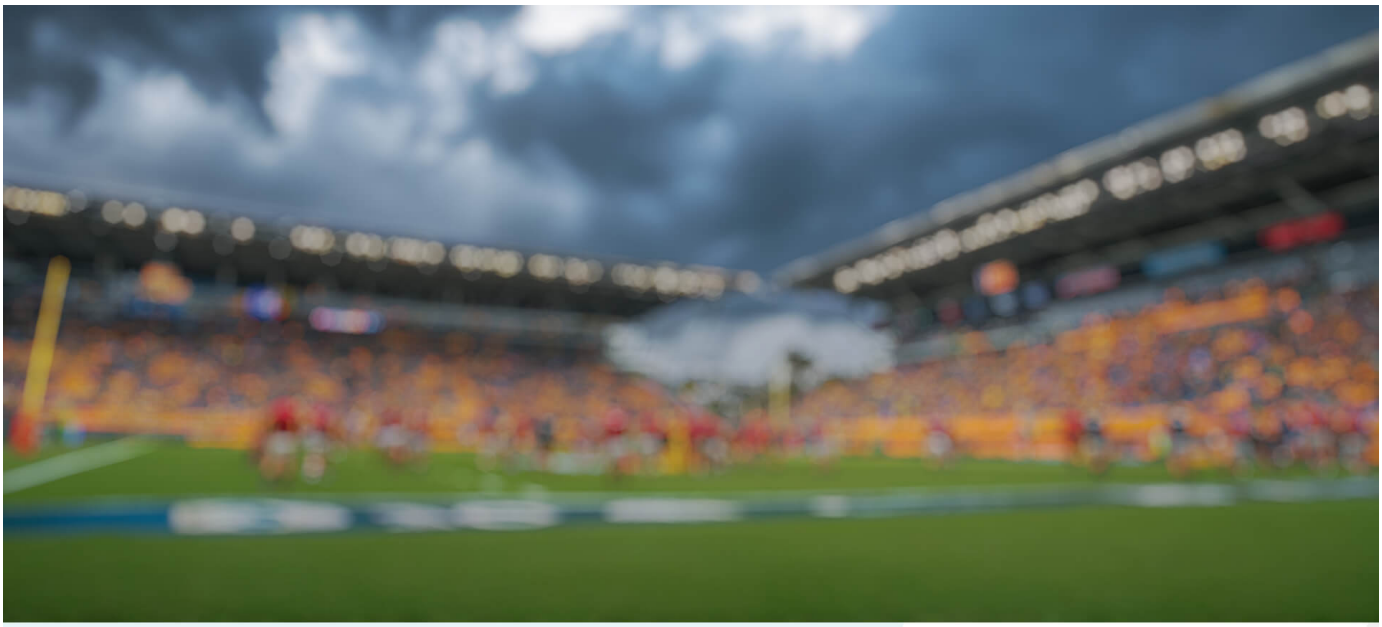

Project

Haley & Aldrich prepares World Cup cities for whatever the weather brings

Summary

- For the 2026 World Cup, FIFA had to plan for extreme weather disruptions in 11 cities across North America.
- Haley & Aldrich designed and delivered trainings to advise event partners of potential hazards and how to manage them.
- Our training framework can also inform preparedness planning for future large-scale events.

Client challenge

Extreme weather hazards can easily disrupt large sporting events like the FIFA World Cup, which rely on networks of venues, transportation systems, public agencies, and services in their host communities. For example, storms and lightning can interrupt game play and transit service. Extreme heat and wildfire smoke can harm players and

spectators.

In 2026, FIFA had to plan for such disruptions across 11 cities in the U.S. — all with different climates, emergency response systems, and infrastructure. Extreme weather-related disruptions rarely affect one organization or facility in isolation, so FIFA had to apprise event partners of how conditions could influence everything: transportation, crowd movement, communications, and venue operations.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Disaster Preparedness Training Center provides disaster preparedness, response, and recovery training to governmental, tribal, territorial, private, and nonprofit agencies. The center engaged Haley & Aldrich to support FIFA host cities with integrated expertise in risk assessment, emergency planning, and climate science. The center relied on us to develop and deliver preparedness training for emergency, transportation, and facility managers.

Our approach

Haley & Aldrich designed training around the broader event ecosystem, understanding that we would need to deliver in a way that would give agencies and other partners a shared understanding of hazards and practical approaches for how to manage them.

Our courses addressed stadium operations, transit access, crowd movement, vulnerable populations, evacuation, emergency response, interagency communication, and public messaging. They also explored compound hazards, including extreme heat combined with wildfire smoke.

We also provided practical tools to assess hazards, establish decision triggers, coordinate protective actions, and connect response decisions to event timelines. Through scenario planning, participants considered mitigation measures, decision points, agency responsibilities, and time-phased response actions.

Realistic stadium and transportation scenarios allowed participants to examine how changing conditions could affect event operations. Our team incorporated public data, forecasting resources, hazard thresholds, and planning tools to help participants evaluate risks and identify appropriate protective actions.

Value delivered

- Offered trainings that connected hazard information with operational decisions
- Took an approach that facilitated coordination among agencies and event partners while helping participants move from general awareness toward operational readiness
- Created a framework that can inform preparedness planning for future large-scale events

> *"We wanted to give people a common language around what extreme hazard risks are, toolkits they can use to approach them, and how they can talk about them together in a productive way."*
>
> *– Laura Hanson*

For more information, contact:

Daniele Spirandelli

Senior Associate, Climate Resilience Specialist

Laura Hanson

Senior Resilience Project Manager