

Civil Unrest: Planning and Response



Mass Shootings

- Due to last weeks attack and tragedy in Colorado just a reminder that we did a “Mass Shootings: Planning and Response Awareness Course” Webinar on Jan. 27, 2011 and is available in the EMForum Archive.
- Course is typically 4 hours and Webinar is a brief 30 minute overview of the topic.

Civil Unrest Introduction

- A safe and successful response to these situations requires planning, training and preparation.
- The likelihood of civil unrest incident is low, BUT public safety officials must prepare for these situations.
- Continuing threats and incidents CONUS and OCONUS have demonstrated the need to prepare local, regional, state and federal agencies to plan for and respond to these critical incidents.
- This program is usually a 3-4 hour session so brief overview of a few topics!

Course Goal

To prepare emergency management and public safety officials with some basic tools and information needed to develop or assess a multi-agency civil unrest response plan or planning efforts.

Not really trying to tell you **how** to train and plan, but rather **what** to plan and train for.



- The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) defines a civil disturbance as “An unlawful assembly that constitutes a breach of the peace or any assembly of persons where there is danger of collective violence, destruction of property or other unlawful acts.”
- **Our First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees people the right to peaceable assembly and to petition their government to address grievances.**
- ***On rare occasions, that line is crossed and that is when public safety becomes a concern.***

Last Night: Anaheim, California

- Several nights of protests and violence including vandalism, rock throwing, police using tear gas, and a crowd storming the police station after officer involved shooting fatality.



Civil unrest events can occur for a variety of reasons and are not just limited to large urban areas. These events can occur in several situations:

- peaceful demonstrations/protests that turn confrontational
- violence related to major sporting events/celebrations
- concerts and "block party" parties that turn violent
- planned political conventions that are disrupted because of activists or violence
- confrontations at "hot spots" such as abortion clinics or research labs
- riots related to racial tensions or officer involved shootings.
- **New terms/threats: Flash Mobs and Occupy Events**

- Civil unrest events have occurred at or near college campuses when teams have either won or lost critical sporting competitions.
- Each year during March Madness college towns can be rocked by civil unrest events, as students become disorderly following tournament basketball games involving their school's team.
- If your town has a team at a major sporting event, have you planned for the response to civil unrest situations?
- Political Season: Does your jurisdiction host large political conventions and conferences? Republican National Convention (RNC), Democratic National Convention (DNC), Presidential Debates, G8 Summit, G20 Summit, World Trade Organization (WTO), and International Monetary Fund (IMF), etc.

- **ORGANIZED**

WTO, IMF, FTAA, RNC, DNC, G8 Summit, G20 Summit, Political Conventions, Occupy, Protests.

- **SPORADIC**

College Campuses, Sports Events, Concerts, Flash Mobs, Celebrations (Mardi Gras, Spring Break, etc.)

- **RACIAL**

LA Riots, Cincinnati, Benton Harbor, etc.

- **CORRECTIONAL FACILITY**

Prisons & Jails



Threat Groups

- Anarchists/Black Bloc
- Extremists Groups
- Gangs
- Inflamed/Emotional Crowds
- Controversial Topics Events
- Alcohol Fueled Crowds
- Sports, Concerts, etc. Who is the crowd?



- Knoxville, Tennessee, a crowd of 500 University of Tennessee students reportedly let a rowdy party celebrating a football team victory get out of hand. People were throwing debris out of windows and setting a small fire. Five people were arrested.
- Durham, New Hampshire, an estimated 4,000 people rioted downtown after the University of New Hampshire men's hockey team lost a championship game. More than 80 people were arrested, and beer bottles, full beer cans, and rocks were thrown at police officers and firefighters.



Columbus, Ohio

Night of rioting, looting and fires after Ohio State defeated Michigan State.



“Over-the-Rhine” Neighborhood Civil Unrest Cincinnati, Ohio



Three days of violence due to police related shooting fatality. Led to over 100 arrests and 100 injuries.

Extensive looting, vandalism and arson. Events were led by hard-core gangs.

Durham, New Hampshire Civil Unrest

- 4,000 people rioted downtown after the UNH Men's Hockey team lost in the national championship game.
- More than 80 people were arrested.
- Dozens of small fires and medical calls.
- **Police Officers and Firefighters pelted by beer bottles, rocks and cans while trying to bring medical aid to a young woman stepped on by a police horse.**
- **Response vehicles damaged by thrown objects.**

Benton Harbor, Michigan: Civil Unrest Event



AP / The Herald-Palladium, Neal Vaughan



Three days of violence due to police related shooting fatality. Led to over numerous arrests and injuries. Extensive looting, vandalism and arson.

Benton Harbor was a small town of only 12,000 citizens.



AP / The Herald-Palladium, Neal Vaughan

Miami "Free Trade" Protests

- Activists planned for months leading up to the event.
- Small numbers of anarchists moved through crowds inciting violence.
- Used improvised weapons such as sling shots that fired ball bearings and marbles at police.



Miami “Free Trade” Protests



- Threw objects at police such as rocks and bottles containing urine and feces.
- City was tied up for several days with thousands of protesters.
- Majority conducted peaceful demonstrations, puppet shows, street theatre, signs, music, etc. Very limited violence.

WHAT IS BLACK BLOC?

- A collection of anarchist or anarchist affinity groups organized for a specific protest.
- Held in reserve and placed into locations where law enforcement show up in strength.
- Is a tactic, not an organization.



Extinguish Fires!





Civil Unrest: Lessons Learned



- Secure construction sites. They contain rocks, bricks, concrete, barrels, and other items demonstrators can use as weapons.
- Protesters may fill barrels with water or cement and use them to block roads or roll them down hills toward responders.
- **Alcohol is a significant contributor to violence.**
- Protesters may use such tactics as protester training, safe houses, surveillance, video crews, bike teams, response teams, and radio communications.
- Squirt guns may be used to spray ammonia, gasoline, bio-hazards, and other chemicals on responders.

Civil Unrest: Lessons Learned

- Molotov cocktails can be serious danger; plan for them.
- Protesters may throw rocks, bricks, bottles, cans, and fireworks at responders or use slingshots or “wrist rockets” to shoot BBs, marbles, lug nuts, and other similar items.
- One tactic protestors use is to form a human chain by interlocking arms, legs, and bodies to quickly block streets and intersections.
- Protesters may use “protester devices” or “locking devices” consisting of steel and plastic PVC pipes to lock arms.

Civil Unrest: Lessons Learned

- Also, buckets, bicycle locks, drums, and other devices are used to anchor individuals to each other or to fixed objects.
- Protesters may place suspicious packages or materials and call in bomb threats (JHAT).
- During civil unrest events, related and unrelated 911 call volume will increase (Comms Center).
- Responders need to be prepared for decon; large numbers of people may be exposed to “pepper spray” and other irritants.

Pre-Incident Planning

- ICS, ICS, ICS (Unified Command)
- Planning (Multi-agency, objectives, IAP)
- Training and Exercises
- Intelligence and Information Sharing (Threats)
- EOC
- JIC (Media and Social Media)
- Mutual Aid
- State and Federal Support
- Declarations



Pre-Incident Planning


- Preparation is the key to a civil unrest incidents and that includes a clear idea of your actions before the incident occurs.
- The first step in your preparation is a review of your agencies guidelines and procedures when responding to these threats or incidents.
- As with any multi-hazard assessment and planning process it is a great idea to do a **multi-agency exercise** (tabletop or functional) to bring all the key agencies together and rehearse the plan once it has been completed.



Scene Assistance

- Local **Emergency Operations Center (EOC)** should be activated as soon as possible for long term response, recovery, management and support efforts. IMT. CP.
- **Joint Information Center (JIC)** should be established involving all key agencies and players to manage the media efforts. Social Media.



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BE SAFE & Questions???

