

The 44th President Inauguration

Transition to power | Inauguration | First 100 days

updated 12:04 p.m. EST, Thu January 15, 2009

Inaugural conundrum: controlling the crowds

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Up to 2 million people expected for Barack Obama's inauguration
- Spectators along inaugural parade route will pass through security checkpoints
- Overflow will watch on screens on National Mall, where security is also tight
- Police have tried to anticipate and plan for everything that could go wrong

[Next Article in Politics »](#)

READ

EXPLAINER

By Kevin Bohn and Jeanne Meserve
CNN

TEXT SIZE - +

WASHINGTON (CNN) -- The 1 to 2 million people expected to pour into downtown Washington for inaugural festivities will pose major challenges for the city, for law enforcement, and for the attendees themselves.



DAVE JENKINS/CNN

Police and horses practice crowd control techniques on Wednesday.

"Unprecedented numbers of Americans are planning to join us in Washington," President-elect Barack Obama said Wednesday in remarks released by the Presidential Inaugural Committee. "That will mean long lines, a tough time getting around, and most of all, a lot of walking on what could be a very cold winter day."

There is the potential for a lot of frustration.

Members of the general public will be funneled through metal detectors and other security screening to view the inaugural parade along Pennsylvania Avenue. The checkpoints will open at 7 a.m. and are expected to be closed by 10:30 a.m., when the parade route reaches its capacity of 300,000 to 350,000 spectators. The overflow will be directed to the National Mall. To systematically and calmly move people from the parade area to the

mall, Washington police will have personnel moving through the crowd distributing maps and directions.

People who want to avoid some of the hassle can go directly to the mall area, where security checks will not be as intense. They cannot camp there overnight but can stand or sit in small chairs to stake out a space, according to a police spokesman.

For the first time, the entire mall will be open for inaugural spectators. It will hold about 20 giant screens showing the day's ceremonies.

Those screens and loudspeakers, as well as text messages, will all be used to communicate with the crowd if there is an emergency. Visitors are being encouraged to sign up ahead of the event to receive text alerts on their mobile devices.

"Information is my best friend," says Chief Cathy Lanier of the Metropolitan Police Department. Experts agree communication is essential to keep a crowd calm.

Watch with CNN!



Watch the historic inauguration of Barack Obama with CNN and the best political team on

TV!
Tuesday, beginning 8 a.m. ET

Get started with complimentary... an Ameriprise financial...

CLICK HERE

LEGAL TERMS >> Ameriprise Financial Services

Most Popular

▼ STORIES

Most Viewed

Most Emailed

Top Searches

- 1 Helicopter hits bird, grounded
- 2 Videos capture plane's splashdown
- 3 MLK's vision fulfilled, blacks say
- 4 Bush's presidency in pictures
- 5 Commentary: Use stimulus wisely
- 6 Obama back in Washington
- 7 Virus exposes millions of PCs
- 8 Flight 1549 recorders match story
- 9 Water taxis set for inauguration
- 10 Pet death secret vs. school test

[more most popular »](#)

▶ VIDEOS

▶ TOPICS

Ads by Google

Artery Clearing Secret

Hugh Downs reports on breakthrough from Nobel Prize Winning Doctor

www.bottomlinecrets.com

A Reverse Mortgage?

Near 70? You Qualify for a Larger Loan Amount. Calculate How Much!

www.newretirement.com

Free Government Grants

Get Free Money from the Government that You Never have to Pay Back!

GovernmentGrantList.org

careerbuilder.com

Quick Job Search

keyword(s):

enter city:

State



Job type



- Part Time Jobs
- Sales & Marketing Jobs
- Customer Service Jobs

SEARCH

[more options »](#)

We Recommend

Stories you may be interested in based on past browsing

Most blacks say MLK's vision fulfilled, poll finds

Ticker: Hero US Air pilot accepts Obama invitation

Bush aides: Os are safe on White House keyboards

Cantor: Big risk in Obama's economic stimulus plan

Washington visitors looking to be part of history

[Home](#) | [World](#) | [U.S.](#) | [Politics](#) | [Crime](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Health](#) | [Tech](#) | [Travel](#) | [Living](#) | [Business](#) | [Sports](#) | [Time.com](#)

[Tools & Widgets](#) | [Podcasts](#) | [Blogs](#) | [CNN Mobile](#) | [My Profile](#) | [E-mail Alerts](#) | [CNN Radio](#) | [CNN Shop](#) | [Site Map](#)

POWERED BY
Google

SEARCH

© 2009 Cable News Network. Turner Broadcasting System, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

[CNN en Español](#)

[Terms of service](#) | [Privacy guidelines](#) | [Advertise with us](#) | [About us](#) | [Contact us](#) | [Help](#)

[International Edition](#) | [CNN TV](#)