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# Marathon Is to Be Run Amid Tight Security

By AL BAKER

Tomorrow's New York City Marathon will be the most heavily secured in the race's history, with thousands of police officers deployed through the five boroughs, the rivers and skies guarded and 30,000 prescreened runners permitted to carry just one transparent plastic bag each, officials said yesterday.

And forget about driving.

For the first time in the marathon's 32-year history, the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, the starting point of the race, will be closed to traffic in both directions, as will other crossings along the route's meandering 26.2 miles. Unlike last year, cars will be prohibited on the Staten Island Ferry.

Before racers log Mile 1 — the midpoint of the Staten Island-to-Brooklyn span, which offers a jarring view of the missing World Trade Center — they will have had their identities checked, their bodies scanned and their 2 million fans corralled. And the runners will have been warned not to eat the orange slices or drink the cups of water that are traditionally bestowed on them by spectators along the way.

Still, they will consider themselves fortunate. The suicide attacks in New York, Virginia and Pennsylvania had put the marathon in doubt. "In the days following the Sept. 11 attacks, the status of the race was uncertain," said Richard M. Finn, a spokesman for the marathon and the New York Road Runners, which organized it. Now, he said, the race is symbolic of a people moving forward, one step at a time.

"We think people see the marathon as helping," he said.

But with terrorist threats looming, security had to be tightened to levels beyond compare in a place already on edge. If making Yankee Stadium safe for a presidential visit during the World Series earlier this week was a challenge, keeping watch over a big, unwieldy road race that spills past subway stops and ends in Central Park was dizzying.

"One stationary location is a lot easier to police than 26 miles," said a Police Department official who spoke on the condition of anonymity. "In other years, we had no terror attack, so we planned it as a crowd control day. Now, it could be a target, just like the World Series is a target, and we are thinking in very broad terms so that we will be ready for everything."

***A carefully planned racecourse vigil, from waterways, roads and rooftops.***

Race organizers, for the first time, were asked to give law enforcement officials a list of the participants, from 50 states and 100 foreign nations, so they could be checked against lists of known criminals, Mr. Finn said. In addition, security checks were run on all volunteers, coaches, managers and reporters, he said.

On the waters, teams of armed Coast Guard officers will patrol in cutters, along with harbor launches from the Police Department. "We are particularly focused on the Verrazano bridge for the start of the race, and then for the 59th Street bridge," said Cmdr. Michael McAllister, the operations chief for the Coast Guard in New York.

Vessels and boats will be barred from within 500 yards of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge between 8:30 a.m. (more than two hours before start time) and 20 minutes after the last runner crosses, Commander McAllister said. Watercraft will be subject to random boarding, he said.

In addition, Commander McAllister said the Coast Guard will patrol the shoreline near the Fort Wadsworth start location, which is closed to the public. In the air, a no-fly zone will ban private airplanes from within a radius of 18 nautical miles of Kennedy International Airport, up to an altitude of 18,000 feet, Kathleen B. Bergen, a Federal Aviation Administration spokeswoman, said. That area blankets the whole race route, she said.

On the roads, police officers and firefighters will be running in the race, and all of the metal trash cans along the route will be removed, the police official said. Police on rooftops will be on the lookout for anything suspicious.

Truck traffic will be prohibited on the Queensboro Bridge. The Pulaski Bridge, connecting Queens and Brooklyn, and the Willis Avenue and Madison Avenue bridges, from Manhattan to the Bronx, will be closed as the race moves through the city.

Bags, backpacks and coolers are banned for runners, who are being asked to use organizers' buses instead of making their own way to Staten Island. Mr. Finn said runners would also be instructed to keep their race numbers displayed at all times.

Mr. Finn said the race would be an homage to the thousands killed in the attack and to those who helped mend the wounded city.

"It's a very strong message, and a very strong picture, that life indeed in the city is going on and will go on," Mr. Finn said. "On Sunday, it will be New Yorkers joined by their fellow Americans, and by the rest of the world, who will be making this very emphatic statement."

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