



# Best Practices for Protecting your Jobsite from a Protest that may turn Violent

When building a construction project, one of the last things we may plan for or expect is a peaceful protest turning violent near our Jobsite. It is essential today, more than ever, to pay special attention to site security protocols in construction. Civil unrest can make construction sites easy targets when abandoned during off-hours or even while occupied. The threat of civil unrest, at or around a project, may leave contractors open to many unwanted risks, including:

- Physical harm to staff
- Damage to physical property
- Theft or damage to critical equipment or materials
- Loss of intellectual property
- Disruption in project schedules
- Irreversible harm to the company's brand/image/reputation
- Long term business continuity disruption

It is essential for contractors and owners to fully understand their risk coverages and identify any potential gaps, such as exclusions in Force Majeure clauses relating to civil disorder/disruptions or acts of terrorism that may lead to the need for increased awareness, prevention, and recovery methods.

A suggested step to take in preparation for threats to a project is to have a solid plan in place. Ideally, a vulnerability assessment is completed before the start of a project. This type of assessment is a tool for identifying potential disruptions that may be encountered over the course of a project.

## Vulnerability Assessment

A vulnerability assessment, like a "risk assessment" in the Environment, Health, & Safety (EH&S) world, is meant to identify potential gaps that exist in physical security measures, which could lead to a site being exposed to a loss if not corrected or planned for. The significant difference between a risk assessment and vulnerability assessment is that the latter centers around potential threats from parties wishing to intentionally do harm to your personnel, property, or the surrounding environment. When identifying protective measures, it is important to account for a person, or group, who have these threatening "intentions" and understand what level of harm/disruption they may cause if not deterred. The process differs from an EH&S assessment where there is no expectation that a person wishes to purposely hurt themselves, others, or the environment.

The vulnerability assessment should account for long term protective measures such as:

- Access control measures
- Key/Card permissions and accountability

---

## Contacts

**Todd M. MacDermott**  
Senior Vice President  
National Practice Leader –  
Construction Claims  
Construction Services Group  
t 617.457.7654 | m 781.962.8241  
todd.macdermott@aon.com

**Scott J. Nissen**  
Managing Director  
Construction Services Group  
t 832.476.5759 | m 713.828.6456  
scott.nissen@aon.com

**Robert Jones**  
Vice President  
Risk Control  
Construction Services Group  
t 973.463.6020 | m 914.475.8446  
robert.s.jones@aon.com

**Chris Demas**  
Senior Risk Consultant  
Construction Services Group  
t 617.457.7664 | m 617.717.8156  
chris.demas@aon.com

- Background checks
- Monitoring/surveillance systems
- Perimeter fencing/barricades

The assessment can also account for short term disruptions such as civil unrest with attention paid to the ability to react to a threat in a timely fashion. This may include significant effort in logistics planning, evacuation/lockdown measures, staff notification, accountability programs, and off-hours site monitoring.

## Plan

Protests and riots can create chaotic situations. Having a comprehensive plan in place and the support documentation available to make decisions will help in the immediate protection of assets as well as help protect the organization against legal ramifications.

When planning, it is important to remember the full scope of risk to the organization. This may include planning for situations in uncommon scenarios, such as:

- Disruption at conferences and meetings
- Mass protests at/around work sites, satellite company properties, and vendor/supplier property
- Protests at mass transit hubs such as train stations and airports
- Disruption to supply chain

The plan at a minimum should include:

- A list of authorized employees and contractors that can enter the site during an incident
- A list of phone numbers of crucial support team members and resources
- A list of on-site hazardous materials and their locations
- Detailed external and internal maps of the site for fire and police units
- Detailed level of security staffing
- Outline of responsibilities and the staff members that are assigned to those responsibilities
- Methods to notify workers on-site should a situation become volatile
- Emergency Lockdown Procedures. If a group forms outside of the Jobsite, how quickly can the site be locked down without hindering emergency egress?

## Imminent Violent Protests

Although there is no replacement for rigorous and detailed planning, a few security-related recommendations that may apply at almost any construction site, and can be implemented almost immediately, in the event of a violent protest or during early signs of social unrest, should include:

- Make sure all fences and gates are in good repair and able to be quickly secured
- Ensure windscreens are securely attached and covered from the inside to prevent protestors from looking into the site
- Remove all signs, temporary lighting, and other loose materials from the fences
- Move any materials that could be pulled through the fence and used as a weapon. (E.g. wood scraps, bricks, rebar, etc.)
- Put portable Jobsite bathrooms in the center of the project, not near fences
- Board up trailer windows and secure all doors/access-ways with locks or security bars

- Remove valuable pieces of technology and/or intellectual property such as computers, confidential documents, and financial records
- Secure all hoists and cranes, remove or lock ladders, and secure/block off any stairs that lead into the building or access scaffolding
- Remove or secure all equipment such as scissor & aerial lifts, fork-lifts, loaders, vehicles, and UTV's
- Remove all flammable/combustible material from the Jobsite perimeter. (E.g. trash dumpsters, trash cans, stored materials, and plastics)
- Fuel storage tanks should be removed from the site. If they cannot be removed from the site, they should be secured in a locked location toward the center of the site
- Ensure there is a proper evacuation plan in place with multiple muster points and a method to account for all staff
- If the site is equipped with video cameras, make sure they are working, and there are cameras trained on all the entrance doors and gates

For street/road and heavy civil work that is not protected by a perimeter boundary/fence, it is important to remove, or secure to the best extent possible, any and all heavy equipment. Additionally, it is equally important to conduct a daily demobilization of all vehicles, tools, and materials that could be damaged, destroyed, or used for malicious purposes. This may call for the need to garage equipment and material at remote, secure, storage facilities/lay down areas during off-hours, instead of storing them at the unprotected Jobsite.

## Communication and Training

Once your plan is created, it is important to make sure everyone involved is aware of the procedures and what steps have been put in place. Your organization must have a way to notify workers if an incident is taking place or about to begin, as well as whether the workers should report to the Jobsite and whom to contact for more information. Project personnel who will have responsibilities during an incident need to understand their specific role during the disturbance. All workers must also understand how they should conduct themselves and what to do if they show up to work and encounter a violent protest.

It is also vital to set up communication channels with local law enforcement, so your company and Jobsite will be informed of any impending risks. In addition, suppliers, vendors, and other offsite entities supporting your Jobsite may also need to be contacted during a protest or riot.

## Right to Public Assembly

Respect the demonstrators' right to have a peaceful assembly. Allow demonstrators to make their point if they are peaceful and not causing harm to the Jobsite or workers. Do not interfere or provoke. If demonstrators have damaged property, assaulted someone, or committed a crime, call the Police to assess whether to arrest or remove the unruly protestors.

Disclaimer: This document has been provided as an informational resource for Aon clients and business partners. It is intended to provide general guidance on potential exposures or specific risk circumstances. As regards insurance coverage questions, whether coverage applies, or a policy will respond, to any risk or circumstance is subject to the specific terms and conditions of the policies and contracts at issue and underwriter determination.

While care has been taken in the production of this document and the information contained within it has been obtained from sources that Aon believes to be reliable, Aon does not warrant, represent or guarantee the accuracy, adequacy, completeness or fitness for any purpose of the report or any part of it and can accept no liability for any loss incurred in any way by any person who may rely on it. Any recipient shall be responsible for the use to which it puts this document. This document has been compiled using information available to us up to its date of publication.

All descriptions, summaries or highlights of coverage are for general informational purposes only and do not amend, alter or modify the actual terms or conditions of any insurance policy. Coverage is governed only by the terms and conditions of the relevant policy.