

To The Point

Protecting Your Business During Civil Unrest

CHUBB®



Protesters and Rioters Can Severely Impact Your Business

Emergency planning tends to focus around events that, while not predictable, are somewhat familiar to us – power outages, weather events, and fires, for example. Over the last few decades, many cities have been affected by civil unrest and rioting. Often, this develops from protests of political, social, economic, environmental or law enforcement issues. Unfortunately, peaceful protests can escalate into a violent and dangerous situation.

As a responsible business, you want to protect your employees and your clients during these events, but you also need to be able to continue your regular business activities. Below are some tips and points that you may wish to consider and incorporate into your business contingency plans as you look to react to events involving civil unrest.

Your People

- If possible, discourage travel into the city starting the day before the event and until the event is over. Disrupted transportation, road closures or irregular traffic patterns may be encountered. Check local news websites frequently for live travel information.
- Encourage remote work arrangements such as telecommuting or alternate schedules (e.g., arrive very early, before major activity begins) if possible.
- Avoid scheduling meetings in the city during this time.
- Consider allowing casual dress for employees to avoid potential heckling by protesters while travelling. Discourage the use of logo items if your firm is associated with target industry sectors, including finance or defence.

Risk Engineering

- Review existing emergency and security contingency plans and make sure employees are aware of, and understand, the procedures. Ensure employee contact information is updated for ease of communication. If you don't have one, establish a "call tree" or notification roster so you can quickly pass information and check on employees.
 - Consider scheduling a training session (actual or table-top) prior to these events in order to increase awareness and understanding of emergency procedures and protocols.
 - Emphasise the importance of situational awareness and remind employees to avoid the areas where protest activity is taking place. Also, encourage employees to avoid interacting with protesters, and if approached, advise them to keep moving toward known secure locations.
 - Follow the social media sites of law enforcement, government and reliable media outlets to ensure your business has the latest available information. Where relevant, monitor regional or global crisis management information services.
 - Consider exercising your existing notification and response plans. Something as simple as a short table-top discussion with the key business leaders will remind an organisation of potential, pending disruptive events. Advance preparations will also reveal gaps in resiliency planning that need to be addressed. Businesses should know what they plan to do to ensure continuity of operations if directly impacted by the protest activity—before it happens.
 - Consider conducting a site-specific risk assessment for buildings that are likely to be exposed to protest activity. At a minimum, this assessment should include the following:
 - Evaluation of the anticipated threat and potential impact (likelihood and consequences).
 - Evaluation of company posture and the potential to become a target for protesters. Global corporations may be a more visible target for protests.
 - Review of the physical facility, identifying critical points and vulnerable areas.
 - Review of the current mitigation and response plans to identify gaps and clarify uncertainties.
- Coordinate with local law enforcement, public safety or security organisations as required. It is recommended to make contacts with support resources in advance of any incident.

Your Business

- Review existing Business Continuity Plans (BCP) and update it as necessary prior to these events. If you do not have a BCP, consider developing one. There are numerous resources available to support plan development, from open source, public web sites to professional help from security consulting firms.
- Consider scheduling essential deliveries and meetings to avoid expected periods of increased activity, such as arrival and departure of political leaders. Verify that adequate supplies are on hand if it is necessary to shelter in place and consider temporarily increasing inventories of critical consumables.
- Social media tools are used to quickly organise activist or protest events limiting the opportunity to plan. Be prepared to adjust business operations on short notice.

Your Facilities

- Instruct employees to be alert for signs of unusual activity in or near company facilities.
- Test all fire and burglar protection/detection systems and review notification procedures with alarm companies.
- If you have a security force, ensure that they are properly briefed on the possibility of disruptions and what is expected of them during an incident.
- Review critical facility requirements at exposed locations. Check life safety items such as emergency lighting. If you have them, test security support tools: intrusion alarms, CCTV/surveillance systems, notification systems, etc. Check that back-up power sources are available and functioning.
- Consider procedures for implementing alternate means of communication during intense protest/police activity. Mobile phones may have limited or no connectivity.

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