OTAS LIVE

Supporting Events and Professionals at Every Stage

Irritant spray in the crowd: the first five minutes

A spray released in a packed dance hall, what the venue did next, what UK guidance says about CS, and a five step response your team can rehearse

Correct as of 9 November 2026

SUMMARY

The crowd is the risk.

15 people to first aid, none to hospital [1]



OTAS style image, generated from real photography. Not a record of a specific event.

OTAS

The facts, as reported

15

people to first aid, none to hospital [1]

15

minutes to clean air, the venue said [1]

30

minutes or less: usual CS recovery [4]

What happened

THE INCIDENT

Packed former industrial hall [1]

Spray during a scuffle [3]

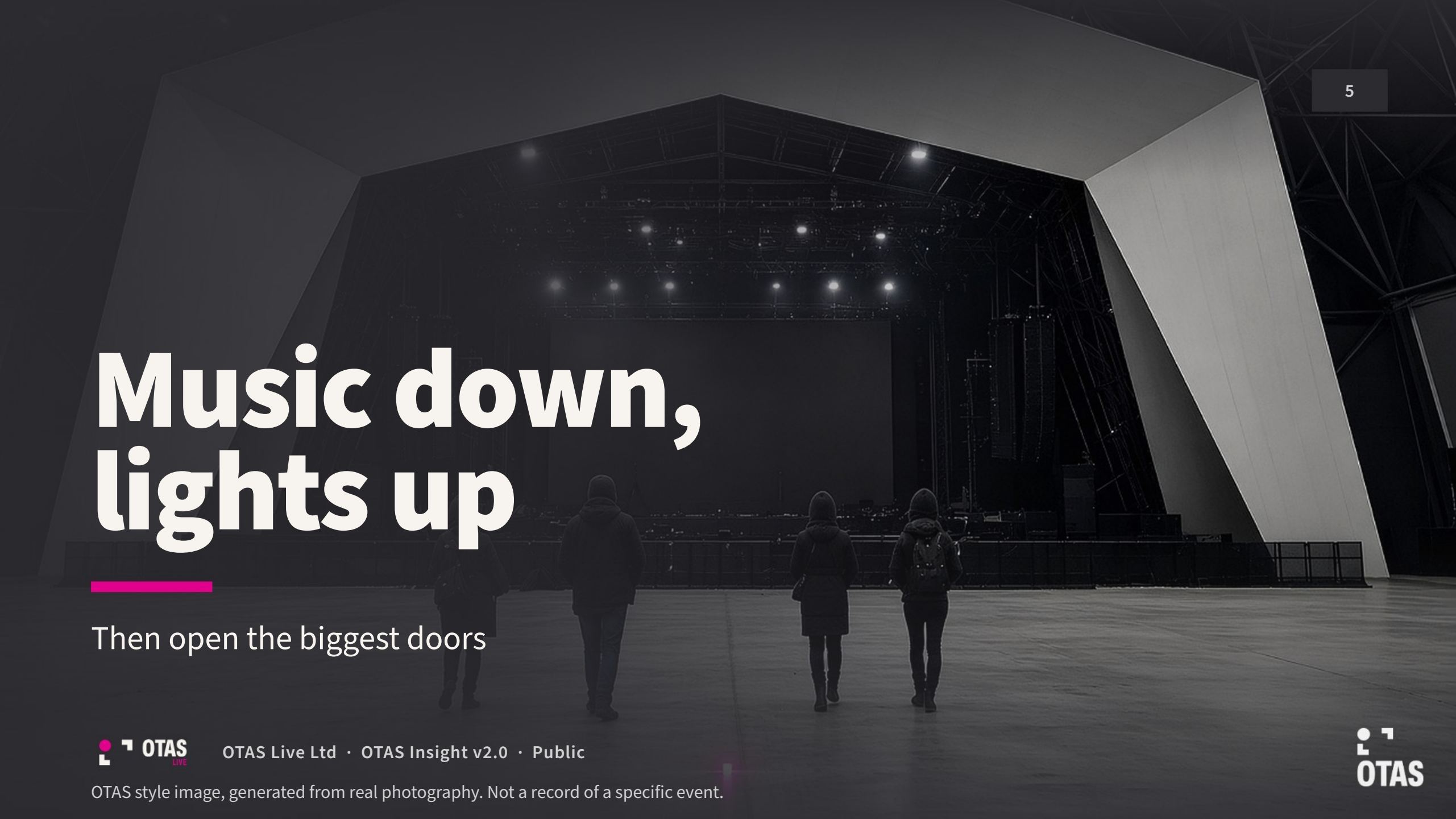
Reported as tear gas [1]

THE RESPONSE

Music down for five minutes [1]

Large doors opened [3]

Visitors searched on exit [1]



Music down, lights up

Then open the biggest doors

OTAS style image, generated from real photography. Not a record of a specific event.

Two more cases in 2026

GERMANY, FEBRUARY	VIENNA, 1 NOVEMBER
Spray on a dance floor [14]	Door worker sprayed a crowd [11]
38 hurt, 8 to hospital [14]	40 treated, 3 to hospital [11]
Club evacuated itself [14]	Reported for bodily harm [11]

03

Your own team

THE POSITION IN GREAT BRITAIN	BRIEF IT
Sprays are prohibited weapons [6]	A door crowd is a safety problem
Duty to the public [22]	No sprays, for anyone
Contractors too [17]	Policy and contractor brief

Where the reports differ

AGREE	DIFFER
Tear gas reported [1][2]	Theft attempted or not [1][3]
15 to first aid [1][2]	Three examined [3]
Music lowered [1][3]	Doors only in one report [3]

05

A pattern that week

REPORTED	FOR UK VENUES
At least the fourth [2]	Brief on theft methods
Dozens of theft reports [2]	Spray as a distraction
Two other venues [3]	Check for thefts after

06

UK guidance on CS

HOW IT BEHAVES	FIRST STEPS
Disperses in minutes [4]	Out of the confined space [4]
Recovery in 15 to 30 minutes [4]	Do not rub your eyes [4]
Asthma can worsen [5]	Do not wash skin at once [4]



Treat in fresh air

Do not rub, follow first aid for the agent

OTAS style image, generated from real photography. Not a record of a specific event.

OTAS

07

CS is not pepper spray

THE GUIDANCE	PEPPER SPRAY
Written for CS [4][5]	A different agent
Fresh air first [4]	Ask your medical provider
No rubbing [4]	Agent unconfirmed here

The five step irritant response

1 Recognise it

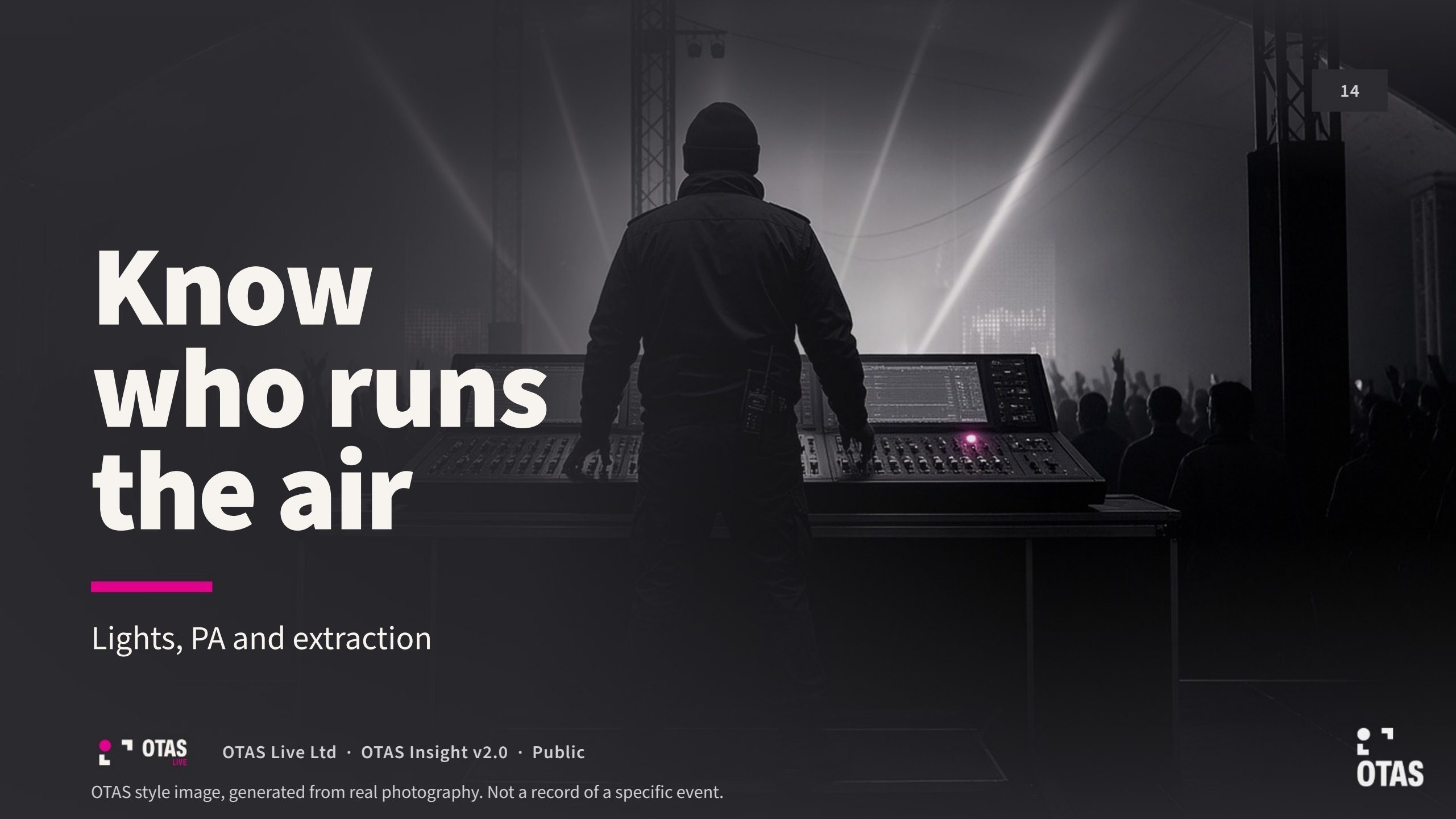
2 Control the show

3 Ventilate the space

4 Move people calmly

5 Treat in fresh air

OTAS professional practice, drawing on UK guidance and the incident reports.



Know who runs the air

Lights, PA and extraction

OTAS style image, generated from real photography. Not a record of a specific event.

Move without a crush

AT THE EXITS	IF THE PA FAILS
Doors fully open	Loud hailer ready [8]
Staff on the stairs [7]	Hand signals agreed
No cross flow	No going back for bags

Signs of a spray release

Signs 1 and 2 come from UK guidance on CS.
Signs 3 to 5 are OTAS practice.

01 **Sudden coughing and sneezing**

02 **Streaming eyes and eye pain**

03 **People covering their faces**

04 **A ring opening in the crowd**

05 **A sudden push to the exits**

Five steps in the first five minutes



STAGE 1

Recognise

Radio it

STAGE 2

Control

Music down

STAGE 3

Ventilate

Doors open

STAGE 4

Move

Exits staffed

STAGE 5

Treat

Fresh air

From the plan in this Insight. OTAS guidance.



Every door fully open

Nobody goes back in

OTAS style image, generated from real photography. Not a record of a specific event.

The next 30 minutes

MEDICAL	CONTROL
The 30 minute check [4]	Reopen only when clear
Clothing off, not over the head [4]	Call the police
Irrigate eyes 10 to 15 minutes [4]	Preserve the CCTV

Four roles

SHOW	CARE AND SCENE
Duty manager: show stop	Medical lead: triage
Technical lead: lights, PA, air	Security supervisor: scene

What to do at each level

Operational

Know the signs

Radio “irritant” and where

Keep exits open

Tactical

Own one step

Hold the scene

Run the 30 minute check

Strategic

Write it into the plan

Fund the kit

Exercise each season

The checklist

BEFORE THE NIGHT

- Sprays named in search policy [6]
- Theft methods briefed
- Ventilation plan written
- PA scripts recorded

ON THE NIGHT

- Patrols in dense areas [9]
- Eye wash and dry kit [4]
- Loud hailer charged [8]
- Drill each season [10]

“

We have a good ventilation system, so within a quarter of an hour the air in the hall is completely clean.

The venue spokesperson, as reported by AT5. OTAS translation [1]

Where the facts come from

1	AT5, Amsterdam local broadcaster, tear gas sprayed at a dance music week party, in Dutch, 25 October 2026	at5.nl
2	DJ Mag, police investigate suspected tear gas attacks at a dance music week, 27 October 2026	djmag.com
3	NL Times, tear gas sprayed in an alleged attempted jewellery robbery, 25 October 2026	nltimes.nl
4	UK Health Security Agency, CS gas: general information, 16 November 2022	gov.uk
5	UK Health Security Agency, CS gas: incident management, 16 November 2022	gov.uk
6	Firearms Act 1968, prohibited weapons, section 5, legislation.gov.uk	legislation.gov.uk
7	HSE, crowd management, assess the risks	hse.gov.uk

Where the facts come from

8	HSE, crowd management, control inside the venue	hse.gov.uk
9	HSE, crowd management, monitoring	hse.gov.uk
10	Security Industry Authority, understanding Martyn's Law and the SIA's role as regulator, 17 July 2026	gov.uk
11	wien.ORF.at, pepper spray outside a club, 40 hurt, in German, 1 November 2026	wien.orf.at
12	Kurier, security used pepper spray and 40 people needed treatment, in German, 1 November 2026	kurier.at
13	Kronen Zeitung, video shows pepper spray attack outside a Vienna club, in German, 2 November 2026	krone.at
14	Polizeiinspektion Rotenburg, unknown person sprays irritant in a club, at least 38 hurt, in German, 1 February 2026	presseportal.de

Where the facts come from

15	**NDR, irritant gas in a club, 38 hurt, 8 in hospital, in German, 1 February 2026**	ndr.de
16	**HSE, managing crowds safely**	hse.gov.uk
17	**HSE, set clear roles and responsibilities, updated 4 April 2025**	hse.gov.uk
18	**HSE, running an event safely**	hse.gov.uk
19	**The Purple Guide, medical**	thepurpleguide.co.uk
20	**The Purple Guide, crowd management**	thepurpleguide.co.uk
21	**Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, regulation 3, risk assessment**	legislation.gov.uk

Where the facts come from

22	**Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, section 3, duties to persons other than employees**	legislation.gov.uk
23	**GOV.UK, Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 collection**	gov.uk

Web sources opened 9 November 2026 and labelled with their publisher. The source pages themselves may name the event or venue. We do not use those names in the text.

OVER TO YOU

If a spray went off in your busiest room tonight, who would bring the lights up?

If you need support with an emergency plan or a crowd response drill for your venue, reach out to us to see how we can support you.

OTAS Live Ltd.

OTAS LIVE