



Legal & Liability Risk Management Institute

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CROWD MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

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Proper crowd management is more important than ever for law enforcement. It is imperative that each officer stays alert. Best practices should be adopted to protect officers in all circumstances. Public demonstrations have increased in frequency as a result of high profile incidents involving the police. Although most have been peaceful, the chance of a threat to officer safety is imminent and law enforcement agencies have an obligation to prepare for a proper response for crowd management, regardless of the type of demonstration.

During a demonstration, whether large or small, the role of a law enforcement officer is to ensure the public's safety, protect lives and property, and also protect the First Amendment rights of all persons involved in the event.

Be Prepared

To effectively respond to such incidents, Legal Liability Risk Management Institute (LLRMI) recommends the following for each agency:

- Review the legal standards of the First Amendment.
- Review response to resistance policies and abide by the objectively reasonable standard.
- Review the model policy on crowd control.
- Review your riot equipment inventory and ensure all officers are properly equipped.
- Meet with leaders of your community: minority leaders, church officials, school administrators, etc.
- Meet with supporting agencies such as the fire department and Sherriff's department.
- Speak with representatives from your local media.
- Conduct yearly training on crowd control.

Talk with Organizers

In the event a demonstration is scheduled, LLRMI recommends the following procedures:

- A representative from the police department should meet with the organizer of the event to establish expectations.
- Information to be collected from organizer:
 - Determine the time, location, and type of activities planned.
 - Estimate the number of persons expected to participate in the event.
 - Determine the routes of travel for participants and if traffic control will be needed.
 - Expected times of arrival and departure.

Plan for Any Scenario

- During this conversation, an agreement should be made concerning what is expected, what will be allowed, and what will not be allowed. All of this information should be collected in an open, transparent manner. Please remember, demonstrations at times are unpredictable and police must be flexible and be careful about drawing hard lines with the organizers of the events.
- Plainclothes officers should be mixed throughout the crowd listening and observing the protestors.
- Additional uniform/plainclothes surveillance detail should be deployed to the outer perimeters of the venue to observe for threats. (This should include a camera team videoing the event).

- Establish a quick response team (out of sight) equipped with riot gear who can respond to handle the event if it turns from peaceful to hostile. It has been proven having an intimidating police presence doesn't prevent confrontation, at times it invites it.
- State Fusion Center or Intelligence unit should be monitoring social media sites of the event organizers while collecting information and behaviors from previous organized events.
- Officers must separate themselves from the criticism directed at them while maintaining their professionalism treating everyone with dignity and respect. Officers should withhold any negative comments about the views which are expressed during the event.

It is understood throughout the law enforcement community that there is a difficult balance to serve communities, maintain order, and engage the citizens while at the same time maintaining proper officer safety. If these principles are adopted, this balance can be met and all parties respectively meet their objectives.

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