

Civil Unrest

Understanding the Risk

Civil unrest and riots with the potential for damage to property, theft and arson attacks can have severe financial implications to businesses and others organisations. The emergency services, in particular the police and the fire and rescue service, inevitably find themselves less able to respond to individual situations as their resources become stretched to deal with and contain the overall situation. This leaves organisations, including their staff and visitors vulnerable. It is important that the overall risk management procedures and protections adopted are reviewed and where necessary reinforced to minimise where possible the threat and consequences.

During periods of heightened risk, businesses and others organisations should take steps to review the following:

Security

- Site perimeter fencing and walls are in good order and gates locked.
- Vehicle security posts should be in working order and used.
- Security lighting fully operational.
- CCTV functioning, unblocked and recording.
- Intruder alarms (including personal attack facilities) fully functioning and set during unoccupancy.
- Perimeter doors are in good condition and locking devices fully functional and utilised.
- Windows – all opening ground floor and other accessible windows are adequately secured with key operated locks or permanently secured shut.
- Fixed window bars and grilles are adequately secured in place.
- Any internal or external shutters or removable grilles are fully operational and utilised. Consider maintaining these in place even during operational hours as incidents can quickly develop.
- Where the location is considered to be vulnerable, consideration should be given to temporarily boarding up vulnerable windows or doors taking into account the need for emergency exits in the event of fire.
- Manned security guarding presence should be considered where not already utilised or hours of coverage and personnel increased if already in place.



Fire

- Sprinkler systems should be checked to ensure they are fully operational and valve-sets secured in the open position.
- Other automatic fire suppression systems should be checked and fully operational.
- Automatic and manual fire alarms fully operational.
- Fire extinguishers and hose-reels should be checked to ensure they are ready for use and have been maintained. Staff must be instructed and trained in their correct use.

Storage

High valued items of contents or stock are particularly vulnerable and where possible the following should be considered:

- Arrange for storage at a less vulnerable location.
- Place items in an internal secure room or where practical in a security safe.
- Remove window stock.
- Flammable and combustible liquids should be kept to a minimum and stored in a secure area.
- Cash should be removed from the premises overnight if safe to do so.

External storage of stock should be avoided.

Vehicles should not be parked in yards or close proximity to buildings in high risk areas. Where possible any vehicles under your control should not be parked in areas where there is unrest.

Management

Where there are external portable features that could be used to break windows etc, such as planters and signage, these should be removed and stored internally.

To reduce the risk of an arson attack, external combustibles such as waste in wheelie bins should be managed and kept to a minimum and where practical stored inside during periods of potential unrest.

The emergency plan and business continuity plan should be reviewed and updated where necessary. Emergency procedures should be communicated to all staff.

As part of the business continuity arrangements, it should be ensured that all computer data is backed up and removed from the premises daily.

References

AIG RiskFix documents:
Business Continuity Planning & Testing
Security - various
Unoccupied Premises
Risk Assessment and Self Inspection
Automatic Fire Detection
Automatic Sprinklers
Sprinkler Impairments
Portable Fire Extinguishers
Emergency Organisation
Arson Control

For further information please contact your
AIG risk engineer

www.aig.co.uk

BELFAST

Forsyth House
Cromac Square
Belfast BT2 8LA
Tel: 02890 726002
Fax: 02890 726085

CROYDON

2-8 Altyre Road
Croydon, Surrey CR9 2LG
Tel: 020 8681 2556
Fax: 020 8680 7158

LEEDS

5th Floor Gallery House
123-131 The Headrow
Leeds LS1 5RD
Tel: 0113 242 1177
Fax: 0113 242 1746

MANCHESTER

4th Floor, 201 Deansgate
Manchester M3 3NW
Tel: 0161 832 8521
Fax: 0161 832 0149

BIRMINGHAM

Embassy House
60 Church Street
Birmingham B3 2DJ
Tel: 0121 236 9471
Fax: 0121 233 3597

GLASGOW

Centenary House
69 Wellington Street
Glasgow G2 6HJ
Tel: 0141 303 4400
Fax: 0141 303 4440

LONDON

58 Fenchurch Street
London EC3M 4AB
Tel: 020 7954 7000
Fax: 020 7954 7001

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