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You're invited?

By: Joan Lowy

Scripps Howard



These are two of the various types of inaugural tickets to be distributed starting Monday at the Capitol in Washington.

Associated Press photos

sudden movements while passing the reviewing stand.

"It's going to be very different from past inaugurals," said Contricia Sellers-Ford, spokeswoman for the U.S. Capitol Police, who is responsible for the Capitol and grounds. "A lot of the security differences will not be detected by the public - there will be a lot of the scenes implementation - but the public will definitely see more of a police presence."

The Department of Homeland Security has designated the inaugural a National Special Security Event under a protocol introduced by President Bill Clinton that calls for especially heavy security during events of national significance at which large numbers of government officials and dignitaries are present.

There have been 20 previously designated special security events, including Bush's first inaugural, last year's Democratic and Republican conventions, former President Ronald Reagan's funeral and the 2002 Super Bowl.

Under the protocol, the Secret Service takes the lead in drawing up the security plan, while the FBI gathers intelligence and the Emergency Management Agency oversees response scenarios to possible terror attacks.

The Secret Service also works closely with the Defense Department, the National Park Service, and local police agencies, especially the Washington police department and the Capitol police. About 40 agencies are involved.

The Joint Force Headquarters National Capital Region, which was created two years ago to bring coordination to the many dispersed military units in the Washington area, will provide more than 4,000 troops to help.

Washington, D.C., police chief Charles Ramsey has sent invitations to police departments across the country inviting them to send officers to help with inauguration security. The federal government is paying for officers' hotels, meals and air travel.

Several thousand officers are expected, Ramsey said. That includes squads from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Minneapolis, Chicago, Bradenton, Fla., Charlotte and Greensboro, N.C., the North Carolina state highway patrol, several law enforcement agencies in Texas and other parts of the country.

"This is the first post 9/11 (inauguration) so obviously there are some more security concerns this time than in past years," Ramsey said. The extra officers from around the country will free up Washington police officers so that they can form "mobile platoon civil control units" to prevent protest demonstrations from getting out of hand, Ramsey said.

Groups planning demonstrations during the inauguration festivities are already smarting from security restrictions. Anti-war protesters with the A.N.S.W.E.R Coalition have complained that large sections of the parade route have been set aside for Bush's political contributors and supporters and will be closed to the general public.

The anti-abortion Christian Defense Coalition, which is also planning a demonstration, has threatened to sue the government because the Secret Service recently added crosses to its list of objects that are banned from the parade route.

"I think it's censorship no matter how you look at it," said the Rev. Patrick Mahoney, director of the defense coalition.

Besides weapons, other items on the banned list include coolers, folding chairs, bicycles, pets, papier-mache objects, displays, puppets, mock coffins, props and "any items determined to be a potential safety hazard."

Parade performers said they also have been warned to expect unprecedented security.

Be ready for metal detectors, personal body searches and highest security in inauguration history

WASHINGTON - The nation's 55th presidential inauguration to be held since 9/11, will take place this month under perhaps the heaviest security of any in U.S. history.

Dozens of federal and local law enforcement agencies and military commands are planning what they describe as the heaviest peacetime security. Virtually everyone who gets within eyesight of the president, either during the Jan. 20 inauguration ceremony at the U.S. Capitol or the inaugural parade down Pennsylvania Avenue later in the month, will first go through a metal detector or receive a body pat-down. Thousands of police officers and military personnel are being deployed to Washington from around the country for the four-day event. Sharpshooters will be deployed on roofs, while bomb-sniffing dogs will work the streets. Electronic sensors will be used to detect chemical and biological weapons.

Anti-abortion protesters have been warned to leave their crosses at home. Parade performers will have security escorts to the parade route they've been ordered not to look directly at President Bush or

"They've told us right out that it's going to be very, very tight," said Peter LaFlamme, executive director of the Spartans Drum and Corps in Nashua, N.H. LaFlamme said he has been receiving almost daily phone calls from inaugural organizers to apprise him security procedures.

Thousands of performers - marching bands, color guards, pompon dancers, hand bell-ringers, drill teams on horseback and Civil War reenactors - will be bused early in the morning to the Pentagon parking lot across the Potomac in Virginia. While performers disembark through metal detectors, bomb-sniffing dogs will search the buses.

Then everybody will get back on the buses for a trip to the National Mall, where they will spend most of the day in heavily guarded warming tents. Participants have been warned that they will not be allowed to leave the tents except to go to portable toilets accompanied by a security escort.

Other instructions given performers include a warning not to look directly at Bush while passing the presidential reviewing stand, to look to either side and not to make any sudden movements.

"They want you to just look straight ahead," said Danielle Adam, co-director of the Mid American Pompon All Star Team from which she also performed in the 2001 inaugural parade.

"Last time we went security was really tight," Adam said. "This time we got almost like a book of things we needed to fill out beforehand."

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