

WHITE PAPER

Dealing with Civil Unrest

A Guide Book

Learning to prepare and respond to civil unrest for protection of people, property and assets.



Contents

- 1 Introduction
- 2 History and Indicators of Civil Unrest in the United States
- 3 The Threats of Civil Unrest to Life
- 4 The Costs of Civil Unrest in Dollars
- 5 How to Boost Your Preparedness
 - Situational Awareness
 - Threat Intelligence
 - Communication Practices
- 6 Finding the Right Tools
 - Mass Notification
 - Threat Intelligence
 - Training
- 7 Conclusion
- 8 Helpful Resources
- 9 About Regroup Mass Notification
- 10 References



Introduction

Civil unrest is not a new phenomena. Throughout history, populations have seen violent and destructive acts — en masse — in response to social grievances, political dissatisfaction, cost of living crises and other socioeconomic hardships. Since 2016, the United States has experienced increases in civil unrest throughout its cities and the numbers indicate these incidents are on the rise.

The recent surges in civil unrest can be attributed to a multitude of factors, but the results are almost always the same; endangerment of human life, destruction of property, disruption in an orderly supply chain and skyrocketing insurance and rebuilding costs.

These very real threats to organizations must be met with an augmented approach to preparedness and business continuity. Organizations at risk must take the safety of their workforce and colleagues as the most fundamental obligation. However, the protection of assets and property demands a greater understanding of the risks associated with civil unrest, addressing the organization's preparedness and response plans and having the tools in place to facilitate best outcomes.

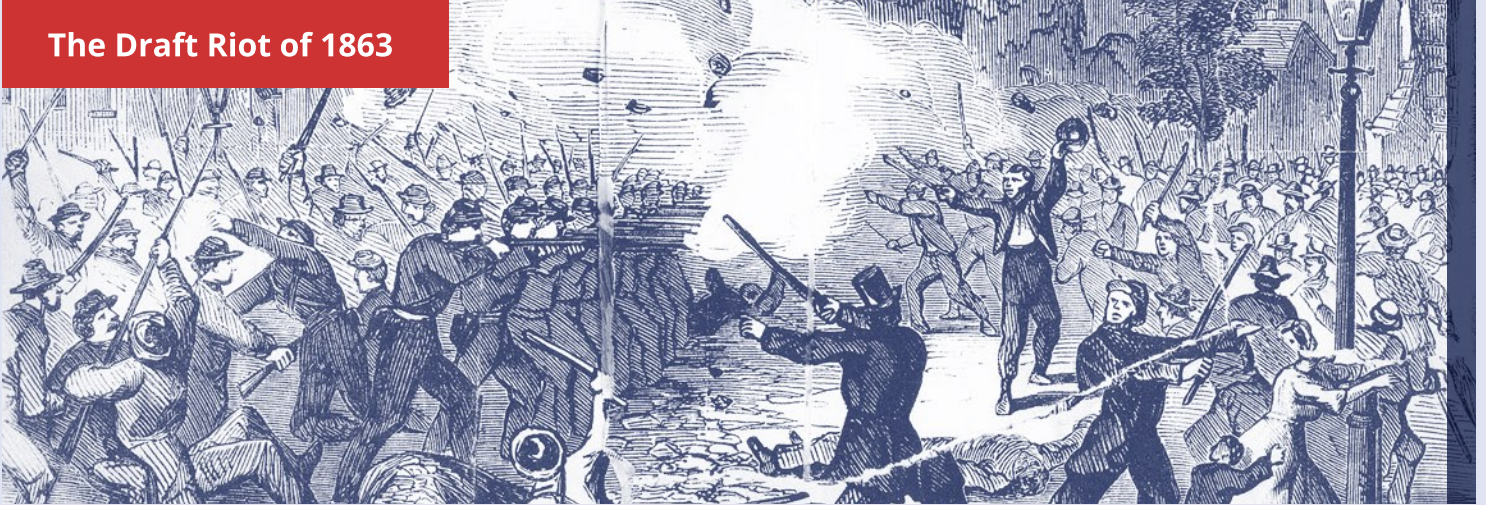
This guide book explores some of the history and risks of civil unrest and provides the processes and tools you need to protect your organization in the event of a civil unrest occurrence.



History and Indicators of Civil Unrest in the United States

Throughout its history, the United States has been no stranger to civil unrest. These events have, largely, taken the form of protest or rioting as a response to some manner of grievance shared by large numbers of individuals.

The Draft Riot of 1863



In July of 1863, New York City was under siege during what would be called the Draft Riot of 1863. Mobs of dispossessed workers took to the streets in protest of oppressive wages and the social inequities of conscription practices during the civil war. Residents and police were assaulted and draft headquarters and other buildings were burned, causing property damage of over \$1,500,000.

The Los Angeles riots of 1992

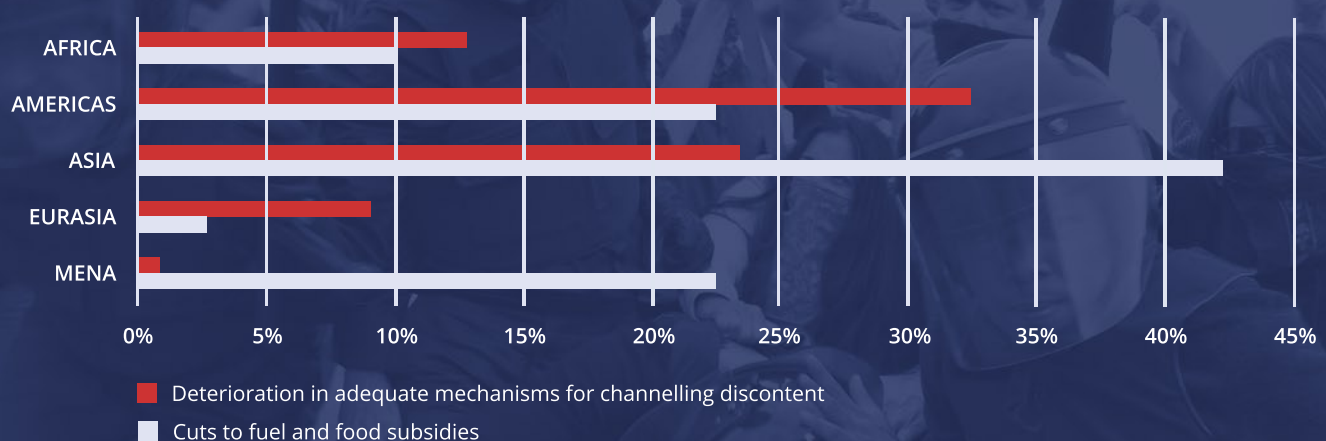


The Los Angeles riots of 1992 (in response to the LAPD beating of Rodney King) resulted in 50 fatalities, 2,300 individuals injured and over \$1 billion in city-wide property damage.

In addition to social grievances, many incidents of civil unrest in the United States have been born out of economic upset, specifically the cost of living.

According to the Verisk Civil Unrest Index Projections, over 70 countries will likely see an increase in civil unrest in 2022¹ with sharp increases predicted for the United States. As a result of a global COVID-19 pandemic, lockdowns, small business closures and the loss of jobs, Americans were left in precarious financial situations by the end of 2020. Further exacerbating their difficulties, increased prices on essential items (gasoline, food and energy) and a deterioration in mechanisms for channeling grievances have — predictably — left many Americans feeling helpless and frustrated.

Figure 1: Cuts to fuel and food subsidies and the weakening of mechanisms for channelling discontent are the most significant drivers of unrest in the 34 most at-risk countries (% indicated the average regional probability of deterioration in each driver by the fourth quarter of 2022)



In addition to the economic burdens faced by middle-class and lower-earning Americans, political tensions swelled to historic proportions from 2020 through 2022.

In July of 2022, the Supreme Court of the United States issued a number of high-profile decisions that were met with varying degrees of public opinion. Social media backlash against the Court and other political figures gained in strength as did protests and other demonstrations by American citizens and residents.

According to the National League of Cities (NLC), harassment, threats and violence against elected officials also rose sharply in 2021 with 87% of those officials surveyed observing increases in such attacks².

On their own, these separate circumstances of social, economic and political discontent can be serious indicators of looming civil unrest. When combined, however, they can produce unpredictable social responses that bring with them destruction of property, widespread injuries and even fatalities.

As we've seen from history, factors such as economic downturns, political disapproval, social unrest and higher costs of living can all create breeding grounds for civil unrest. For organizations to take the necessary precautions, their stakeholders must first seek to understand the history and costs associated with civil unrest and violence in our nation's communities.

The Threats of Civil Unrest to Life

According to a New York Times report, at least 6 people lost their lives to violence during the protests that started after George Floyd's death in 2021³. At least 140 cities across the United States saw protests, riots and civil unrest resulting in increased law enforcement presence and the activation of the National Guard in over 20 cities.

Injuries incurred during protests and other uprisings can range from minor to life-threatening, with the most common injuries including:

- Blunt force trauma
- Burns from fire and explosions
- Contusions from rubber bullets
- Ocular and respiratory injuries from tear gas

Additionally, psychological trauma is a real consequence (to protestors and bystanders) when public protests turn violent. These injuries can flood local emergency centers and cause long-lasting effects to the victim or patient. While most medical centers and hospitals have plans in place for responding to civil unrest, many organizations do not.

Even for the uninvolved bystander, the threat of a protest escalating to a violent situation is real and brings with it potential jeopardy in the form of physical injury. For organizations in areas of risk, employee and staff safety must be addressed ahead of social disruptions. This means acquiring a means of threat monitoring, conducting drills, keeping lines of communication open with staff members and having a response plan in place.



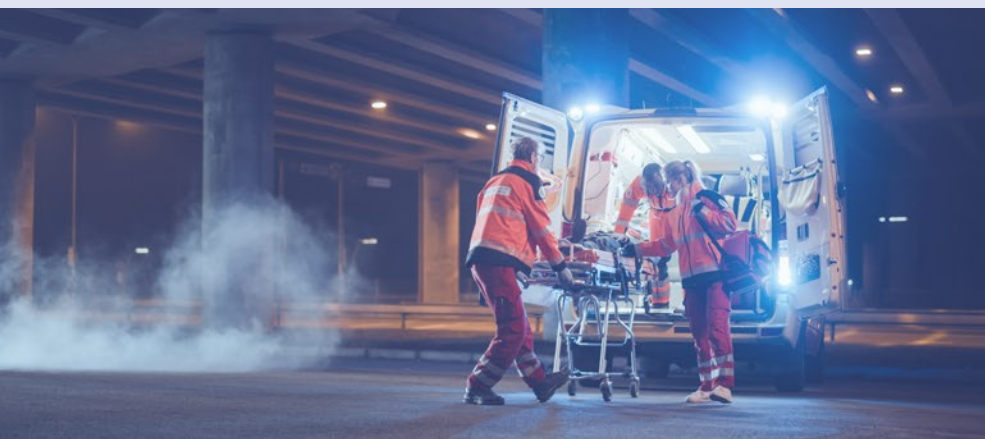
Questions to Ask

Does your organization have an emergency response plan in place?

Do you have a way to quickly communicate threats to your staff members?

Are you prepared to shelter in place and have needed first aid?

Do you know who to call when your location is at risk?



The Costs of Civil Unrest in Dollars

Whether intentional or unintentional, some protests escalate into riots. When riots occur, it is inevitable that property and other assets will be damaged or destroyed. This leads to additional costs to the victim organization by way of replacement assets and increased insurance premiums.

Hardening an organization’s facilities can be an effective means of protection, but only if there is enough time and prior planning to deal with an imminent threat.

In the United States alone, the cost of civil unrest can easily reach the multimillion dollar mark and, at times, over a billion dollars in losses have been recorded⁵. These costs are absorbed by the victim organization but also taxpayers.

Things to Consider

- Adequate Insurance and Annual Review
- Contingency Plans for Supply Chain Disruptions
- Communication for Emergencies
- Evaluations of Security and Safety Procedures
- When to Close or Cancel Events

The Top Five

Most Destructive Riots in the United States*

5	Miami, Florida	May 1980	\$204,000,000
4	Detroit, Michigan	July 1967	\$322,000,000
3	Los Angeles, California	August 1965	\$357,000,000
2	Washington, DC	January 2021	\$1,000,000,000
1	Los Angeles, California	April 1992	\$1,420,000,000

*Dollar amounts adjusted for current value and inflation.

Most organizations have learned the hard way that typical insurance policies do not cover business interruption relating to civil unrest. For business owners, even minor disruptions can lead to staggering losses.

Since civil unrest can lead to supply chain disruptions, reduced consumer confidence and other financial downturns, its impact on an organization can be difficult to gauge or predict.



How to Boost Your Preparedness

Understanding the difference between peaceful demonstrations and violent disturbances is important. However, it is also vital to understand that apparently peaceful gatherings can oftentimes turn violent and disruptive. For that reason, your organization can never be too prepared for destructive events when protests are taking place.

Best practices in preparedness and response can vary based on a number of factors. Consider the potential size of events, proximity to your location, your area's history of public demonstrations and the safety of your staff members.

Civil unrest is just one example of the need for organizations to have in place a comprehensive preparedness and response plan that serves to mitigate risks and enhance the safety of individuals, property and assets.

Situational Awareness

Situational awareness is the first smart step to promoting the safety of individuals and protection of valuable assets. Employed by healthcare, military, aviation and law enforcement for decades, situational awareness is a learned skill that can be passed along to your team members to heighten safety.

On its most basic level, situational awareness is knowing and understanding what is going on and predicting a situation's potential impact. In an organization, training can prove useful for both individuals and the organization as a whole. Consulting with local law enforcement for guidance on situational awareness training is the first step to planning staff exercises.

Situational Awareness Training Points



Short-Term
Memory Exercises



Attention to Detail
Exercises



Recollection
Exercises

Much like memory games used with young children, the appropriate situational awareness exercises can help your staff members become more observant and able to recognize potentially dangerous indicators. These exercises can also hone the individual's ability to understand and respond.

Situational Awareness Tips

Stay focused on surroundings

Scan areas when you approach them

Make a mental note of what you are seeing

Pay attention to sounds, scents and voices



Threat Intelligence

Gathering information about potential threats has become an essential business tool for healthcare, enterprise and tech companies. It's important to understand that civil unrest is not limited to activities in public spaces. Rather, it can also take the form of cyberattacks and reputation hacking.

Additionally, espionage carried out in the digital space can cost targeted organizations millions. According to Accenture⁶, security breaches increased 67% in the last five years and cost targeted companies an average of \$2.6 million each. It's also reported⁷ that nearly \$17,700 is lost every minute due to phishing attacks.

In the 2004 thesis by Alexandra Whitney Samuel, Hacktivism and the Future of Political Participation, a hacktivist is defined as an individual who employs "non-violent use of illegal or legally ambiguous digital tools in pursuit of political ends." Such attacks can include Denial of Service (DoS), Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) and Domain Name Service (DNS) hijacking as well as ransomware and malware attacks.

Political Hacktivism Against Organizations



Denial of Service Attacks



Website Attacks



Infrastructure Logging



Email Bombing (Inboxes)



Reputational Attacks

Using threat monitoring intelligence can create heightened awareness for company stakeholders and IT teams when potential threats are forming. This enables the organization to take the needed steps to bolster digital security throughout the organization.



Communication Practices

Good communication practices are essential to everyday business in virtually any organization. However, when risk threatens, it's crucial that a strong communication plan be in place. In the case of civil unrest, staff member safety comes first, and alerting others to potential danger needs to be an efficient process.

Because public protests can be unpredictable and oftentimes chaotic, protecting individuals requires consistent messaging from stakeholders and team leadership. Employees and staff members should also be encouraged to communicate what they know, what they've witnessed and requests for assistance when needed. This includes staff members who work in remote locations, traveling employees, hybrid employees and those in geographical areas of risk.

A dedicated chain of command in communications can be useful in ensuring the right information is passed along to the team during times of crisis. This keeps information clear and more accurate and instructions easier to follow.

Prior to critical events, every organization should have in place a communication plan that addresses everyday demands and the needs that may arise from critical events like civil unrest. These communication plans should incorporate annual review and discussion of changing requirements that correspond with organizational growth, business continuity plans and insurance obligations.

Tips for Emergency Communications



Keep messaging clear

Impart information in simple, understandable terms.



Be as timely as possible

Critical events are fluid. Rapid response is necessary to keep people safe.



Leverage all channels

Use every medium (email, text, push notifications, social media) at your disposal.



Ask for feedback

Encourage others to report their status back to team leaders.

Reviewing Your Communication Plan

Who are the team leaders?

How will alerts be communicated?

Do you have two-way communication?

What if there are cellular outages?

During an emergency, such as a violent protest, staying in continual contact with your team members, employees and stakeholders will serve to keep individuals safer and enable you to better protect property. Having an emergency communication plan in place prior to critical events is essential to its success.

Finding the Right Tools

Preparedness is an important part of any business plan. For all organizations, emergency preparedness planning can help mitigate long-term disruptions and speed recovery efforts. While civil unrest can be unpredictable and sometimes explosive, there are tools that can be employed to ensure better outcomes for people and property.

Mass Notification

Mass notification is a complement to an overarching communication strategy that is essential for organizations of all sizes. Used primarily during crisis situations, mass notification can reach large numbers of individuals quickly.

Not all mass notification platforms are created equal. For optimum efficiency, a mass notification platform should be cloud-based, redundant and capable of sending large numbers of alerts through many different channels (email, text, push notifications, voice calls, digital signage, etc.).

Additionally, an effective mass notification system should be accessible from the desktop and mobile devices. This enables two-way communication and collaboration when emergencies strike.

8 Must-Have Features in a Mass Notification System



Easy to use but with a comprehensive, unified communications interface



Multiple fail-safe features to ensure alerts can always be launched



APIs to automate emergency notifications



Tools for collecting on-scene intelligence to increase situational awareness



Unlimited all-hazards notification templates to save time when sending alerts



Mobile apps for two-way communication and sending alerts



Desktop alerts sent from the cloud to reach remote workers



Integrations for government and public services

In times of crisis — such as civil unrest and violent demonstrations — mass notification is an important tool for quickly reaching your entire network. Having a protocol in place for alerting others will also prove to be beneficial when threats are present and moments count.

Threat Intelligence

Threat intelligence is the practice of collecting, analyzing and disseminating information that can pose a risk to organizations and their infrastructures. Beginning primarily as a technology monitoring tool, threat intelligence has bloomed in recent years to monitor, not only IT and security threats, but social media trends, brand reputations and public happenings.

In larger organizations, a threat intelligence platform is typically used by security teams to identify potential network threats such as phishing attacks, DDoS attacks and malware or ransomware, with some varieties of threat intelligence going far beyond IT risks.

Today's threat intelligence platforms are monitoring and analysis tools that identify risks based on data collection from a number of vetted sources. These may include social media, news media, regional network activity, online trends and government reporting agencies such as National Weather Service and NOAA.



The key to finding the right threat intelligence solution is to closely examine the sources for data and information. Ask the provider what data points they monitor, if they are vetted sources and how often data and other information is collected and analyzed. What serves a large institute of higher learning may not suit a county hospital facility.

Trends monitoring is crucial to understanding where and when civil unrest may occur. Furthermore, the right threat intelligence tool will take into account financial, social, political and environmental triggers that can impact regional crime, unrest and potential violence.

Training

Training requirements for dealing with civil unrest will naturally vary from organization to organization but there are some basic safety, security and response training that should be part of your team's overall learning.

Consider some important practices that will help ensure the safety of your people and property:

- First aid training and CPR
- Shelter in place
- Evacuation drills
- Severe weather drills
- Drills for fire, bomb threats and other physical threats
- What to do for chemical exposures (tear gas, other noxious gasses)
- Buddy system
- Situational awareness training
- Tourniquet, bandaging, eye washing techniques
- Communication techniques
- Identification of suspicious activities and persons

While it is always our hope that none of these learned skills will ever be needed in our workplaces, it is valuable to provide every team member with essential training for safety and security.



Tips for Your Team Members

Report suspicious activities or persons

Ask for assistance if injured or in a protective state

Understand basic first aid and CPR

Know when to shelter in place

Maintain awareness in fluid situations

Use a buddy system

Reaching out to local law enforcement, fire and emergency services, city councils and county commissions can open a wealth of new opportunities for learning and training exercises. Many agencies will welcome the opportunity to give guidance to your team and provide you with the appropriate track for communicating and responding to emergencies.

Additionally, the United States Federal government, through agencies like Homeland Security and OSHA, can provide employers, educators and other organizations guidelines on dealing with crisis situations like civil unrest.

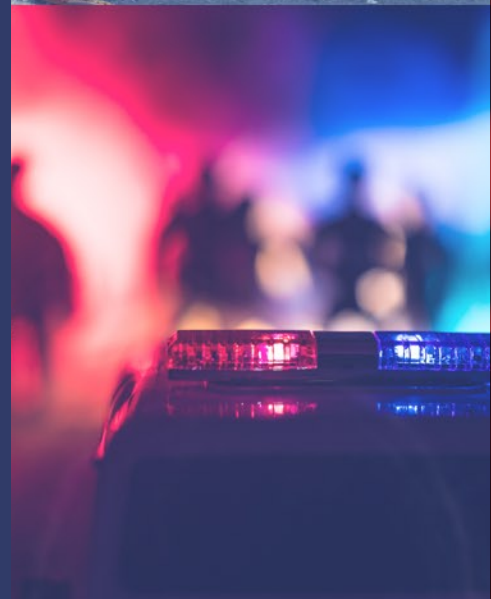
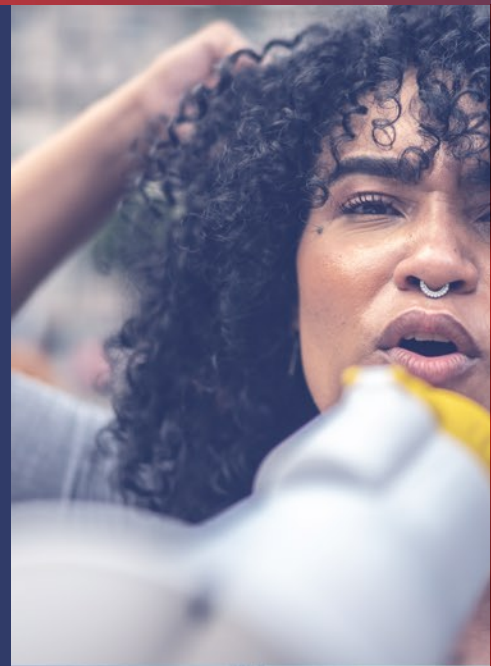
Finally, training personnel and team members preparedness and response to serious events like civil unrest requires personal commitment from team leaders. It's important to complement any training efforts with frank and open discussion that serves to address the concerns of individual team members. Truly, the best possible outcomes can only be achieved when everyone is on board, comfortable with their role and clear that they have the support of the entire organization.

Conclusion

Civil unrest brings with it the threat of disruption, injury, property damage and more. Preparedness and a strong communication strategy are key in maintaining the safety of the organization's members and assets.

As we continually seek new ways of ensuring the safety and security of the people we work with, it is clear that employing technology and the professional knowledge of emergency responders can help build a safer environment for all.

History has taught us that events of civil unrest can quickly turn into explosive and violent situations. With inflation, political dissatisfaction, social tension and ongoing disruptions from a global pandemic all coming into play at the same time, the likelihood of protests is high. How we prepare for them and respond to them will not only serve to protect ourselves and others; it will provide valuable lessons in overall organizational safety, continuity and recovery.



Helpful Resources

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA):

https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/emergencypreparedness/gettingstarted_evacuation.html

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA):

<https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/News-and-Research/Resources/Fire-service/Responder-Forum/2015-NFPAresponders-forum-Civil-Unrest-Paper.ashx?la=en>

Department of Homeland Security:

<https://www.ready.gov/business/implementation/emergency>

Mass Notification Buyer's Guide

<https://4by9.short.gy/mnbg>

Guide to Effective Crisis Communications

<https://4by9.short.gy/GJ8pkj>

US Civil Unrest and Political Violence in 6 Charts:

<https://www.visionofhumanity.org/%F0%9F%87%BA%F0%9F%87%B8-the-us-political-violence-civil-unrest-in-6-charts/>

A dangerous new era of civil unrest is dawning in the United States and around the world:

<https://www.maplecroft.com/insights/analysis/>

[a-dangerous-new-era-of-civil-unrest-is-dawning-in-the-united-states-and-around-the-world/](https://www.maplecroft.com/insights/analysis/a-dangerous-new-era-of-civil-unrest-is-dawning-in-the-united-states-and-around-the-world/)

US Civil Unrest:

<https://disasterphilanthropy.org/disaster/u-s-civil-unrest/>

History of Civil Unrest in America: Capitol Hill Riot:

<https://online.maryville.edu/blog/civil-unrest-in-america/>

The Risk of Large-Scale Civil Unrest and Violence in the United States:

<https://www.beyondintractability.org/frontiers/risk-civil-unrest>

Three Keys to Managing Civil Unrest:

<https://www.hmpgloballearningnetwork.com/site/emsworld/article/1225573/three-keys-managing-civil-unrest>

Risk management Strategies for Civil Unrest and Rioting:

<https://m3ins.com/civil-unrest-and-rioting-business-preparation/>

Preparing for civil unrest: 12 tips for security leaders:

<https://www.jensenhughes.com/insights/preparing-for-civil-unrest-12-tips-for-security-leaders>



About Regroup Mass Notification

Since 2006, Regroup Mass Notification has provided a multi-channel, cloud-based mass communication platform used in emergency situations and routine business. Trusted by higher education, healthcare, enterprise and venues, Regroup provides a robust solution that is easy to use but reliable in times of crisis.

Our entire team is dedicated to continual improvement, finding solutions that work for our clients and keeping people safe, informed and productive.

We're here to help.

Learn More

regroup.com 855-REGROUP inquiries@regroup.com

Schedule A Demo

regroup.com/demo



References

1. <https://www.verisk.com/insurance/products/emerging-issues/perspectives/a-dangerous-new-era-of-civil-unrest-is-dawning-in-the-united-states-and-around-the-world/>
2. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/petersuciu/2021/11/10/threats-to-lawmakers-have-become-the-norm-on-social-media--should-the-platforms-take-responsibility/?sh=6384426461f1>
3. <https://www.nytimes.com/article/george-floyd-protests-timeline.html>
4. <https://www.chicagotribune.com/chi-insurance-civil-unrest-riots-bix-gfx-20141126-htmlstory.html>
5. <https://www.iii.org/fact-statistic/facts-statistics-civil-disorders>
6. <https://www.accenture.com/us-en/insights/security/cost-cybercrime-study>
7. <https://www.csoonline.com/article/3153707/top-cybersecurity-facts-figures-and-statistics.html>