

CRISIS MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR CIVIL UNREST

The Food Marketing Institute (FMI) Loss Prevention Services Department conducted a meeting with security executives and other key operations executives from a number of FMI member firms that were directly affected by the looting and rioting that occurred in Los Angeles, April 28 – May 1, 1992. The information, opinions and recommendations provided by these executives provided the basis for the *Crisis Management Guidelines for Civil Unrest*. While the riots in Los Angeles occurred over ten years ago, the information and suggestions provided by the security and operations executives are still useful today.

I. Developing a Simple and Flexible Plan.

- a. Develop a chain of command for emergencies. Every company should have one person pre-assigned to take charge in an emergency, a crisis team leader. A person should also be assigned as assistant crisis team leader to take charge in the team leader's absence.
- b. Develop a comprehensive list of emergency telephone numbers. Obtain direct line telephone numbers to key law enforcement personnel in city and county police departments. Do not rely on 911 during periods of civil unrest.
- c. Develop a list of all company executive cellular telephone numbers. Maintain the list in a secure but accessible place.
- d. Determine the number of cellular telephones used in your company, the names of the people who have them and the telephone numbers. Keep the list in a secure but accessible place.
- e. Determine the number and location of two-way radios in use in your company. Determine the range of the radios from your crisis command center.
- f. List the vehicles having two-way radios and the individuals assigned to the vehicles.
- g. Provide your crisis center with the following equipment: one, but preferably two, television sets, a VCR, a police and fire scanner, an AC/DC radio, emergency lighting, all emergency telephone lists, street maps, aerial photos of areas at risk (if possible), a personal computer and printer, two or three telephones with dedicated outside lines and call waiting service, a cassette tape recorder with a telephone recording device for each telephone, two or more cellular telephones, two or more hand-held two-way radios, a fax machine, a supply of blank video and cassette tapes and batteries for all battery-operated equipment.
- h. Establish basic rules and procedures for verbal and written communications to help establish and maintain intended chain of command, to limit rumors and false reports, to systematically communicate with company associates, law enforcement, other emergency services, the news media, insurance companies, and key company executives.
- i. Assign one person to record in writing or with a personal computer all incoming reports from targeted stores and areas. This should include the times and dates of decisions made, e.g., orders to close and evacuate a store, and information on other important matters that need to be reviewed and evaluated when the crisis is over.
- j. Determine the source(s) for additional contract security personnel. Check the supplier's certificates of insurance, document compliance with all state training requirements, whether armed security personnel are available and, if so, check all state firearms licensing documents, the supplier's willingness to assign its personnel to high-risk

locations, and attempt to get agreement for a minimum number of personnel at a pre-set cost per hour.

II. Preparing At-Risk Stores.

Small incidents of civil disobedience can quickly develop into widespread riots with looting and arson fires resulting. Stores located in or near the inner city are at far greater risk than stores in suburban or rural areas. Companies should concentrate their pre-planning efforts for civil unrest in stores at risk, at least initially.

Management staff, department heads and security personnel at targeted stores should know in advance what to do to protect the store and its employees and customers.

The store manager or the person in charge of the store should take appropriate action when instructed, or when in his or her judgment it is advisable to do so, if not instructed. The person in charge at a store at risk can best evaluate the existing and potential dangers through first-hand knowledge of the situation. Companies should determine and inform those persons who have authority to close and evacuate a store.

Certain basic pieces of equipment should be readily available and used at stores at risk, as follows:

- a. Plywood Panels.
 - (1) Commercial grade, ½-inch thickness minimum, 4' x 8' plywood panels should be available to protect windows and entrances.
 - (2) Large metal screws, 3-inch length minimum with 1-inch diameter metal washers should be used to secure the plywood panels to aluminum or steel window and doorframes.
 - (3) Guide holes in the plywood panels and metal frames should be pre-drilled to expedite installation. Pre-drilled holes in the metal frames should be appropriately sized to provide a tight fit for the screws.
 - (4) A power drill with a screw head attachment or a Yankee screwdriver should be available at the store for securing the plywood panels quickly.
 - (5) If time permits, screws with washers should be driven at 12-inch to 18-inch spacing around the perimeter of the plywood panels into windows and doorframes.
- b. Permanent Protection for Storefront Glass. A number of materials are available to protect windows and doors. A clear liquid material can be applied to the outside of glass panels, which resists thrown bricks, baseball bats, etc. The glass may break from attacks, but the plastic material holds the glass in place and offers considerable resistance to forced entry. Any experienced glazier will have information on glass protective materials.
- c. Fire Protection Equipment.
 - (1) Sprinkler valves inside the store and OS and Y valves outside the store (usually located on a back wall outside) should be secured in the open position with a heavy forged link chain and a heavy-duty security-rated padlock with a case hardened shackle. If the OSY valve is secured with a lightweight chain and a

frangible or breakaway lock required by most fire departments, remove or break the lock and protect the valve as described previously.

- (2) Post Indicator Valves (PIV) and pit valves should be secured with a security-rated padlock, as described above. When the crisis is over, the security-rated locks should be replaced with the frangible locks to meet fire department codes. It is extremely important that all valves in the fire protection system are secured against unauthorized closing.
- (3) All fire extinguishers should be fully charged in designated locations.
- (4) At least two 10-pound tri-class (all purpose) dry powder fire extinguishers should be available in the courtesy booth or manager's office.

d. Secured Storage Area for Flammables.

- (1) A security cage commonly used to store cigarettes, films and high-value merchandise can be used to store flammables. If a security cage is available, make certain it is in good repair and in good order.
- (2) If a security cage isn't available, use a first-floor restroom to store the flammables listed below.
- (3) When the store is at risk, remove the following merchandise to the security cage or a restroom:
 - (a) Cigarette lighters
 - (b) Cigarette lighter fluids
 - (c) Matches
 - (d) Charcoal lighter
 - (e) Nail polish remover
 - (f) Class III aerosol products
 - (g) Motor oil
 - (h) Varnishes
 - (i) Paints
- (4) Secure the security cage door with a heavy-duty padlock. Position two-high pallets of sugar, salt or canned goods against the door and vulnerable sides of the security cage. Position two-high pallets of previously mentioned merchandise against the restroom door, if utilized.

e. Protecting Store Fronts and Entrances Inside the Door.

- (1) If plywood panels aren't used to protect windows and entrances, place pallets of heavy merchandise two-high against the inside of store entrances and as close to the front inside wall and windows as possible.
- (2) Roll-down steel screens are effective in protecting store entrances. Scissor-type screens are easily defeated because they are only attached at either side of the protected opening and they aren't positioned in steel racks.

f. Protecting Cash Media.

Cash media includes any coin or paper that is negotiable, including paper money, food stamps, money orders, WIC receipts, gift certificates, and trading stamps.

- (1) When operating stores during civil unrest, keep cash reserves in checkouts at absolute minimum.
- (2) Attempt to retain armored car service during the crisis.
- (3) Move all cash from cash drawers to the main safe. Keep the safe locked.
- (4) Drop safes should be bolted to the floor. If the safes aren't secured to the floor, remove the contents to the main safe.
- (5) Remove cash tills at checkouts before evacuating stores at risk and leave drawers open.
- (6) If armored car service isn't available and cash buildup becomes a problem, cash may have to be removed from the store. If so, conceal the cash in a dog food bag or a large detergent box before removing to a waiting vehicle.

g. Materials Handling Equipment.

Lift trucks and powered pallet trucks can be used by vandals to break through doors and walls, and to move drop safes outside the store where they can be loaded on to pickup trucks. Take the following steps to prevent vandals from using materials handling equipment before evacuating the store.

- (1) Remove the ignition key from all lift trucks, stand-up lifts and straddle stackers. Put the keys in the main safe.
- (2) Remove the electrical-connect cord apparatus from powered pallet trucks. Secure the electrical connections in a safe place or remove them from the store.
- (3) Park the lift-truck against the back room exit door to hinder free access through the door.

h. Shopping Carts.

Prevent looters from using shopping carts to haul away store merchandise. Nest all shopping carts and secure them with a heavy chain and heavy-duty padlock. Tip the nested cars over to prevent them from being moved.

i. Protecting Vital Records.

- (a) Determine the types of paper records and computer data that are vital to operate the store and for providing proof of loss to insurance carriers.
- (b) When civil unrest begins in the neighborhood, it will be too late to begin to protect vital papers and computer records unless a plan has been formulated and initiated promptly.
- (c) A U.L. fire-rated records storage safe provides excellent protection for paper records and computer discs. The safe should be bolted to a wall or to the floor.
- (d) If accounts payable and accounts receivable records, payroll records, certificates of insurance, recent inventory records, and sales records for the previous 12-36 months are not kept at an off-site location, these records should be routinely secured in a U.L. fire-rated records safe. Historical sales records may be retrieved from tax records.
- (e) Records of inventory values, sales records, and documented lists of store fixtures and equipment must be provided to the insurance carrier to prove loss. Small

retailers, in particular, should ask their insurance companies to provide them a list of the records the carriers will require in the event the store is totally destroyed by fire. It is incumbent upon every retailer to prove loss.

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ACTION CHECKLIST	YES	NO
1. Someone has been named as our crisis team leader.		
2. A list of vital telephone numbers has been prepared and distributed to key personnel.		
3. Two-way radios and portable cellular telephones are available in the quantity and at the locations needed.		
4. A crisis command center has been established and provided the necessary equipment.		
5. A chain of command has been established and every key person knows his or her role during a crisis.		
6. Store managers have been advised of company policy relating to operating/closing stores at risk.		
7. Plywood panels or other means of protection have been provided for windows and customer entrance doors.		
8. If plywood panels are to be used to protect windows and doors, store personnel know how to install the panels and an electric drill with screw-head attachment is at the store(s).		
9. Heavy forged-link chains and security padlocks have been issued to stores and key store personnel know how to attach chains to all exposed sprinkler water valves.		
10. Chain and heavy-duty locks are available at the store(s) to secure shopping carts.		
11. Key store personnel have been trained to use fire extinguishers.		
12. Security cage or other area has been established as a place to secure flammable liquids and matches.		
13. Store managers have been provided a list of flammables that must be moved to secured area during periods of civil unrest.		
14. Key store personnel have been instructed to secure keys from all lift trucks and to make powered pallet trucks inoperative before evacuating store(s).		
15. U.L. fire-rated safe has been provided for vital paper records and computer records not kept off-site.		