



Preparedness Committee
Security and Life Safety
Commercial Office Building Protective Measures

Topic:	Civil Unrest / Protests / Demonstrations
Date:	Jan 2014; Revised May 2018

Background A civil unrest situation can take multiple forms, but usually begin as a protest or demonstration outside a building’s property line or entrance(s). In worst case scenarios, the protesting group can enter a building’s perimeter (i.e. entrances) and disrupt operations for the property and its tenants. In many cases, proper planning and a sound emergency operations plan can help eliminate these disruptions and maintain normal business operations. With many protests, advance warning is provided by multiple pre-event indicators, including intelligence provided by law enforcement. With this information, properties have the opportunity to increase their security measures, such as police involvement, additional officer placement, lockdown of entrances and/or communications with tenants. As with any potential hazard, it is imperative that a plan be developed, personnel trained and tested. By doing so, property managers and security personnel can reduce business interruptions and maintain some form of order during these types of events.

Response Measures At the onset of any civil disturbance (or situation that may turn into some form of a protest/demonstration), the following measures may be considered:

- Call 911 immediately and alert the Chicago Police Department to the location and situation
- If possible, consider placing additional security officers at all perimeter doors, to include, but not limited to lobby, loading dock and/or parking-garage entrances
- If additional security personnel are not available on site, consider calling your security services provider and requesting additional staff
- Inform tenant contacts of situation and of the response measures to be taken by property
- For worst case scenarios, be prepared to lock down facility so protestors cannot gain entry into building and cause additional disruption
- If applicable, utilize building’s card reader system to control access to floors (i.e. elevators)

- If building is an “open” building (i.e. no visitor or guest registration process), managers may consider adding a registration or screening process so all guests and visitors must first register with security prior to entering the building
- Monitor and record all activities by CCTV (if applicable)

Best Practices / Considerations From a proactive standpoint; consider the following actions, especially if your property has a history of protests or civil unrest types of situations:

- Have a fully functional emergency operations plan that identifies responsibilities and tasks for Building Management, Engineering, and Security team
- Work with Chicago Police Department and keep them informed of any issues or conflicts that may result in a protest/demonstration
- Monitor current events and social media sites that may forewarn actions against your building and/or building’s tenants
- Participate in the City of Chicago Public Private Partnership (CP3) program to share building safety information with first responders, and receive additional alerts
- Keep lines of communication open with tenants and advise them to inform you of any potential or probable protest activity
- Ensure all security systems are property working (i.e. CCTV and alarms)
- Make sure a plat survey is available and property lines are clearly marked or distinguishable
- Be capable of locking all doors and keep keys readily available (and test locking mechanisms on a regular basis)
- Identify method(s) to communicate emergency messages to tenants (i.e. public address system and/or mass messaging system)
- Identify alternate means of accessing your building if a specific entrance is blocked/closed
- Identify what the impact will be if your service providers (i.e. security, housekeeping, mail room, café, retail, etc.) cannot access your building because of a protest

Conclusion / Follow Up A civil disturbance can impact your operations, but with proper planning and training, building employees will be more confident in their response and disruptions can be limited. At the conclusion of any such disturbance, Security should consider the below actions:

- Obtain relevant information for an Incident Report
- Return building back to normal operations (security posts, elevators, etc.)
- Conduct after-action-review with team to identify gaps in response measures and opportunities for improvement
- Review findings with Building Management, and update response plans as necessary
- Report losses to insurance carriers, risk management, and ownership

Note: The above measures are provided for informational purposes only and do not constitute any set standard, guideline, or code. They are offered as possible options to consider when developing response measures to issues in a commercial office building. When developing response measures, consider all variable, such as building size and design, staffing, time of day, etc. The purpose of these measures is to provide general information to those persons responsible for developing site-specific protective measures, to serve as practices to consider when drafting emergency operations plans, and do not constitute any set policy or procedure.