



**September 21, 2016: Charlotte, North Carolina riots
Protestor with a gunshot wound to the head**



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“Joint Public Safety Response to Large-Scale Civil Unrest”

Presentation Description:

Large-scale, civil unrest events have occurred in various cities throughout the United States. Notable riots include the 1965 Watts (Los Angeles riots), the 1967 Detroit 12th Street riots, the 1967 Newark riots, the 1968 Holy Week Uprising riots (multiple cities), the 1977 New York City blackout, the 1992 Los Angeles Rodney King riots, the 2014 Ferguson riots, the 2015 Baltimore riots, the 2016 Charlotte riots, and the 2019 Portland riots. In each event, protesters conducted violent and hostile actions against public safety personnel. In many of the protests, multiple arson fires were set.

Every city in the United States is at risk for a large-scale civil unrest event. Causal events include sporting event wins/losses, law enforcement officer-involved-shootings, political protests/rallies, private business malfeasance (New York City stock exchange collapse), global pandemic, and more. Civil unrest events have occurred in large and small cities alike. The common thread with all of these events is that local public safety had only a few hours' notice to respond to these events.

In the 2014 Ferguson riots, United States law enforcement saw the return of professional, serial arsonists and Molotov cocktails thrown at first responders. This is now a common theme in civil unrest events. The introduction of fire-as-a-weapon adds a very specific dimension to the protests that public safety officials must address. Universally, experts agree that the introduction of fires at civil unrest events only increases protester agitation and escalates violence.

Protesters also frequently deploy body fluid “bombs” at officers, chemical “bombs”, explosive devices, and other potentially deadly weapons. Integrated fire/EMS rescue task forces provide civil unrest (riot response) platoons with downed-officer rescue, fire-as-a-weapon immediate response, hasty decontamination of body fluid/chemical bombs, and emergent civilian rescues.

Protesters are also using different tactics such as lasers and bright lights, vehicle-as-a-weapon, electric cattle prods, bear spray, and other non-standard attack tactics. Law enforcement can recognize specific signs in advance that might warn of these attack tactics. In addition, the presenter will discuss specific law enforcement countermeasures.

Reviews of large-scale civil unrest event demonstrate that these events occur with little to no notice, and all public safety agencies must plan and prepare for an effective response. In many of the events, an aggressive fire department response is necessary to combat the increasing frequency of arson events and deliberate fire-as-a-weapon attacks against law enforcement.

The presenters work in a jurisdiction that has trained integrated fire/EMS response with civil unrest officers since 2011. The presenters have also conducted numerous large-scale civil

unrest exercises utilizing the rescue task force concept and the fire department structural fire civil unrest task force response. The presenters served as front-line responders and incident commanders in a seven-day riot event in a large, metropolitan city. In addition, the presenters served as civil unrest planning and response commanders for the 2012 Democratic National Convention and the 2020 Republican National Convention.

Presentation Objectives:

1. At the conclusion of this program, attendees will learn and discuss the history of large-scale civil unrest in the United States.
2. At the conclusion of this program, attendees can describe the various “players” at a civil unrest event.
3. At the conclusion of the program, attendees can describe various threats posed to civil unrest police officers on the skirmish line.
4. At the conclusion of the program, attendees can describe various arrest considerations, including arresting those with severe disabilities, those with children, common arrest mistakes, and common law enforcement civil riots violations.
5. At the conclusion of the program, attendees can discuss law enforcement liability with the use of CS gas or OC exposure.
6. At the conclusion of the program, attendees can describe methods to integrate fire and EMS rescue task forces with civil unrest platoons.
7. At the conclusion of the program, attendees can describe methods to combat fire-as-a-weapon during civil unrest.
8. At the conclusion of the program, attendees can describe various methods to conduct hasty vehicle extrication in the hot zone at vehicle-as-a-weapon events.
9. At the conclusion of the program, attendees can describe various media communication considerations and significant mistakes made by government agencies at prior civil unrest events.
10. At the conclusion of this program, attendees will be able to describe lessons learned from numerous large-scale civil unrest events, including Los Angeles 1992, Seattle 1999, Ferguson 2014, Baltimore 2015, Charlotte 2016, and Portland 2019.