

Preparing for the 2026 World Cup: Cross-Sector Impacts and Readiness Discussion Exercise One-Pagers

The California Resiliency Alliance (CRA) developed these 11 discussion-oriented one-pagers in support of a discussion exercise held at the Bay Area BRMA meeting on March 26, 2025. They are designed to help emergency management and business continuity professionals — across both the private and public sectors — examine how the 2026 FIFA World Cup will reshape the regional operating environment and alter the hazard and threat landscape.

As one-pagers, they are by design focused and selective — intended to surface the important questions and spark productive discussion, not to provide an exhaustive treatment of any single topic.

Track 1 — Non-Crisis Impacts: How the World Cup Changes the Baseline

These one-pagers examine how the World Cup reshapes normal operations across the region before any emergency occurs.

- Communications
- Movement of People
- Commodity Supply Chains
- Utilities
- Public Health

Track 2 — Changing Threat and Hazard Landscape

These one-pagers examine how the World Cup context transforms specific hazard and threat categories.

- Cyber Threats
- Targeted Attacks
- Supply Chain Disruption
- Natural Hazards
- Infrastructure Failures
- Infectious Disease

Ideas for Putting Them to Use: These one-pagers are designed to be used, not just read. A few ways you can put them to use: internal tabletop or discussion exercise, team awareness briefing, association or peer network discussion, regional cross-sector workshop, or even as individual thought prompts.

A Note on Geographic Applicability: These resources were developed with the San Francisco Bay Area as the primary context, and some specifics — venue references, regional infrastructure details — reflect that. However, the vast majority of the content applies directly to any World Cup host city.

A Note on DHS References: Several one-pagers reference federal planning support disruptions stemming from the funding situation at the time the workshop was developed. That specific situation may have evolved — but the downstream effects on interoperability planning, security grant distribution, and coordination infrastructure will continue to matter even after appropriations are resolved. The underlying questions remain valid.

About the California Resiliency Alliance

The California Resiliency Alliance is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit working at the nexus of California's private, public, and nonprofit sectors to strengthen resilience statewide. Our mission is to equip professionals with actionable knowledge and bridge cross-sector divides — turning complexity into clarity for planners and decision-makers across California.

BREAKOUT 1 – NON-CRISIS IMPACTS | Communications

How the World Cup Reshapes Our Communications Environment

OBJECTIVE

Explore how the World Cup alters the communications environment across the region — including infrastructure demand, coordination complexity, and information accessibility. Focus on what these shifts mean for routine operations, day-to-day situational awareness, and crisis readiness.

CONTEXT & FRAMING

- A significant share of visitors will arrive from outside the U.S. with foreign devices, SIM cards, and roaming configurations. Some may also carry foreign consumer hand-held radios as a backup for staying connected in crowds — adding to spectrum congestion and potential interference with licensed systems.
- The current DHS funding lapses have affected federal support for planning and paused distribution of some security grants meant for host cities.

STRESS-TESTING ASSUMPTIONS

Identify 2–3 assumptions that are commonly made in this focus area — then pressure-test them:

- Under what conditions would this assumption fail or degrade during the World Cup?
- How would you know if it was failing? What's the tell?
- If the assumption breaks, what does the downstream impact look like?

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

Treat these as conversation starters, not a script. Use what sparks the best discussion and feel free to follow threads that emerge organically as long as the group stays within the objective.

- How will the influx of international visitors — bringing foreign SIMs, roaming configurations, and data-heavy apps — change network usage patterns across the region? Where are the most likely chokepoints?
- Which websites, platforms, and apps will see dramatic traffic increases? What might be cascading impacts of surges in these systems?
- Multilingual communications will be essential. Which languages are most likely to dominate among arriving fans and what does this mean for regional communications?
- In a high-volume, multilingual, social media-saturated environment, how do you distinguish timely and accurate information from rumor and misinformation — especially when both may be circulating in languages local entities don't necessarily monitor?
- Carriers will deploy temporary capacity (COW/COLT assets) in event zones. How does this help, and how does it create new interference or priority conflicts with other systems?
- Broadcast and media operations will place significant demands on spectrum. Could this create any interference or priority issues for the licensed or unlicensed communications of other organizations?

SIGNAL IDENTIFICATION | EARLY INDICATORS

What would you want to be watching? Consider:

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- What early warnings are subtle, easy to miss, or typically go unmonitored?

REPORT-OUT | BE PREPARED TO SHARE

Identify a few key takeaways from your discussion. At minimum, please bring back one of each:

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BREAKOUT 1 – NON-CRISIS IMPACTS | Movement of People

How the World Cup Reshapes Regional Mobility

OBJECTIVE

Assess how the large-scale population influx and heightened security measures reshape mobility patterns, access, and congestion — not just at core venues but across the broader region. Consider what this means for employee commutes, facility access, and operational continuity for organizations throughout the Bay Area.

CONTEXT & FRAMING

- While matches will be held at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, fan activities and official events will occur at locations across the region, meaning crowd and mobility effects will be geographically dispersed rather than concentrated in a single corridor.
- A significant portion of arriving visitors will be unfamiliar with the local geography, transit systems, and traffic patterns, introducing unpredictable movement into an already-stressed system.
- The current DHS funding lapses have affected federal support for planning and paused distribution of some security grants meant for host cities.

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- Employee commutes will be disrupted beyond just match days — security setup, road restrictions, and elevated regional traffic will create extended impact windows. Which routes, transit lines, and time windows might be most exposed?
- Beyond official venues and fan zones, which areas will see the heaviest visitor concentration — waterfront areas, hotel corridors, popular commercial districts, transit hubs?
- Visitors unfamiliar with Bay Area geography may concentrate in unexpected locations — spontaneous fan gatherings, overflow areas, or simply places that look approachable. What areas might become unplanned gathering points?
- Pedestrian volumes in areas not designed for high-density foot traffic will stress infrastructure — sidewalks, crosswalks, bridges. How might this create safety or liability exposure for facilities in those areas?
- Access for emergency services — fire, EMS, police — may be significantly constrained in congested areas. How does that constraint change the emergency response picture across affected parts of the region?

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BREAKOUT 1 – NON-CRISIS IMPACTS | Commodity Supply Chains

How the World Cup Strains the Supply Chains Businesses Depend On

OBJECTIVE

Examine how demand surges, last-mile constraints, and infrastructure pressure alter the availability, flow, and reliability of the goods that local organizations depend on — not just the supply chains serving the event itself.

CONTEXT & FRAMING

- The World Cup will generate concentrated demand spikes across a multi-week tournament window — a potential sustained stress period.
- Last-mile delivery will face constraints from road closures, security perimeters, and elevated traffic in affected areas, with impacts extending beyond the immediate venue footprint.
- Supplier prioritization may shift: vendors serving venues and hospitality operations may deprioritize routine commercial and institutional customers during peak demand.

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DISCUSSION PROMPTS

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- Which commodity categories are most exposed to demand-driven shortages or price pressure during the tournament — food and beverage, fuel, medical supplies, hospitality goods?
- Last-mile delivery will face significant constraints in event-adjacent zones. How might these pockets of disruption ripple outward, affecting delivery reliability across the broader region?
- Temporary labor markets will be distorted — workers may shift toward better-paying event-related roles in hospitality, security, and logistics. Which sectors or operational functions are most vulnerable to this labor pull, and what are the downstream effects if staffing gaps develop in critical supply chain roles?
- Hidden dependencies — specialty packaging, cold chain requirements, single-source components — may create unexpected bottlenecks. Where are the fragile links in supply chains that don't get attention under normal conditions?
- The rebound effect after the games end — sudden demand drop, redistribution of inventory — may create its own disruption. What are potential implications of the post-event supply chain environment?

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BREAKOUT 1 – NON-CRISIS IMPACTS | Utilities

How the World Cup Changes Demand and Infrastructure Stress on Regional Utilities

OBJECTIVE

Understand how the World Cup shifts population density and activity patterns in ways that may stress utility infrastructure — electricity, water, wastewater, and waste management. Consider what this means for business operations and what signals suggest the system is approaching its limits.

CONTEXT & FRAMING

- Significant temporary electrical and communications infrastructure will be installed for venues, broadcast operations, security, and fan zones adding new loads and potential interference to an already-stressed grid.
- Utility systems are designed for predictable demand patterns; the World Cup creates atypical geographic concentrations and timing anomalies that may not align with normal load management.
- The event coincides with summer, when cooling demand is already elevated — a heat event layered on top of World Cup demand could create compounding stress on electrical infrastructure.

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- Power, water, and waste demand will increase across the region, with geographic concentrations that don't necessarily match normal load patterns. Which utility systems are most exposed — and which areas are most likely to experience disproportionate strain?
- Beyond the obvious — more people using more power and water — what are the less visible ways the World Cup changes utility demand patterns? Think about the types of activities, facilities, and behaviors that come with a global event that aren't part of normal regional life.
- How might temporary event infrastructure — power distribution, lighting, broadcast equipment — interact with existing utility systems? How could it introduce new possible failure points?
- In instances where utilities' SCADA and remote management systems rely on public communications networks to monitor and manage infrastructure, event-period congestion could degrade that operational visibility precisely when demand stress makes it most critical. How might this affect utilities' ability to monitor and respond to stress?
- The tournament runs for several weeks during the summer. How does a sustained elevation of demand — rather than a single spike — change the stress picture for regional utility infrastructure?

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BREAKOUT 1 – NON-CRISIS IMPACTS | Public Health

How the World Cup Shifts the Regional Public Health Baseline.

OBJECTIVE

Explore how population influx and global human mixing alter healthcare demand, disease exposure, and system capacity — not as a crisis scenario but as a sustained baseline shift that affects operations, workforce health, and community resilience throughout the tournament period.

CONTEXT & FRAMING

- Mass gathering events are well-documented amplifiers of respiratory illness, gastrointestinal disease, and heat-related illness — the World Cup's scale and duration exceed most prior mass gathering experiences.
- International visitors will arrive from countries with different endemic disease profiles, vaccination rates, and healthcare norms, some of which Bay Area clinical and public health systems may not routinely encounter.
- Emergency departments, urgent care facilities, and pharmacies in high-concentration areas will face elevated and geographically atypical demand across a multi-week period.

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- Beyond infectious disease, what types of health events are likely to increase — heat illness, alcohol-related incidents, crowd injuries, mental health crises? How does the cumulative volume of these events stress local healthcare infrastructure, and where are the most significant capacity gaps?
- International visitors may present with conditions, medications, or health histories that local clinicians rarely encounter. How prepared are regional healthcare systems to recognize and manage unfamiliar presentations — and what are the implications if they are not?
- Public health surveillance systems are designed around resident populations and routine healthcare utilization. How does this influx of a transient, multilingual, non-registered population affect the ability to detect an emerging health problem early?
- If a communicable disease cluster emerged during the games, where might be the most significant gaps between what would be needed and what currently exists across public and private sector capacity?
- The risk doesn't end when the final match does — incubation periods mean that disease introduced during the games may not surface until visitors have returned home or dispersed across the region. How does that delayed tail change the shape regional infectious disease risk post-event?

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BREAKOUT 2 – CHANGING THREAT LANDSCAPE | **Cyber Threats**

How the Games Alter the Regional Cyber Threat Landscape

OBJECTIVE

Evaluate how the World Cup changes the attractiveness, complexity, and scale of cyber threats to organizations in the region — both those directly connected to the event and those that are not. Consider how the event shifts threat actor behavior, expands the attack surface, and creates new cascading risk.

CONTEXT & FRAMING

- Major international sporting events are proven targets for state-sponsored cyber operations — the 2018 Winter Olympics and 2022 World Cup both involved documented nation-state interference.
- The event dramatically increases the number of devices, networks, and user behaviors in the region, many involving foreign carrier infrastructure, public Wi-Fi, and unmanaged personal devices.
- Event-related hiring, new vendor integrations, and expanded system access will temporarily widen the insider threat and third-party risk surface for many organizations.
- The current DHS funding lapses have affected federal support for planning and paused distribution of some security grants meant for host cities.

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DISCUSSION PROMPTS

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- Temporary IT and AV systems deployed for the event — at venues, in hotels, at broadcast facilities — introduce new network segments and potential entry points. How does the proliferation of these temporary environments expand the regional attack surface and amplify the potential impact of a successful intrusion.
- How might event-related digital traffic volume complicate detection of malicious activity — creating noise that masks anomalies?
- Ransomware operators may view the event as a moment of leverage, calculating that organizations under operational pressure are more likely to pay quickly. How might this change the regional risk calculus?
- Post-event persistence is a real risk: adversaries who gain access during a high-profile event may have no interest in immediate disruption — instead remaining dormant for months before activating. How does the World Cup window create durable footholds that extend the threat well beyond the tournament itself?
- AI-generated phishing, deepfakes, and social engineering content will exploit event themes in ways that may be hard to detect. How does this shift the threat environment for the duration of the event and beyond?

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BREAKOUT 2 – CHANGING THREAT LANDSCAPE | Targeted Attacks

How the Games Reshape the Mass Violence and Terrorism Threat

OBJECTIVE

Explore how the World Cup event environment alters the targeted attack threat landscape — at and well beyond the official event footprint. Consider how different attack types including active shooter events, knife attacks, vehicle ramming, IEDs, and fire as a weapon vary in likelihood and impact under these conditions, how security hardening displaces risk, and what locations may be underweighted in current planning.

CONTEXT & FRAMING

- The World Cup will draw global media attention & political symbolism, increasing potential visibility rewards.
- Fan zones, watch parties, transit hubs, and commercial areas outside the security perimeter will concentrate large, unsecured populations — many unfamiliar with local environments and emergency procedures.
- The current DHS funding lapses have affected federal support for planning and paused distribution of some security grants meant for host cities.

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DISCUSSION PROMPTS

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- The World Cup is a globally visible, symbolically significant target. How does that visibility affect the threat calculus — for ideologically motivated actors, state-sponsored actors, and those primarily seeking notoriety?
- Security hardening at venues pushes risk to the periphery. Where do soft-target concentrations form in the local context — fan zones, transit hubs, hotel lobbies, restaurants, watch parties — and how does the geographic dispersal of events across the region affect where those concentrations are most significant?
- Beyond the obvious targets — what locations in the Bay Area represent attractive targets that current security planning may have underweighted? Consider symbolic sites, critical infrastructure, specific communities, and ideologically significant locations.
- An attack anywhere in the region — regardless of scale — reshapes the environment for everyone: fear spreads, crowds move unpredictably, and communications surge. How does this secondary effect itself become part of the threat, and how might actors deliberately exploit it?
- Copycat and follow-on attacks are a documented pattern following high-visibility incidents — the original event lowers the psychological barrier and provides a template. In a multi-week tournament with sustained global attention, how does this dynamic elevate the threat profile beyond the initial incident?

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BREAKOUT 2 – CHANGING THREAT LANDSCAPE | Supply Chain Disruption

How the Games Elevate Deliberate and Accidental Supply Chain Risk

OBJECTIVE

Assess how the World Cup elevates the risk of deliberate or accidental supply chain disruption — beyond the baseline demand and logistics changes of the non-crisis environment. Consider both the threat to individual supply chains and the risk that supply chain could be exploited as an attack/disruption vector.

CONTEXT & FRAMING

- The concentration of global attention and economic activity creates elevated motivation for deliberate interference — from nation-state actors targeting critical supply chains to criminal organizations exploiting operational distraction.
- The event creates new and expanded supply chains with temporary vendors, expedited contracting, and potentially reduced vetting — introducing new entry points for fraud, contamination, and infiltration.
- Key logistics chokepoints — port facilities, distribution centers, specific highway corridors — will be under simultaneous stress from event demand and elevated threat.

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DISCUSSION PROMPTS

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- How does the World Cup elevate motivated, deliberate interference with supply chains — state actors, criminal organizations, or ideological actors — beyond the baseline disruption risk?
- Fraud, counterfeiting, and diversion risks are elevated when large volumes of goods move rapidly through new and less-vetted channels. Which supply categories are most susceptible?
- Regional logistics has critical nodes and chokepoints — specific distribution centers, port facilities, key road corridors — that if disrupted affect overall supply flow. How might the World Cup increase the vulnerability of such nodes and chokepoints?
- The temporary workforce that materializes around a major event — hired quickly, potentially vetted inconsistently, and distributed across logistics, hospitality, and security operations — represents a structural vulnerability in supply chain integrity. How does the scale and speed of that workforce expansion create new vectors for theft, contamination, and deliberate disruption?
- How does the interaction between supply chain disruption and changing baseline conditions potentially amplify disruptions and/or hamper detection of problems?

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BREAKOUT 2 – CHANGING THREAT LANDSCAPE | Natural Hazards

How the Games Amplify the Consequences of Regional Natural Hazard Events

OBJECTIVE

Examine how the World Cup would transform the consequences of, and response to, natural hazard events. The question is not whether these hazards become more likely, but how the event environment fundamentally changes their impact — on affected populations, on responders, and on regional recovery.

CONTEXT & FRAMING

- The Bay Area's natural hazard profile includes heat waves, earthquakes, wildfires, wildfire smoke, and tsunami risk — all with realistic probability of occurrence during the summer tournament window.
- First responder resources will be significantly pre-committed to event operations during the tournament period, directly affecting mutual aid capacity and response flexibility.
- During the tournament period a larger portion of the at-risk population will be non-US visitors — unfamiliar with local emergency protocols, without local support networks, and potentially non-English speaking.

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- A natural hazard event occurring during the tournament would unfold under different baseline conditions. How do those variations in baseline conditions change the trajectory of a hazard event compared to the same event occurring under “normal” conditions?
- What natural hazard scenarios do you think is most likely to occur AND most significantly underplanned for, given current regional assumptions?
- Response to a natural hazard event occurring during the tournament, would be managed under a global media lens. How might that visibility affect resource prioritization decisions — and could it distort where attention and assets flow in the early hours?
- The Bay Area's hazard profile is not equally familiar to all arriving visitors — someone may have no frame of reference (or different frames of reference) for earthquake protocols, wildfire behavior, or tsunami warnings. How does that knowledge gap shape the hazard risk picture during the tournament?
- Mutual aid agreements and resource-sharing frameworks are built around “normal” baseline assumptions about what each jurisdiction can contribute. How might the tournament period change those assumptions — considering many local jurisdictions will simultaneously have resources committed to event operations?

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BREAKOUT 2 – CHANGING THREAT LANDSCAPE | Infrastructure Failures

How the Games Exacerbate the Consequences of Critical Infrastructure Failures

OBJECTIVE

Understand how the World Cup context transforms common infrastructure failure scenarios — boil water notices, power outages, communications outages — into more complex, higher-consequence events. Consider how event-period stress, access constraints, and the nature of the population affected change both the impact and the response.

CONTEXT & FRAMING

- Infrastructure restoration requires access — crews, equipment, parts — that will face constraints from security perimeters, road closures, and congestion during the event period.
- Any infrastructure failure during the games will receive global media attention, creating political and reputational pressure that may distort technical decision-making during response.
- The current DHS funding lapses have affected federal support for planning and paused distribution of some security grants meant for host cities.

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- How might that high-profile nature of the World Cup accelerate, or distort, the decision-making of utilities, operators, and public officials during a response?
- Accidents, glitches, and deliberate attacks are not always easy to distinguish in the early moments of an incident. How might the World Cup alter initial assessment assumptions of infrastructure failures?
- Temporary infrastructure installed for the event — power distribution systems, communications assets, water supply — introduces new failure vectors that interact with permanent infrastructure in ways that may not have been fully mapped. Where could the most significant interaction risks lie?
- Infrastructure restoration requires physical access — crews, equipment, supply vehicles — that will face real constraints from security perimeters, road closures, and crowd density during the event period. How significantly could this extend restoration timelines?
- Not all infrastructure failures are equal in how quickly they can be resolved. Some can be restored in hours; others may take days or longer. Which failure types, if they occurred during peak event activity, would be most difficult to resolve within an operationally acceptable timeframe given the constraints of the event?

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BREAKOUT 2 – CHANGING THREAT LANDSCAPE | Infectious Disease

How the Games Alter the Infectious Disease Threat and Response

OBJECTIVE

Explore how the World Cup creates an elevated and qualitatively different infectious disease risk environment — not just for public health systems, but for the private and public sector organizations that depend on a healthy workforce and the functioning of the broader community.

CONTEXT & FRAMING

- Mass gatherings are well-documented amplifiers of respiratory illness, gastrointestinal disease, and other diseases; the World Cup's scale and international character exceed most prior Bay Area event experience.
- The summer timing coincides with a period of typically lower respiratory disease surveillance activity, reducing the baseline sensitivity of early warning systems.
- Contact tracing and containment for a disease cluster during a globally mobile event would involve coordination across international borders — a fundamentally different operational environment than routine public health response.

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- Visitors arriving from dozens of countries will bring different endemic disease profiles and vaccination histories. Which does this mean for the local infectious disease threat landscape?
- Incubation periods mean some illness introduced during the games won't manifest until after the tournament ends, potentially seeding community spread after the crowds have dispersed. Considering the first discussion prompt, how does that delayed tail change the threat landscape compared to an endemic disease (one that is in natural circulation locally)?
- Visitors may arrive carrying antimicrobial-resistant organisms that are uncommon in local clinical settings. How might the World Cup accelerate the introduction of resistant strains into a regional healthcare system and what could be the long-term consequences of that?
- In a political and media environment where public health guidance carries varying levels of trust, how does that context shape the threat, independent of the pathogen itself?
- How do the behavioral and environmental factors surrounding the World Cup compound the disease risk beyond what pathogen characteristics alone would predict?

SIGNAL IDENTIFICATION | EARLY INDICATORS

What would you want to be watching? Consider:

- What signals or indicators could suggest conditions in this area are beginning to shift or degrade?
- What early warnings are subtle, easy to miss, or typically go unmonitored?

REPORT-OUT | BE PREPARED TO SHARE

Identify a few key takeaways from your discussion. At minimum, please bring back one of each:

- An “Aha” moment — something unexpected, underappreciated, or not widely on the radar
- A concern or vulnerability — a gap your group believes deserves attention
- A thread worth pulling — a topic or question that merits deeper exploration