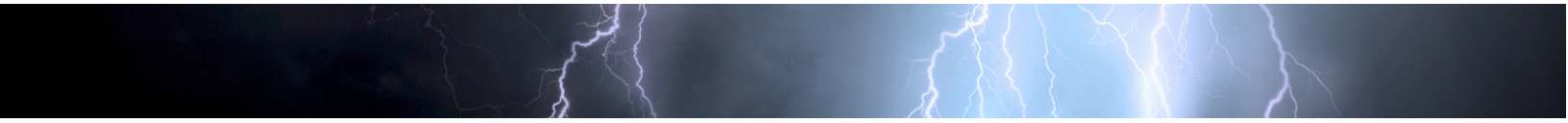


LEFT OF BOOM

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF CLINICAL SECURITY SOLUTIONS



HOPE FOR THE BEST, BUT PLAN FOR THE WORST

Preparing Your Organization for Protests and Civil Unrest

Failing to Plan is Planning to Fail - Benjamin Franklin

One of the foundational rights in our democracy is the right to protest peacefully. The First Amendment of the United States Constitution clearly guarantees “the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

As we have seen in recent years, those peaceful protests at times have **degenerated into illegal acts of civil disobedience, civil unrest, and dangerous and destructive riots**. Such acts of civil unrest and disorder can significantly adversely impact communities and businesses. As such, organizations should include provisions to address the risks associated with civil unrest in their crisis management plans.

Verisk Analytics is a multinational data analytics and risk assessment firm that publishes an annual Civil Unrest Index Projection. In the most recent edition of this publication, Verisk predicted that 75 countries, including the United States, will likely **see an increase in protests** by late 2022, resulting in a higher frequency of unrest and greater potential for damage to infrastructure and buildings.

Historically, the financial fallout from protests has been significant. As reported by Verisk:

- The Yellow Vest movement in France, protesting fuel prices and economic inequality cost local retailers an estimated \$1.1 billion in just a few weeks in 2018.
- In 2019, an increase in subway fares sparked large-scale protests in Chile resulting in massive property damage and an estimated \$3 billion in insured losses.
- In July 2021, protests fueled by economic and political tensions in South Africa caused property damage in excess of \$1.7 billion.
- This year, demonstrations against COVID-19 restrictions in Canada, France, and New Zealand have disrupted businesses, forcing many companies to curtail operations or take other precautions.
- The insurance industry has categorized the U.S. protests and riots from May to June 2020 as multi-state catastrophic events with damage estimates exceeding \$1 billion. The flight of businesses from the downtown areas of Portland, Oregon, and Seattle, Washington should serve as a cautionary tale for the risks associated with civil unrest and protracted, unaddressed criminal activity.

As we enter the fourth quarter of 2022, the United States faces an **increase in potential stressors** from political, economic, and social/legal issues. Chubb Insurance, in a recent analysis, assessed that the United States was at an elevated risk for civil unrest for the next 12 months



CONTINUED

Violence and Civil Unrest Risks - Political

Less than a month from now the United States will have **one of the more consequential midterm elections in recent history**. At stake is partisan control of Congress. Both the Senate and House leadership are up for grabs. More importantly, many other down-ballot positions such as state governors and state secretaries responsible for administering elections are also in play. These gubernatorial and Secretary of State elections will have a significant impact on the administration of the 2024 presidential election. According to an analysis by the Washington Post more than 300 individuals running for office in the midterm elections have **openly denied or questioned the results of the 2022 election**.

The political and social fabric of the nation remains tense and highly strained in the aftermath of the 2020 election and the January 6th assault on the United States Capitol. Several consequential criminal prosecutions related to these events are only now coming to fruition. The Department of Justice has charged several individuals with seditious conspiracy, and this trial is currently underway. Other criminal investigations regarding the events leading up to and following the 2020 election are soon to be concluded. It remains to be seen if anyone will be criminally charged following these investigations however the indictment and or arrest of significant political figures could lead to protests and violent acts like the January 6th assault on the Capital. Our political dialogue has become more polarized and vocal. Each side openly refers to the other as an existential threat to the American way of life and democracy. **Incendiary rhetoric has become the norm as each side labels the other with pejorative terms such as Nazi, socialist, fascist, communist, pedophile, groomer, and other extreme labels. Some of this rhetoric is clearly inflammatory and could be considered a form of stochastic terrorism.**

Stochastic Terrorism

"The public demonization of a person or group resulting in the incitement of a violent act, which is statistically probable but whose specifics cannot be predicted."

While some may dismiss this harsh rhetoric as simply the normal currency of today's political climate such inflammatory comments have the potential to inspire and escalate an individual already contemplating violence. Multiple acts of violence have been attributed to false information about the QAnon conspiracy movement.

In a recent interview, Senator Susan Collins (R-Maine), who has received death threats and had a window smashed at her home, said violent threats appear to be crossing over into actual violence. **"I wouldn't be surprised if a Senator or House member were killed,"** Collins told The New York Times. "What started with abusive phone calls is now translating into active threats of violence and real violence." U.S Representative Pramila Jayapal (D-Washington) was threatened in her home by an armed individual who camped out in front of her residence making death threats. The assault on or the assassination of a political figure will likely further inflame the political dialog and could result in additional violent acts or protests.

The United States Capitol Police, responsible for the security of members of Congress, recently opened two field offices, one in California and another in Florida, to investigate and respond to these escalated threats.



CONTINUED

Economic

After an extended bull market, many investors are seeing a **significant decline in their personal wealth**. Plunging 401K balances, rising mortgage rates, and inflation have all placed new and significant financial pressures on the population. Consumer stress remains high regarding reports of an impending recession. These economic factors and events loom large in the overheated political climate we are in. Multiple conspiracy theories, including QAnon, have claimed the global financial industry is controlled by “elites” and “unseen forces” seeking to subjugate large portions of the world population.

Social/Legal

Recent rulings by the U.S. Supreme Court regarding reproductive health and gun rights have elicited **strong public reactions and protests**. During their current term, the Supreme Court will likely rule on cases involving election law, congressional redistricting, and other high-interest topics.

Short-Term Forecast and Recommended Steps

In the months ahead, organizations may face increased risks during periods of public protests and social unrest, which can **threaten employees, disrupt operations, and damage property**. An organization should review crisis management plans and mitigate these risks by considering the following actions:

Maintain good situational awareness

- Social media has become the primary means to organize protest events quickly. Open-source social media monitoring is critical for organizations to detect and prepare for protest activity. Be prepared to adjust business operations, on short notice, due to last-minute or unexpected event-driven changes. Monitor local websites and news reports for changes in event scheduling, travel restrictions, or road closures.

Emphasize and prioritize employee safety and security

- Clear and open communication with employees is critical when organizations face the possibility of protests or civil unrest. Such communications should express concern for employee safety and welfare, promote good situational awareness, and provide clear and concise guidance to ensure employee and customer safety.
- Prepare to transition to work from home or safe, alternate worksites as needed.
- Urge employees to avoid areas where protests and riots may occur; promote virtual meetings where possible to avoid travel to these areas.
- Discourage employees from wearing clothing bearing your company's logo if your business is associated with industry sectors targeted by protestors. Employees should be cautioned not to wear company ID badges outside of the workplace. A cursory glance at the typical ID badge will reveal an employee's name, job title, and assigned department.
- Ensure all employees are familiar with the company's emergency and security plans.
- Ask employees to confirm or update their contact information to be easily reached.



CONTINUED

Protect Your Facilities

- Ask employees to remain alert for unusual activity at or near company facilities—and review response and reporting protocols.
- Test alarms, cameras, and fire protection systems.
- Ensure security personnel are fully briefed on the situation and the response plan.
- Have plan to secure points of entry and vulnerability.
- Remove flammable materials from the exterior of the building.

Plan for Business Continuity

- Develop or update your business continuity plan to help your company resume operations quickly after any disruptions caused by civil unrest or other events.
- Consider conducting a site-specific risk assessment for facilities that may be targeted by or in the vicinity of protest activity.
- Such assessments should consider 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 more vulnerable to the more radical elements of the protest
 - Review of the physical facility identifying critical points and vulnerable areas
 - Review of current mitigation and response plans to identify gaps and clarify uncertainties

We can help.

Our team of Certified Threat Managers® accredited by the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals must pass a rigorous certification exam to achieve this elite certification. Certified Threat Managers must meet stringent criteria to even be able to sit for the certification exam. Applicants must have a minimum of five years' experience conducting threat assessments and must pass a rigorous exam covering the following core competencies: Threat Assessment/Management Principles and Practices, Ethics, Criminal Law, Civil Law, Employment Law, Regulatory Law, Mental Health Risk Factors, Liability and Risk Management, Report writing and Interviewing. The goal of this certification is to elevate professional standards, enhance individual performance by identifying those who strive to be the "best in the business." Certified Threat Managers not only have a solid knowledge of the core competencies tested by a rigorous examination but are also committed to maintain currency on new trends, research, and public policies through formal continued education required to maintain their certification.