

# Ask the Expert: CROWDGUARD

**Martin Woosey, Director - Crowdguard, answers questions exclusively for Security Buyer about the company and what it hopes to achieve in the H.V.M marketplace**

## What made you decide to enter the temporary hostile vehicle mitigation market?

Following retirement from the police service after 34 years, a career I wanted to find something that still challenged and excited me and am very grateful for the opportunity that Matt and Debbie Ainscough gave me to come on board with Crowdguard.

I have a passion for public safety and protective security, so wanted to continue to work in this field and listening to the vision that they both have for enhancing the standards of temporary hostile vehicle mitigation (HVM) at events, I was extremely keen to be part of the project. This opportunity enables me to utilise my previous knowledge and experience in policing whilst developing new skills in the commercial world and most importantly for me ensuring the continued safety of the public.

## How do Crowdguard differ from the competition?

Our team has a vast blend of experience and knowledge across a diverse variety of

backgrounds, from policing, counter terrorism security coordination, the barrier industry, engineering and the events sector, which complement each other and cohesively enable us to provide an informed professional service based on knowledge and experience.

We are aligned to and supported by our sister company Ainscough Industrial Services (AIS), who have over 40 years' experience and expertise in equipment moving and handling with bases right across the UK and due to our connection we have a strong and resilient national network, which is able to deploy anywhere in the UK on a 24/7 basis.

We are an authorised deployment partner for ATG, who are a leading manufacturer of hostile vehicle mitigation both nationally and internationally and we utilise their award-winning Surface Guard system. This is an innovative robust pedestrian permeable, modular lightweight barrier, easily and quickly moved and installed with low penetration distances, which looks aesthetically pleasing and many people don't even realise that it is HVM.

## What are you aiming to achieve?

Our genuine aim is to be the company of choice and an industry leader when organisers are seeking temporary HVM for their event. Our company ethos is centred on professionalism and high standards of service and as a result I have real concerns that whilst some venues and organisers recognise a need for HVM, they sometimes wrongly believe that all HVM performs the same function and can therefore be falsely reassured. This is not necessarily their fault as



they cannot be expected to have detailed knowledge on the subject, so they must be able to ask the right questions and to rely on the advice and guidance of experts. The questions that need to be considered from the outset are does the HVM conform to IWA/PAS testing?; what is the penetration distance after impact, which can be crucial dependent on crowd management plans?; is the product the most appropriate solution given the location?; and has it been deployed according to the manufacturer's installation standards? This last point is one that gives me the greatest concern, because just because you have it doesn't mean it is going to work and is why we demand the highest standards of deployment from AIS and have layers of quality assurance in place to ensure that this is the case.

## How much experience have you brought to Crowdguard?

I am a retired senior police officer with a wealth of experience especially within event and public order command; counter terrorism security coordination; and crisis management. Prior to retirement I was seconded from Merseyside Police as the deputy head of the National Police Coordination Centre in London and my role included setting strategy and coordinating the response to national crises and security threats. I previously led on and coordinated both operational planning and counter terrorism security coordination for major events such as Premiership football at both Liverpool and Everton Football Clubs, the Grand National Festival, Olympic Torch Relay, Royal Variety Performance, Open Golf Championships, political conferences and

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other large-scale public order events. In 2017 I was privileged to provide the security coordination for the Americas Cup in Bermuda and assist the police service and government with guidance and support throughout the event.

### What do you see as the key issues moving forward?

We live in a world now when very sadly it is not a matter of if there will be another terrorist attack, but when and concerning as a nation we have become very complacent about the threat posed by terrorism especially when there has been a significant period between attacks. Talking to friends and my peer group there is little to no recognition that for the last few years the threat level has been at SEVERE or more importantly what this actually means. There is also a perception that it will more than likely happen in London or to someone else and it won’t happen to me, but in Manchester we very sadly know from experience that this is not the case. When it does occur the immediate response by the appropriate authorities is second to none, but there is a wider knee jerk reaction and security measures are heightened for a period before again dissipating over time and returning to the normal level, but it is imperative that there is a more proactive rather than reactive approach to addressing the threat to public safety. Tackling the threat posed cannot be done in isolation by the police and security services, who both do a great job in conjunction with other partners, there must be a wider buy in especially by those who are responsible for events where large numbers of people gather thus creating a crowded place and potentially a

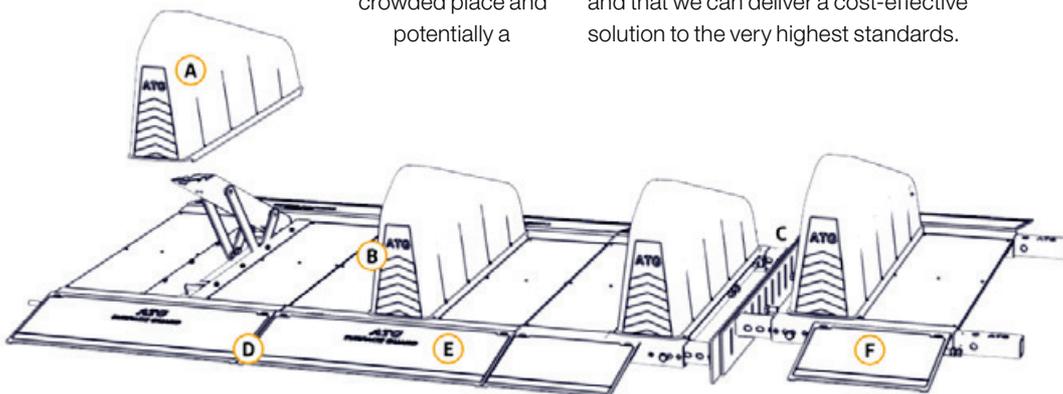
target for terrorism. It is unbelievable given the events of recent history that there is currently no legal obligation on venues to have counter terrorism policies and procedures in place, but only one of moral conscience. It is important that positive action is taken now to mitigate against the threat and to deter terrorists through primary legislation.

That is why I fully support the need for primary legislation and thus the campaign for Martyn’s law to ensure appropriate, whilst proportionate measures are implemented at all venues.

### How can Crowdguard impact on this?

ISIS and Al Qaeda have promoted attacks against soft targets using ‘whatever means available’ and this is evidenced by the use of vehicles as weapons in the attacks on Westminster Bridge and also on the continent in Nice and Berlin where at each incident there were tragically multiple deaths and serious injuries.

That is where Crowdguard is able to assist with the provision of pedestrian permeable temporary barriers. Surface Guard is certified to the IWA14 standard and in respect of both the required tests has less than five metres of penetration, which makes it the ideal solution at events for crowd safety. We ensure that it is installed quickly, efficiently, safely and most importantly to the manufacturers installation standards to ensure the integrity of the HVM, which is then signed off by a supervisor to ensure accountability. We are confident that we have the best product available on the market and that we can deliver a cost-effective solution to the very highest standards.



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