Riots and Civil Unrest

In light of the recent events and threats of public disorder in cities across the UK, customers with premises located in areas that may be at risk are strongly advised to evaluate and implement measures to:

➢ Safeguard their employees.

➢ Reduce potential damage.

➢ Minimise disruption to their property and operations.

Civil unrest can occur and escalate quickly, with very little warning and in any location. It can have a hugely negative effect on an organisation and its people, and some businesses have found it hard to recover from the consequences. There's not much that a single organisation can do to stop or fix civil unrest. This is why it's vital to give adequate consideration and preparation to ensure that businesses and their locations are as resilient as they can be.

Below are some practical tips and guidance to help you to ensure that you are as well prepared as possible for any event of riot or civil unrest.

Initial Considerations & Planning

➢ Ensure adequate insurance cover is in place.

➢ Liaise with the police for the most up-to-date intelligence information.

➢ Carry out a security assessment / audit to ensure that premises are adequately protected and identify any potential vulnerabilities. Focus on publicly accessible areas at ground floor and basement level. Make sure to pay attention to high windows, emergency exits, and roof lights. These could be reachable because of things like outside fire escape stairs, scaffolding, and the roofs of nearby buildings.

➢ Consider your neighbours and other tenants/occupiers of your buildings – are they a potential target for protesters, thus adding risk to your own business?

➢ Review existing response and contingency plans, especially in the event of damage to IT or communication systems. Ensure that the plan(s) also suitably consider denial of access to the site for a prolonged period. Such as due to significant damage or an unsafe environment.

- Clearly determine what factors will trigger implementation of your contingency plan(s).

- Ensure that communications/escalation paths are up to date and that staff emergency contact details are current.

- Ensure that clear communication is maintained with staff throughout the incident to ensure they are fully aware of developments. Consider how communication can be maintained if telecommunications systems / networks are disrupted.

- Ensure all staff are aware of emergency evacuation and relocation procedures. These may need to be revised or modified to ensure that, if required, staff are not evacuated into a hostile or dangerous environment. These should be tested before known protest dates if possible.

- Staff may need to remain in the building for an extended time if it's unsafe to leave or if travel disruptions prevent them from getting home. It's important that plans take this into account.

- Ensure that measures are in place to rapidly secure the building in the event of building damage, and for emergency repairs, boarding-up, cleaning-up operations etc.

- Appreciate that rioters may use a variety of means to attack premises. It is therefore vital to ensure that security and contingency plans are constantly reviewed to address emerging threats.

Reduce Risks

- If possible, allow or encourage staff to work from home during the period of potential disruption.

- Brief all staff on how to minimise opportunities for confrontation. Discourage doorstep cigarette breaks, avoid lunching out, walk away from provocation, etc. Furthermore, staff should be encouraged to report suspicious activity immediately to their managers.

- Request that staff avoid wearing or displaying branded items of clothing or material as protesters may be targeting the business.

- Keep external areas clear of combustible materials or waste to reduce the risk of arson.

- Control access at the building perimeter, rather than at a reception desk or foyer that is within the building. Main entrances should be permanently manned by appropriate personnel who can quickly secure the entrance if needed. It may be appropriate for entrances to be locked and only opened for validated staff or visitors.

- Avoid leaving or parking any vehicle in 'hot spot' areas to minimise the risk of malicious damage.

- Remove any external items or street furniture that are not securely fixed in position. Such items can easily be utilised as missiles or weapons. Similarly, any unfixed elements of scaffolding should be removed.

- Where practical and safe to do so, request that scaffolding is removed from the building as this can be used as missiles to attack properties (even when assembled)

- Remove valuable and thief-attractive stock from shop display windows to a secure internal storeroom.

- Remove high value or sentimental items and store these off-site in locations not subject to riot or civil unrest. Alternatively, a secure internal storeroom on site.

Enhance Security

- Heighten general site surveillance throughout the period of disorder. Maximise the use (and monitoring) of video surveillance systems.

- Increase the visible security presence on site and undertake frequent patrols to ensure the integrity of the premises is maintained. Vary patrol routes and frequency rather than follow a predictable routine.

- Implement anti-climbing measures on any areas or structures that may allow access to upper sections of the building i.e. scaffolding, external fire escapes etc.

- If the premises are considered to be an increased target, either due to location, occupancy or past experience, then consideration should be given to the boarding up of vulnerable windows and doors.

- Tighten authorisation and access control measures for visitors and contractors.

- Temporarily reduce the number of operational entrances and exits, if safe to do so from an emergency evacuation perspective, so as to provide greater control over access to the building.

- Implement suitable arrangements to ensure that all operational access points can be rapidly secured at short notice.

- ➢ Restrict deliveries to a minimum and reschedule wherever possible, including the transportation of any money or valuables i.e. takings to the bank.

- ➢ Ensure that the premises are fully secured whenever unoccupied. All physical locking security should be engaged and other protective features or systems fully utilised and operational i.e. intruder and fire alarms as well as remote monitoring facilities.

- ➢ If buildings are going to be empty for a long time, turn off any machinery and equipment that isn't needed. Also, if it's safe and possible, utility providers like gas, water, and electricity should be shut off. However, security and fire protection systems should remain fully operational.

- ➢ Vacant buildings should also be inspected regularly, when safe to do so.

Further Advice

For further advice and guidance please contact your any member of your RSA Servicing Team or visit

www.rsainsurance.co.uk/why-rsa/risk-consulting