

Program Best Practices > Policy and Guidelines >

Protest Guide for Security Leaders

By the Security Executive Council

Across the United States, organizations have expressed concern about the potential for civil unrest in the wake of the U.S. Presidential election on November 3. Demonstrations have already dominated the 2020 landscape, and regardless of the election results, the potential exists for weeks of street demonstrations and protests that could cause business interruption or damage to organizations in high-risk areas. Now is the time to enact plans to manage demonstration-related risk.

Ensure your security organization is up to date on intelligence related to potential public disturbances. Reach out to public partners and other local organizations to collect and share information. Help your organization analyze its risk and take action in areas that may be impacted by civil unrest.

The following is an abbreviated version of one of many SEC resources on this topic available to Tier 1 security leaders. (For information about becoming a Tier 1, [click here](#).) Use this guide as a starting point to help your organization prepare.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY

- Ensure major incident contingency plans are up to date and rehearsed.
- Crisis team ready to operate at short notice or skeleton staffed in preparation.
- Maintain contact with police before, during and after protest. Consider possible advantage of offering police use of your facilities.
- Arrange for rubbish, debris and any substantial items that could be used as weapons or missiles to be removed the previous day.
- Have firefighting equipment (hoses, extinguishers, sand) checked and placed conveniently.

STAFF AND VISITORS

- Notify appropriate staff of potential disruption.
- Draw up a list of essential and non-essential staff.
- Designate entrances/exits to be used.
- Allow only essential visitors.
- Monitor impact of protest/disorder on public transport; may need to send staff home early or provide refreshment over prolonged period.
- Advise staff not to engage with protestors.

SECURITY PERSONNEL

- Identify tasks in advance, adjust staffing, and ensure that security staff are properly briefed, rehearsed and supervised.
- Be ready to record and log action by any intruders and your counteraction.
- Put out spotters with suitable communications to monitor progress of protest, action, and mood of demonstrators/participants.

MEDIA

- Be prepared for media interest before, during and after the event and have a media strategy.
- Nominate suitably qualified and senior representative to speak with the media, if required.

FACILITIES AND BUILDING PROTECTION

- Liaise and coordinate with other tenants (if a multi-occupancy building).
- Ensure recording systems are set and notify police of their existence.
- Obtain details of specialist cleaners for graffiti removal in advance.

We can help organizations build and maintain robust plans for crisis and event response. [Learn how the SEC can work with you to meet and manage risks and challenges.](#)

Visit the Security Executive Council web site to view more resources in the [Program Best Practices: Policy and Guidelines](#) series.

About the Security Executive Council

The SEC is the leading research and advisory firm focused on corporate security risk mitigation solutions. Having worked with hundreds of companies and organizations we have witnessed the proven practices that produce the most positive transformation. Our subject matter experts have deep expertise in all aspects of security risk mitigation strategy; they collaborate with security leaders to transform security programs into more capable and valued centers of excellence. Watch our [3-minute video](#) to learn more.

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