

Music City Center Prioritizes Safe Events with GBAC STAR Facility Accreditation

Opportunity

Music City Center, opened in 2013, is a 2.1 million square foot convention center located in the heart of downtown Nashville. The facility includes more than 353,000 square feet of exhibit hall space, two ballrooms, and 61 meeting rooms. The Music City Center aims to create economic benefit for the greater Nashville region by attracting local and national events. Since its opening, the convention center has generated \$2.6 billion for the city.

When the pandemic hit, federal, state, and local mandates, as well as event cancellations by organizers, forced Music City Center to close to the public temporarily. To continue operations, administrative staff worked from home and essential workers, primarily management staff, continued to report to the facility. While event staff could not report to work, Music City Center was able to fully compensate them during the temporary closure.

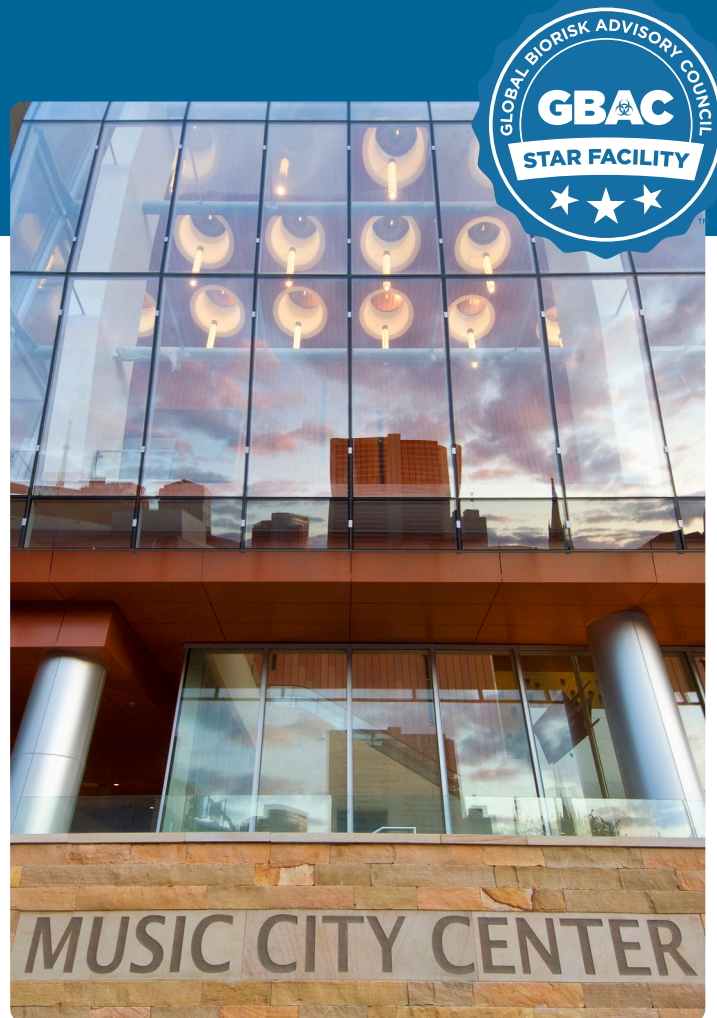
“The health and safety of Music City Center guests has always been a priority,” said Elisa Putman, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Music City Center. “However, the pandemic created a heightened sense of awareness of our processes. We knew we would need to do something different to combat the virus and safely welcome our guests.”

Solution



In May 2020, the International Association of Venue Managers (IAVM) partnered with the Global Biorisk Advisory Council[™] (GBAC), a Division of ISSA, to promote GBAC STAR[™] Facility Accreditation to its membership. Accreditation ensures facilities implement the right procedures, practices, and protocols to prevent, respond to, and recover from infectious diseases. Through this partnership, Music City Center was one of the first to achieve accreditation. It also joined the IAVM GBAC committee to develop templates to assist fellow venue operators pursuing accreditation.

To achieve GBAC STAR accreditation, facilities work with the GBAC team to demonstrate compliance with the program’s 20 elements including cleaning and disinfecting chemicals, risk mitigation, training, emergency preparedness, and sustainability. Facilities renew their accreditation each year to ensure continuous improvement and accountability.



“The GBAC program helped us evaluate and improve our established processes,” said Putman. “We developed not only a more comprehensive cleaning system, but also more stringent training to ensure the integrity of that system.” During the height of the pandemic, the center was prepared to operate as an overflow hospital, although it was never utilized. In the first five months of 2021, however, the facility hosted a vaccination clinic that operated seven days a week.

In June 2021, the center hosted its first large-scale event since the pandemic with more than 21,000 guests. Since achieving this accreditation, the venue has hosted 103 events and another 40 local meetings. To assure customers, staff, partners, and the community that the convention center meets the highest standards of cleaning and disinfection, Music City Center displays the GBAC STAR logo on its website, digital displays on the interior and exterior of the facility, and printed materials.



Results



By achieving GBAC STAR accreditation, Music City Center realized the following benefits:

Improved cleaning processes. Through the accreditation process, Music City Center evaluated its cleaning program to identify areas for improvement. With the help of GBAC, the team implemented comprehensive training and new cleaning protocols. For example, the team implemented a color-coded cleaning rag system to reduce the potential for cross-contamination when cleaning different surfaces and areas of the facility.

Enhanced product selection. Music City Center ensures that cleaning and disinfecting chemicals used in the facility are on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) List N to ensure efficacy against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. The center also established a chemical committee to review recommended chemical changes from relevant authorities to ensure that the center is compliant with the latest guidelines.

Early in the pandemic, working with the GBAC team also helped Music City Center evaluate the many technologies that emerged to combat COVID-19. "An expert with GBAC assisted us in a decision not to buy a potentially ineffective device, which saved Music City Center roughly one million dollars," added Putman.

Increased customer confidence. Music City Center experienced additional challenges when the Delta and Omicron variants caused an increase in COVID-19 cases. Customers expressed worry about the variants, and the facility was concerned about the possibility of event cancellations. With the help of GBAC STAR, however, the center reassured customers and staff of its commitment to health and safety.

"Event organizers are more selective than ever," explained Putman. "The GBAC STAR accreditation is the stamp of approval that signifies to our customers that we are committed to health and safety, and we're doing things the right way."

Visit our website at [GBAC.org](https://www.gbac.org)

Contact us by phone at 1-800-225-4772 (North America)
or 1-847-982-0800 (outside North America)

“Like many, I have been in the convention business for more than 30 years. I've learned that if our space isn't clean and well-maintained, customers will not come. Cleanliness has always been vital to our success, but now it is vital for everyone's health.”

- Elisa Putman
Senior Vice President and
Chief Operating Officer,
Music City Center



About GBAC, a Division of ISSA

Composed of international leaders in the field of microbial-pathogenic threat analysis, mitigation, response and recovery, the Global Biorisk Advisory Council (GBAC), a Division of ISSA, provides training, guidance, accreditation, certification, crisis management assistance and leadership to government, commercial and private entities looking to mitigate, quickly address and/or recover from biological threats and real-time crises. The organization's services include biorisk management program assessment and training, Forensic Restoration[®] response and remediation, the GBAC STAR[™] facility and service accreditation programs, training and certification of individuals and consulting for building owners and facility managers.