CIVIL UNREST/RIOT

The spontaneous disruption of normal, orderly conduct and activities in urban areas, or the outbreak of rioting or violence that is of a large nature, is referred to as civil unrest. Civil unrest can be spurred by specific events, such as large sporting events or criminal trials, or can be the result of long-term disfavor with authority. Civil unrest is usually distinguished by the fact that normal on-duty police and safety forces cannot adequately deal with the situation until additional resources can be acquired. This is the time period when civil unrest can grow to large proportions.

The threat to law enforcement and safety personnel can be severe and bold in nature. Securing of essential facilities and services is necessary. Looting and fires can take place as a result of perceived or actual non-intervention by authorities.

The various agencies that are tasked with providing emergency response services within their respective jurisdictions are very adept at dealing with ordinary or routine emergency incidents. There are, however, incidents and circumstances that, by their very nature, exceed the ability and capacity of a single jurisdiction to handle the situation. When this occurs, a request for additional resources is initiated and is accommodated through mutual aid agreements. Incidents, whether they are natural, e.g., flooding, earthquakes, etc., or civil disturbances that occur simultaneously in a widespread manner affecting multiple jurisdictions, require a greater degree of coordination and organization. Active participation in Unified Command (UC) and ICS, as adopted by SEMS, is essential if a coordinated effort is to be initiated and maintained.

During an episode of civil unrest, available resources and equipment may be allocated and reallocated based on changing conditions and priorities. This process alone mandates participation by all entities within the OA. In ICS, UC is a united team effort that allows all agencies that have responsibility for the incident, either jurisdictional or functional, to jointly provide management direction to an incident through a common set of incident objectives and strategies established at the command level. This is accomplished without losing or abdicating agency authority, responsibility, or accountability. Each agency is fully aware of the plans and actions of all others, and the combined efforts of all agencies are optimized as they perform their respective assignments.

In Orange County, civil disturbances may be precipitated or manifested in a number of different ways, as follows:

- Spontaneous reactions to verdicts in high-profile trials (retaliation or celebration)
- Spontaneous reactions to organized sporting event outcomes
- Organized reactions or demonstrations
- Targeting of public facilities
- Targeting of private highly visible establishments
- Local population demonstrations
- Transient population demonstrations
- Hit and run tactics

- Diversion tactics masking other motives
- Indiscriminate acts of arson and vandalism

While the motivation behind the unrest may be known, the extent and type of activity that will occur is less certain. The potential for widespread acts of multiple disturbances or violence is very real. The fact that these types of operations are labor intensive amplifies the need for preplanning and aggressive organizational techniques.

Additionally, terrorists could use the chaotic activity of civil unrest, either spontaneous or planned, to provide misdirection and camouflage their intent.

Southern California has faced civil unrest in various forms since the Watts Riots of 1964. Recent events include the extensive unrest that occurred in response to the 1992 "Rodney King" verdict, which resulted in approximately 50 deaths, more than 2,000 injuries, 9,000 arrests for riot activity, and \$735 million in property damage within the County of Los Angeles.

The entire County, including residential, industrial, and commercial properties, is vulnerable to the effects of civil unrest.