



# **4.14** CIVIL UNREST

## SECTION 4.14 CIVIL UNREST

### 4.14-1 HAZARD OVERVIEW

Civil disturbance is a broad term that is typically used by law enforcement to describe one or more forms of disturbance caused by a group of people. Civil disturbance is typically a symptom of, and a form of protest against, major socio-political problems. Typically, the severity of the action coincides with the level of public outrage. In addition to a form of protest against major socio-political problems, civil disturbances can also arise out of union protest, institutional population uprising, or from large celebrations that become disorderly ([U.S. Army, 2005](#)).

Civil disturbances can take the form of small gatherings or large groups blocking or impeding access to a building or disrupting normal activities by generating noise and intimidating people. Demonstrations can range from a peaceful sit-in to a full-scale riot, in which a mob burns or otherwise destroys property and terrorizes individuals. Even in its more passive forms, a group that blocks roadways, sidewalks, or buildings interferes with public order. Often protests intended to be a peaceful demonstration to the public and the government can escalate into general chaos.

There are two types of large gatherings typically associated with civil disturbances: a crowd and a mob. A crowd may be defined as a casual, temporary collection of people without a strong, cohesive relationship. Crowds can be classified into the following four categories ([Blumer, 1969](#)):

- **Casual Crowd:** A casual crowd is a group of people who happen to be in the same place at the same time. Violent conduct does not occur.
- **Cohesive Crowd:** A cohesive crowd consists of members who are involved in some type of unified behavior. Members of this group are involved in some type of common activity, such as worshipping, dancing, or watching a sporting event. Members of these crowds may have intense internal discipline and require substantial provocation to arouse to action.
- **Expressive Crowd:** An expressive crowd is one held together by a common commitment or purpose. They may not be formally organized and are assembled as an expression of common sentiment or frustration. Members wish to be seen as a formidable influence. One of the best examples of this type is a group assembled to protest.
- **Aggressive Crowd:** An aggressive crowd is composed of individuals who have assembled for a specific purpose. This crowd often has leaders who attempt to arouse the members or motivate them to action. Members are noisy and threatening and will taunt authorities. They may be more impulsive and emotional and require only minimal stimulation to arouse violence. Examples of this type of crowd could include demonstrators and strikers, though not all demonstrators and strikers are aggressive.

A mob can be defined as a large disorderly crowd or throng. Mobs are usually emotional, loud, tumultuous, violent, and lawless. Similar to crowds, mobs have different levels of commitment, and can be classified into the following four categories ([Alvarez and Bachman, 2007](#)):

- **Aggressive Mob:** An aggressive mob is one that attacks, riots, and terrorizes. The object of violence may be a person, property, or both. An aggressive mob is distinguished from an aggressive crowd only by lawless activity. Examples of aggressive mobs are the inmate mobs in prisons and jails, mobs that act out their frustrations after political defeat, or violent mobs at political protests or rallies.
- **Escape Mob:** An escape mob is attempting to flee from something such as a fire, bomb, flood, or other catastrophe. Members of escape mobs are generally difficult to control and can be characterized by unreasoning terror.
- **Acquisitive Mob:** An acquisitive mob is one motivated by a desire to acquire something. Riots caused by other factors often turn into looting sprees. This mob exploits an authority's lack of control in safeguarding property.
- **Expressive Mob:** An expressive mob is one that expresses fervor or revelry following some sporting event, religious activity, or celebration. Members experience a release of pent-up emotions in highly charged situations.

Civil unrest and disturbances affect the following factions of society:

- **The Public:** The general population could serve as participants or targets in actions of civil unrest. Wide spread unrest could cause fear amongst the populace and cause them to be absent from school or work activities. During an event, bystanders may be harmed because of the activities of participants.
- **Responders:** Responses to civil unrest events are generally handled at the local level. In a large event, the resources of a local jurisdiction may be exceeded. In this instance, State resources would be activated to fill the need. During an event responder may become targets, which could hamper their effectiveness.
- **Continuity of Operations, including delivery of services:** The outbreak of widespread rioting or looting could have potential impact on the State's ability to provide services and conduct its normal operations. Protesters could occupy government buildings and interrupt the normal functions of government, or targeted attacks on government facilities could interrupt operations entirely.
- **Property:** Private property often serves as a target in instances of civil unrest. Businesses can be targeted for looting or vandalism. If an event is particularly large, damage could reach millions of dollars and recovery could take years.
- **Facilities:** Often in acts of civil unrest government facilities become the focal point of protests or targets for vandalism. Damage suffered during an event or the inability of a worker to enter a facility may greatly reduce a facility's effective capacity or close it completely.
- **Infrastructure:** Similar to government facilities, public and private infrastructure can become targets of civil unrest. Damage to transportation, communications, or utilities infrastructure could further exacerbate the situation.
- **Environment:** Normally, instance of civil unrest will have a minimal impact on the environment. However, if petroleum or other chemical facilities were a target for vandalism or large-scale fires occurred, the impact on the environment could be significant.
- **Economic Condition of the State:** Civil unrest could prove economically crippling to the State of New Jersey. Large-scale events are usually accompanied by wide-spread absenteeism and damage to private property.
- **Public Confidence in the State's Governance:** If an event becomes prolonged or is perceived to be mismanaged, it could greatly decrease public confidence in the governance of the State. If the response is seen to be inadequate, individuals may attempt to protect their property by their own means and further degrade the situation.

In the State of New Jersey, a municipality in which a civil disorder occurs bears the first and primary responsibility to control the disturbance. Civil unrest that remains uncontrolled warrants local mutual aid from neighboring municipal and/or county resources. If the civil unrest remains beyond the capabilities of local law enforcement agencies alone, limited State Police assistance may be requested. If the restoration of law and order is beyond local, county and state abilities, the Governor may declare a State of Emergency calling on federal support such as the New Jersey National Guard to restore order (NJ HMP, 2011). The NJ Attorney General is the state's chief law enforcement officer.

The purpose of the New Jersey Emergency Support Function (ESF) #13 is to provide for the coordination of statewide law enforcement resources to maintain law and order and to support the full range of incident response activities requiring a state response. This includes threat or pre-incident as well as post incident situations (NJ HMP, 2011). New Jersey ESF #13 generally is activated in situations requiring extensive assistance to provide public safety and security and where local government resources are overwhelmed or are inadequate, or in unique situations that require protective solutions or capabilities unique to the State (NJ HMP 2011).

## 4.14-2 LOCATION, EXTENT, AND MAGNITUDE

### Location

Government facilities, landmarks, prisons, and universities are common sites where crowds and mobs may gather. The concentration of buildings in and density of northeastern New Jersey, and State government buildings in Trenton may be targets of civil disturbance. New Jersey also has correctional facilities, treatment units, and youth development centers, as well as federal prison facilities and local and private facilities throughout the State that may be targets for civil unrest.

## Extent and Magnitude

The magnitude or severity of a civil unrest situation coincides with the level of public outrage. They can take the form of small gatherings or large groups blocking access to buildings or disrupting normal activities. Civil unrest situations can also be peaceful sit-ins or a full-scale riot.

### 4.14-3 PREVIOUS OCCURRENCES AND LOSSES

#### *1913 Paterson Silk Strike*

A significant civil disorder incident occurred during a six-month long strike that involved silk mill workers in Paterson, New Jersey. The strike began on March 3, 1913. During the course of the strike, approximately 1,850 strikers were arrested. Ultimately, the strike ended in failure on July 8, 1913. Scholars cite an important reason for this failure as Paterson’s necessary adaptation to the new machinery and new economics of the silk industry. Manufacturers would not acquiesce to the demands of strikers because they simply could not. Without producing goods at competitive prices through new machinery and cheap labor, they would be put out of business by firms in other states.

#### *1967 Newark Riots*

The worst civil disturbance incident to occur in New Jersey happened in 1967 in Newark. The event was fueled by police brutality, political exclusion of African Americans, urban renewal, inadequate housing, unemployment, and poverty.

In an article published by Rutgers University it is described that the Newark Riot of 1967 began with the arrest of a cab driver named John Smith, who allegedly drove around a double-parked police car at the corner of 7th Street and 15th Avenue. He was subsequently stopped, interrogated, arrested, and transported to the 4th precinct headquarters. During that time, he was severely beaten by the arresting officers. As news of the arrest spread, a crowd began to assemble in front of the precinct house, located directly across from a high-rise public housing project. When the police allowed a small group of civil rights leaders to visit the prisoner, they demanded that Mr. Smith be taken to a hospital. Emerging from the building, these civil rights leaders begged the crowd to stay calm, but were shouted down. Rumor spread that John Smith had died in police custody, despite the fact he had been taken out the back entrance and transported to a local hospital. Soon a volley of bricks and bottles was launched at the precinct house and police stormed out to confront the assembly. As the crowd dispersed, they began to break into stores on the nearby commercial thoroughfares. Eventually, violence spread from the predominantly black neighborhoods of Newark’s Central Ward to Downtown Newark, and the New Jersey State Police were mobilized. Within 48 hours, National Guard troops entered the city. With the arrival of these troops, the level of violence intensified. At the conclusion of 6 days of rioting, 26 people were dead, an estimated 725 people were injured, and close to 1,500 people had been arrested.

#### *Other Disturbances*

Hundreds of peaceful protests surrounding nationwide concern regarding police brutality occurred in many municipalities across New Jersey after the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, MN in May 2020. Demonstrations took place in Atlantic, Bergen, Essex, Gloucester, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Somerset, and Union counties according to news outlets (nj.com, 2020). These demonstrations were peaceful and did not result in violence in the state. These were smaller protests compared to events around the nation; while there was no violence in New Jersey, there was some violence and property damage as a result of unrest around the nation at this time.

Table 4.14-1 outlines Paterson, Newark, and other civil disturbances affecting New Jersey. Figure 4.14-1 shows the geographic locations of the previous instances of civil unrest. FEMA has made no presidential disaster declarations related to civil unrest.

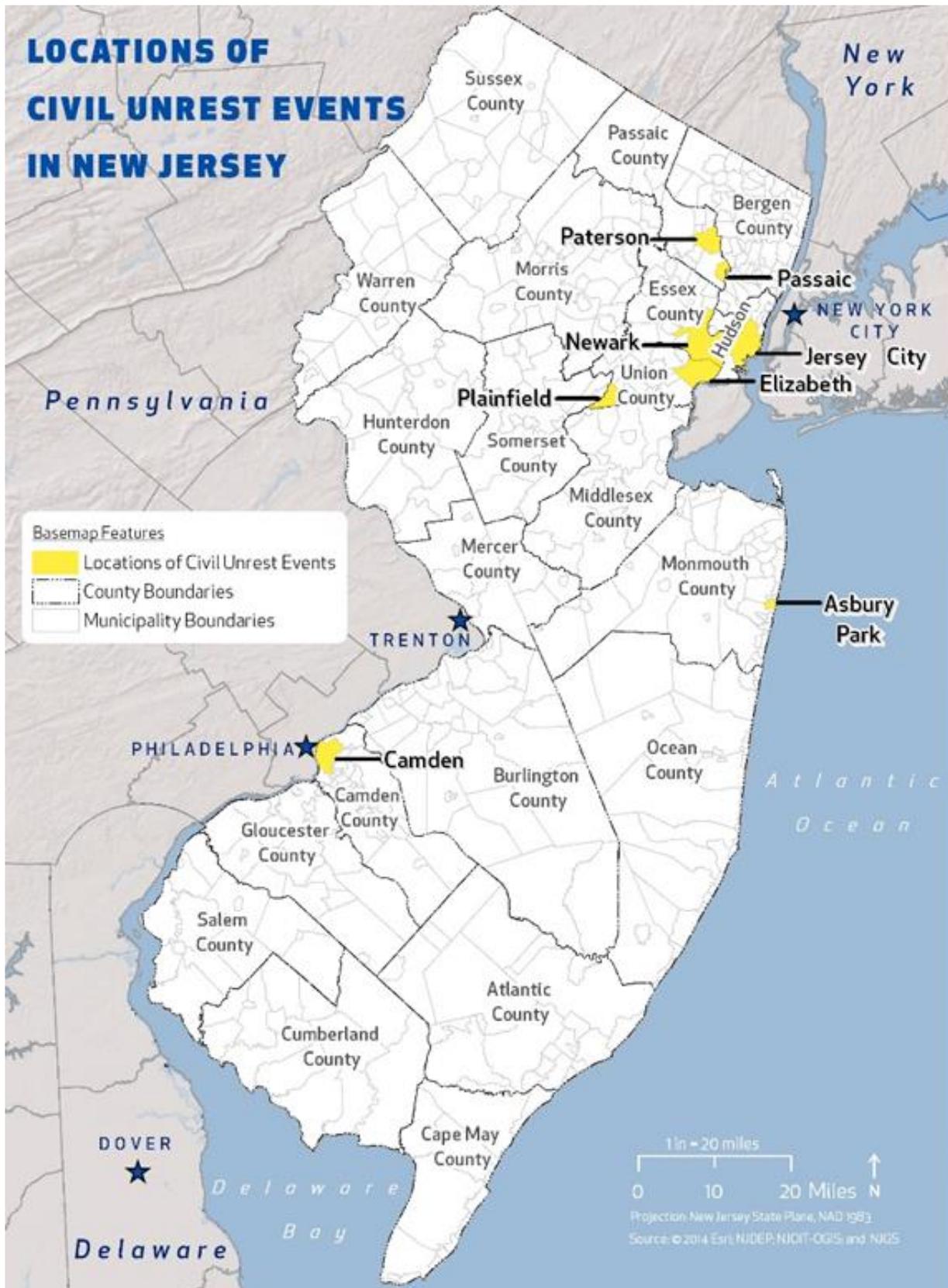
**Table 4.14-1 Civil Unrest Incidents in New Jersey**

Date(s) of Event	Disturbance Name	Description
February 1 to July 28, 1913	Paterson Silk Strike	The 1913 Paterson silk strike was a work stoppage involving silk mill workers in Paterson, New Jersey. The strike involved demands for establishment of an eight-hour day and improved working conditions.

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Date(s) of Event	Disturbance Name	Description
August 2-4, 1964	Jersey City Race Riot	From August 2 to 4, 1964, Jersey City, New Jersey, was the site of one of the first race riots to occur after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The New York Times reported that the race riot in Jersey City was instigated by the arrest of a black woman on a disorderly conduct charge. Initial estimates attributed the demonstrations of the first night to some 800 African Americans who were looting, throwing rocks and stones at cars, and attempting to pull people out of the cars.
August 11-13, 1964	Paterson Riots	No description available
August 11-13, 1964	Elizabeth Riots	No description available
July 12 -17, 1967	Newark Riots	The 1967 Newark riots were a major civil disturbance that occurred in the city of Newark, New Jersey between July 12, and July 17, 1967. The 6 days of rioting, looting, and destruction left 26 dead and hundreds injured.
July 14-21, 1967	Plainfield Riots	The Plainfield Riots were a series of racially charged violent disturbances that occurred in Plainfield, New Jersey during the summer of 1967, which mirrored the 1967 Newark riots in nearby Newark, New Jersey.
8/3/1969	Passaic Disorder	No description available
7/9/1970	Asbury Park Riots	The riot was caused by several black teenagers who apparently were unable to secure summer jobs in Asbury Park. The trouble started when a group of young people started breaking some windows after a youth dance at the West Side Community Center on the night of July 4. The violence increased in intensity and scope over the course of the next 7 nights. While extensive and far reaching, the rioting and damage was essentially limited to the major entertainment, business, and retail district of the Springwood Avenue, on the west side of Main Street. Before it was all over, there would be over \$4 million in property damage, 167 arrests, 165 injured, 15 police injured, and countless numbers of families made homeless.
8/1/1971	Camden Riots	Sections of downtown Camden were looted and torched after racial riots occurred following the beating and death of a Puerto Rican motorist by city police in August 1971.

Figure 4.14-1 Locations of Civil Unrest in New Jersey



## 4.14-4 PROBABILITY OF FUTURE OCCURRENCES

While the probability of future civil unrest incidents is difficult to predict, given past occurrences and significance of New Jersey and its communities, civil unrest incidents are possible. As discussed in Section 4.14-2 Location, Extent, and Magnitude above, areas that are important to the State, region, and greater United States may be targets for civil unrest. These areas include universities, landmarks, prisons, major industrial facilities, and others similar in nature. It is also worth noting that while the last major civil disturbance in New Jersey occurred in the 1970s, it is still possible for a future event to occur. Societal trends and emerging social issues should be watched closely as these types of issues have led to instances in the past.

### Potential Effects of Climate Change

While civil unrest is a human-caused hazard, civil unrest may arise in response to changing climate conditions and public policy. Research into the connection between climate change and civil unrest is ongoing: not enough to make a definitive statement on their connection, but not little enough to ignore a possible connection.

## 4.14-5 VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT

The following discusses New Jersey's vulnerability, in a qualitative nature, to the civil unrest hazard. A consequence analysis for this hazard was also conducted and presented in Section 10.0: EMAP. Impacts on the public, responders, continuity of operations, and delivery of services; property, facilities, and infrastructure; the environment, economic condition of the State, and the public confidence in the State's governance is discussed in Section 10.0: EMAP in accordance with Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) standards. This section addresses assessing vulnerability and estimating potential losses by jurisdiction and to State facilities.

### Built Environment

State-owned facilities are often targets of civil disturbances, and thus are vulnerable to the effects of these incidents. These facilities may become the focus of civil disturbances depending on the causes of the disturbance. Particularly vulnerable is the City of Trenton in Mercer County, given its concentration of State buildings and its role as the capital of the State. These facilities are vulnerable and may be damaged or destroyed depending on the nature of the disturbance. Additionally, buildings at State-owned colleges and universities are vulnerable to civil unrest, such as the Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey campus.

Like State facilities, critical facilities may be targets for civil unrest disturbances. Refer to Table 4.1-9 and Table 4.1-10 in Section 4.1: Risk Assessment Overview, which lists the replacement cost value of each State-owned and leased building. Disruptions to critical facilities may have cascading secondary effects such as power outages and utility failure. Because these facilities are vulnerable to civil unrest and, like State-owned facilities, may be a focal point during a protest, these facilities will need to be protected during incidents.

New Jersey has one of the most culturally diverse and dynamic populations in the United States. As the State continues to develop, there will always be cultural and societal shifts both geographically as well as socially. It is difficult to quantify the potential losses to State facilities because of the unpredictability of civil disturbances and their duration. The replacement cost value for the State facilities provides a total risk exposure.

### Population and Economy

For the purposes of measuring exposure, the entire population of the State is exposed to the civil unrest hazard. Those that live in densely populated areas, those living near colleges/universities, correctional facilities, landmarks, and other areas of significance may have a higher exposure and are thus more vulnerable to the effects of civil unrest. Section 3 discussed population density in New Jersey.

Historic records indicate that Camden, Essex, Hudson, Monmouth, Passaic, and Union Counties have been targets of civil disturbance. Almost all of the major instances of civil unrest took place in the late 1960s and early 1970s. These types of instances were common throughout the United States during this specific time period. There is also an evident correlation with

the instances of civil unrest and higher population density in larger cities, as was the case for almost all of the places where these instances took place.

Measuring the economic impact of civil unrest in the state is difficult. Elements that contribute to this are the volatility of the nature of civil disturbances, and the uncertainty of the duration of an incident. The local and State economies may be affected by a civil disturbance, as was the case during the Asbury Park Riots, which targeted the business sector in the community during the peak of tourist season. For the purposes of this assessment, the entire New Jersey economy is considered exposed to the effects of civil disturbances. Should a large-scale civil unrest incident occur, the economy of New Jersey will be affected and is therefore vulnerable. For example, a prolonged strike will affect production and tax revenues in the state. Also, if a widespread riot occurred it, would interrupt daily commerce, thus affecting the economy.

The limited number of instances of civil unrests within the state has only shown one clear and consistent similarity, which is that each instance occurred in large, densely populated cities. However as indicated above, the causes of civil unrest are too dynamic and too inconsistent to quantify in a meaningful manner.

## Ecosystems and Natural Assets

Normally, instance of civil unrest will have a minimum impact on the environment. However, if petroleum or other chemical facilities were a target for vandalism or large-scale fires occurred, the impact on the environment could be significant (NJ State HMP, 2011).

## Impact Analysis

### *Severity and Warning Time*

Civil unrest and civil disturbances can range from minor to significant events that can disrupt the functioning of a community for weeks or months. A worst case-scenario for a civil disturbance would be an incident that takes place in a large urban environment and lasts for an extended period of time. An example of a worst-case scenario was the 1967 Newark Race Riots, which significantly impacted the city and led to numerous fatalities and injuries.

Civil unrest and riots can be much worse than the 1967 Newark incident. The worst riot to occur in the United States took place in Los Angeles in 1992. The riot was first started in South Los Angeles and then eventually spread out into other areas over a 6-day period within the Los Angeles metropolitan area in California in April 1992. The riots started on April 29 after a trial jury acquitted four Los Angeles Police Department officers of assault and use of excessive force. The mostly white officers were videotaped beating an African American named Rodney King following a high-speed police pursuit. Thousands of people throughout the metropolitan area in Los Angeles rioted over 6 days following the announcement of the verdict (Clark, 1992).

Widespread looting, assault, arson, and murder occurred during the riots, and estimates of property damage topped \$1 billion. The rioting ended after soldiers from the California Army National Guard, along with U.S. Marines from Camp Pendleton were called in to stop the rioting after the local police could not handle the situation. In total, 53 people were killed during the riots and over 2,000 people were injured (Wilson, 2012). Civil disturbances often occur with little to no warning; however, certain events may trigger riots. As demonstrated in the Section 4.14-3 Past Occurrences and Losses and discussions regarding severity, riots can occur as a result of controversial court rulings, unfair working conditions, or general unrest. Riots can also be triggered as a result of favorable or unfavorable sports outcomes. Thus, generally there will be a certain degree of warning time that a riot may occur; however, achieving certainty that an incident is imminent is not possible.

### *Secondary Hazards*

Civil unrest can result in numerous secondary hazards. Depending on the size and scope of the incident, civil unrest may lead to widespread urban fire, utility failure, transportation interruption, and environmental hazards. The most significant impact of civil unrest is the secondary hazard of interruption of continuity of government, which can also lead to several of the aforementioned secondary hazards. The extent of secondary hazards will vary significantly based on the extent and nature of the civil unrest.