



## IAFC Terrorism and Homeland Security Committee

### Civil Unrest Lessons Learned

- Ensure communications with police, both strategic and operational, using multiple tac channels.
  - Consider encryption; the use of scanner apps by protestors may inhibit effective response or result in negative impacts to first responders.
- Maintain situational Awareness/Overwatch Teams at all times. These are fluid situations that can change quickly and at any time.
- Operations Centers and/or the Incident Commander should be monitoring social media live streams for up to date intel and help make operational decisions.
- Task force concept versus strike teams: evaluate using Quick Reaction Force (QRF) Teams instead. Smaller teams move more quickly, deploy more rapidly, and are nimble.
- Vehicle preparation; removing tools, no sirens. Lockable compartments, etc.
- Work with LE to maximize the use of surveillance camera reconnaissance. Know what you are heading into.
  - Consider predesignated rally points for Fire and LE in case the situation turns dangerous for first responders.
  - Identify escape routes prior to entering the warm and hot zones.

- Stress to crews, they have permission to leave a hostile environment. Crews seemed reluctant to acknowledge the need to 'run away.'
  - Define the hot, warm, and cold zones and communicate when they expand or contract.
- Commander on the ground has to make the decisions.
- Battalion Chief/Shift Commander should pair up with a partner if they do not have an assigned driver due to workload if staffing permits.
- Assign tactical medics to LE and assign LE to Rescue Task Forces (RTF's).
  - Make sure LE escorts stay with RTF's at all times.
  - Imbed LE with RTF's in staging if possible.
- Coordinate resources and needs across zones/regions/county. Stand up a resource coordinator in the EOC as soon as possible.
- Unified Command and Unified Operations sections are a must for coordinated communication to carry out operations.
- Utilize private ambulance for transport when possible to conserve fire/ems resources.
- Have an ICS 208/Safety plan and a safety briefing.
- If a fire station is in the middle of the epicenter, determine if crews need to lock it down and relocate.
- Consider LEO presence at stations where unrest may occur or leverage fire personnel (Arson/Homeland/Internal Affairs) that are LEO certified and armed to secure location.
- Consider Mobile Field Force Extrication and Mobile Field Force Extrication Command Training for members of the department to include officers and chief officers for Command Training (CBP-Anniston, Alabama).
- Leverage fusion centers for intel.
- Offer department drones and drone pilots to partner with LE.
- Limit unnecessary movement of field ops personnel when in "Alert Mode."

- Designate a department call back list early.
- Plan to adjust shift times to ensure seamless personnel change for safe and uninterrupted field operations.
- Incident Command/EOC teams should be 3-4 teams deep to ensure uninterrupted command operations and personnel change during extended operations.
- Contact neighboring departments early for possible mutual aid support.
- Neighboring departments willing to support should know their roles if called and be trained.
- Fire suppression systems are key to hold fires in check in multiple occupancies during civil unrest, which allows for controlled, reduced responses to these buildings to maximize the use of resources.

## **Lessons Learned for Longer Sustained Civil Unrest Events**

- Leadership must have a presence in the event's aspects, whether in the community, stations or on scene.
- Agencies must be flexible and able to adjust policies, dispatch protocols, daily operations as needed.
- Organizational updates are critical to keeping everyone in the loop and need to go out on multiple platforms including, written, verbal, and electronic.
- Work on developing relationships with the leaders from the community and the protestors.
- Meet with Protest Medics to gain knowledge of their capabilities and predesignate CCPs if support from fire/EMS may be needed.
- Acknowledge and communicate with the community's impacted residents or businesses to make sure you are still meeting their needs.
- Your PIO is key in monitoring communication, especially social media, and needs to keep you up to date, so the narrative does not get out of control.