given to close the stall. The gentleman from Show and Event stated that this is what he was trying to tell the merchandise. Due to the number of people in the queue and the potential for disorder if people were instructed to leave, it was agreed that the remaining people could be served but no-one else is to be allowed in the queue. As part of the discussions a member of staff claimed that there was nearly a crushing incident as fans leaving got confused over where the exit was and started heading to a dead end next to the merchandise and this was prevented by allowing people to enter the queue. We then left site after this.

Red Hot Chili Peppers

22. On the 21st June 2022 I received an email from Mrs Nicola Duckworth with intelligence received by Greater Manchester Police in relation to persons being employed as security guards at the Red Hot Chili Peppers concert who are foreign nationals who do not have permission to work in the UK and have not undergone the necessary security checks. This was then followed by a phone call where it was agreed that Mr Lee Affleck and myself would visit the stadium in the morning to carry out an audit of the stewarding on site.

23. On the 22nd June 2022 I visited Lancashire County Cricket Club with Mr Lee Affleck at 10:30am, where we were initially met by Ms Hannah Nash. Also present was Mr Amit Manchha and Mr Kamren Maleki Mostahari from Amey Structures, who were carrying out a safety check on the temporary structures present on site. Ms Nash escorted Mr Affleck and myself to the Indoor Cricket Centre where we met with Ms Ranjit Saroy who informed us that the check in process was not scheduled to start until 1pm. Ms Saroy then escorted us to the stadium control room where we met with Ms Strong and Mr Tom Rigby (Showsec) and Mr Mark Wanderley (Showsec). Mr Affleck and I left the control room with Mr Rigby and Mr Wanderley and proceeded to a green cabin by Gate 8 where they informed us of the check-in process. Following this Mr Affleck left site and I joined Mr Manchha, Mr Maleki-Mostahari and Ms Nash for the remainder of the structural checks. During the checks Ms Nash mentioned that there was a sound check scheduled for 11:30am and we would need to have completed the checks by this point as the promoters want this to occur with the stadium bowl empty. As the sound check started the structural checks had not been completed, however, we were afforded the time to complete them. Once this had been completed I left site.

24. At 1pm I returned to site with Mr Affleck to complete the stewarding audit entering through Gate 10 on Great Stone Road where we met with Ms Saroy and went into the marquee where some staff would check in and collect their accreditation, for example Lancashire County Cricket Club staff. Staff employed by G4S had a check in area in the indoor cricket centre and so we set off to observe their check in process. Due to the site set up staff were required to walk between parked up HGV drivers' cabs to head over to the indoor cricket centre. As we approached the end of the row of HGV drivers' cabs a HGV arrived to park over the end, however, due to the set-up of the area we were unable to see the lorry until it was parking over the end of the row. As the vehicle was parking, a person on a bicycle manoeuvred through a narrow gap. Ms Saroy immediately spoke to the driver about this and tried to phone Ms Strong, however, the call went to voicemail. Ms Saroy then called one of her colleagues and I phoned Ms Strong and left a voicemail and a short time later I spoke with Ms Strong who informed me that the matter was being dealt with. We then proceeded to observe the G4S check in process. During this time I spoke with Mr Dave Bellas and Mr Lewis McNulty from G4S. During the check in process I observed a member of staff being checked in with a bank card as proof of identification which I informed staff carrying out the check-in process of. After observing the check in process we carried out an audit of stewards and SIA staff on the entrance gates and it was found that at Gate 5 on Talbot Road a member of staff had been allowed to check in using a Covid Pass as identification and another using a bank card. I informed Mr Bellas of this. At the end of the audit I visited the control room and informed Ms Strong of the findings. I then left the site.
25. At approximately 17:45 I returned to site with Ms Nicky Shaw, Emergency Planning Manager and Forwarding Incident Officer, and entered via Gate 5. As we arrived at Gate 5 we saw Mrs Duckworth and Mrs Whittle stood by the entrance with an unknown gentleman. Mrs Duckworth informed me that when she asked the gentleman questions about his job role at the event he said he did not know and that he would not provide his name so they were waiting for the police to arrive. I continued to the room allocated to council staff in the Player and Media building. Shortly afterwards I left the room with Mr Manchha who was already in the room and accompanied him whilst he carried out structural checks. After completing the walk round we returned to the council control room.
26. At approximately 7pm Ms Strong entered the room to inform us that the second support act, A\$AP Rocky, had not arrived and if he was not on stage by 7.30pm then he would not be performing. Due to him not being onsite the first support act, Thundercat, was playing a longer set. At approximately 7:15pm I left the council control room with Mrs Duckworth to observe movement and behaviour along with Mrs Whittle and Mr James Boles (Enforcement Support Officer) who were going to carry out checks on the bars. Whilst walking by the bar close to the Gate 5 entrance off Brian Statham Way, it was found that the queue was

not being effectively managed and so the queue from the bar was extending across the entrance to the pitch area from Gate 5. Mrs Whittle went to speak to the bar manager to resolve this matter. We then continued into the North Fan Zone where it was found that it was very busy and it was difficult to move around this area. Due to the difficulties in moving around the fan zone we decided to return to the council control room. Upon returning to the room I was informed by Mr Adrian Fisher (Director of Growth and Regulatory Services) that Ms Strong had spoken to Mr Nigel Smith (Head of Regulatory Services) and himself, as A\$AP Rocky had arrived on site, and it had been agreed that he would perform after the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

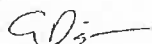
27. Whilst the Red Hot Chili Peppers were performing I was observing the crowd to monitor their behaviour and movement and it was noticed that the far side of the pitch by the hotel appeared to be congested, however, there was space available on the pitch by the Players and Media building. When I viewed the stands it was noticed that there was a significant amount of space available for spectators.
28. After the Red Hot Chili Peppers set had finished I was stood on the balcony at the Player and Media Building to observe crowd movement when A\$AP Rocky came on stage. Whilst looking at the walkway between Players and Media building and 'C Stand' it was noticed that the area was congested with crowd flow in both directions resulting in slow movement on spectators. There were stewards attempting to direct the crowd using a stop / go board and a megaphone, however, this was not effective as it was evident that the crowd were not following the instructions. During its busiest period there was one steward stood amongst the crowd with the stop/go board, a steward stood in 'C Stand' next to them using the megaphone and 4 other stewards present attempting to direct spectators. **I recorded videos of this which I exhibit as GDI 2.** Whilst observing spectators trying to exit the ground it appeared to be slow moving due to other spectators wanting to watch A\$AP Rocky.
29. At 22:45 Mrs Duckworth requested I accompany her to the merchandise stall in the North Fan Village with Mr McNulty (G4S) as they were refusing to close despite an instruction from Ms Strong. When we arrived at the stall there were customers still in the queue and Mrs Duckworth gave an instruction to close the queue. The manager and member of staff working on the stall became argumentative and were unwilling to close. Shortly after Mr Davies arrived at the stall and he informed me that Ms Strong had given the instruction to close the bars and merchandise stalls at 22:30. I informed the staff that they must follow any instructions given by the Safety Officer. The manager of the merchandise stall only agreed to close when Mr Davies agreed to send him a copy of the licence conditions. We then left the site.
30. Following the concert the following complaints were received by Environmental Health:

- a. 23rd June – insufficient toilets outside the ground for all four concert. A response was sent to the customer to informing them of the numbers provided and their locations.
 - b. 23rd June – the customer was unable to access the accessible viewing platform with insufficient facilities available. Security did not know where the accessible seating was. Seat 102 collapsed in the stand next to the viewing platform with further seats collapsing not long after.
 - c. 30th June – concerns in relation to security due to the number of people openly smoking cannabis and that they felt like they were going to get trampled when leaving.
31. On the 1st July 2022 a Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) notification was received involving a heavy goods vehicle entering the site through Gate 8 at 11:30pm which I was asked to investigate by Mrs Duckworth. A second report was received on the 22nd July 2022. This accident is currently under investigation. On the 28th July 2022 I was made aware by Mrs Whittle that the licence only permitted vehicle movements to and from the site between 8am and 8pm. I exhibit CCTV footage from approximately 11:20pm showing HGV vehicles driving onto site as **GDI 3**. From the footage it does not appear that the area is well lit.
32. On the 19th July 2022 at 15:00 the post concerts de-brief was held. As part of the de-brief the club provided an overview of the issues that had been identified throughout the concerts and had been split into those that had been completed and those that were on-going. Some of the issues that were classified as on-going related to crowd movement within the ground.
33. On the 9th August 2022 the post-concert de-brief report for The Killers as well as control room logs for Harry Styles and the Red Hot Chili Peppers were provided. The post-concert debrief reports for Harry Styles and the Red Hot Chili Peppers were received on the 22nd September 2022.

Statement of Truth

34. This statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

23rd September 2022



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Graeme Dixon



EXHIBIT GDI1

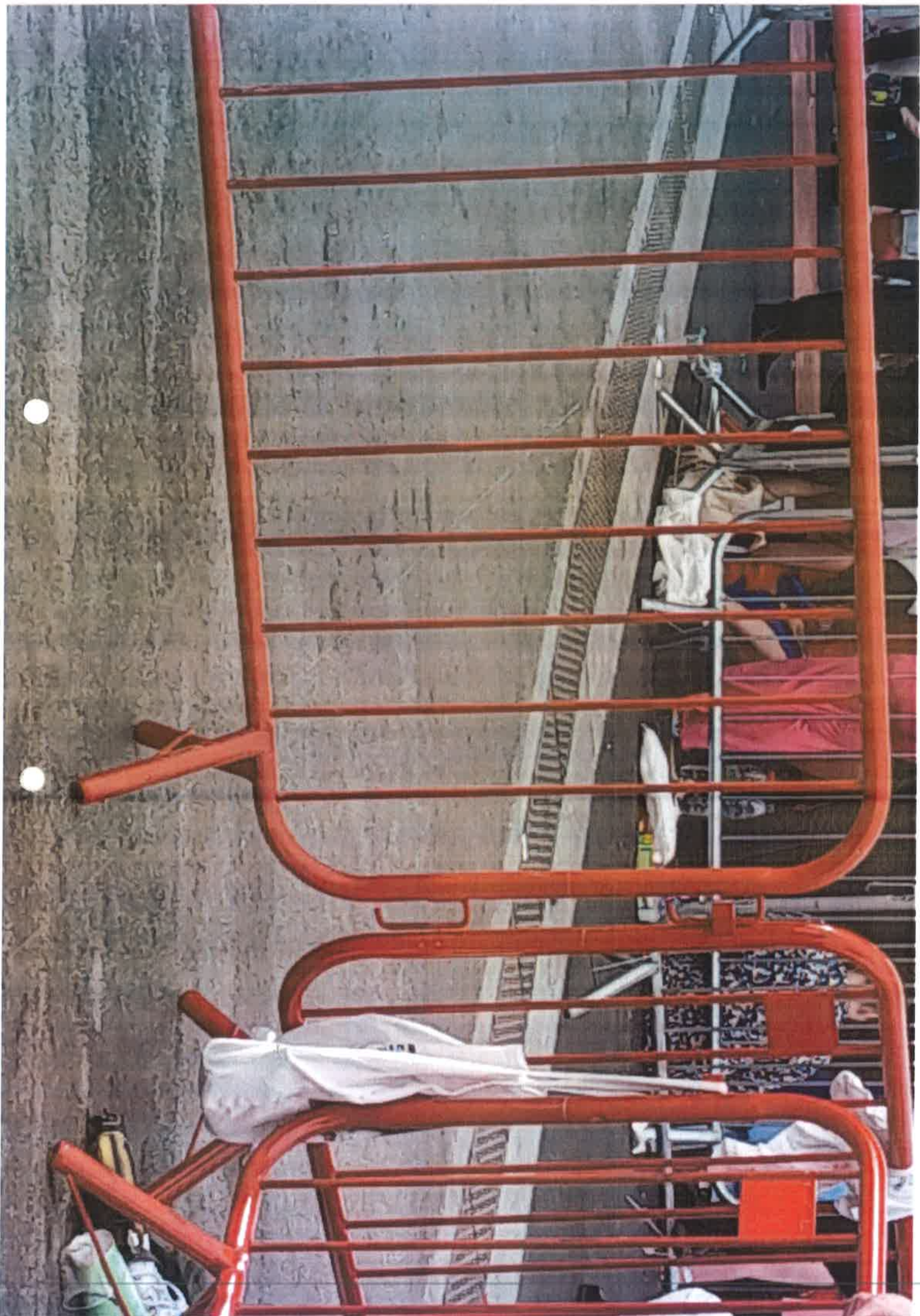


EXHIBIT GDI2

Footage can be produced upon request