

Density & the Crush

The least glamorous instrument in the box — and the one that has saved the most lives. For every event-control room wall.

Read the density (persons per square metre):

Up to 2–3 / m²

A crowd flows freely and adjusts itself.

4–5 / m², standing

Tight, but survivable.

4–5 / m², moving

Already an emergency — flow has broken and the pressure has nowhere to go.

6 / m², standing or moving

Crush territory: the pressure of bodies — not the will of any individual — can lift people off their feet and squeeze the breath out of them while they are still standing.

The tool is design:

- Count the density — before it counts you.
- Separate the entries from the exits.
- Break a great mass into smaller cells, with breathing room between them.
- Watch the choke points — the gate, the bridge, the narrowing lane.
- Relieve the pressure before it builds, not after — because after is measured in funerals.

People do not die because they panic; they panic because they are dying. In a fatal crush people are not running — they cannot move at all. They are not animals reverting to instinct. They are people in a machine that someone built wrong.