



4.3.11 Civil Disorder

The following section provides the hazard profile (hazard description, location, extent, previous occurrences and losses, probability of future occurrences, and impact of climate change) and vulnerability assessment for the civil disorder hazard in Essex County.

2020 HMP Update Changes

- All subsections have been updated using best available data.
- Previous events between 2014 and 2019 were researched, with a comprehensive list of previous events in Appendix X.

4.3.11.1 Profile

Hazard Description

Civil disorder is a broad term that is typically used by law enforcement to describe one or more forms of unrest caused by a group of people. It involves a disruption of the typical social order that can involve a strike or protest, and it can be peaceful or involve violence (NJOEM 2019). Demonstrations, civil unrest, public disorder, and riots happen for a number of reasons that include economic hardships, social injustices, ethnic differences, objections to word organizations or certain governments, political grievances, and terrorist acts. An event can be triggered by a single cause or a combination of causes (U.S. Army 2005).

Civil disturbances can take the form of small gatherings or large groups blocking or impeding access to a building or disrupting normal activities by generating noise and intimidating people. Demonstrations can range from a peaceful sit-in to a full-scale riot, in which a mob burns or otherwise destroys property and terrorizes individuals. Even in its more passive forms, a group that blocks roadways, sidewalks, or buildings interferes with public order. Often protests intended to be a peaceful demonstration to the public and the government can escalate into general chaos (NJOEM 2019).

There are two types of large gatherings typically associated with civil disturbances: a crowd and a mob. A crowd can be identified as causal, cohesive, expressive, or aggressive (Blumer 1946):

- **Casual Crowd:** A casual crowd is a group of people who happen to be in the same place at the same time. Violent conduct does not occur.
- **Cohesive Crowd:** A cohesive crowd consists of members who are involved in some type of unified behavior. Members of this group are involved in some type of common activity, such as worshipping, dancing, or watching a sporting event. Members of these crowds may have intense internal discipline and require substantial provocation to arouse to action.
- **Expressive Crowd:** An expressive crowd is one held together by a common commitment or purpose. They may not be formally organized and are assembled as an expression of common sentiment or frustration. Members wish to be seen as a formidable influence. One of the best examples of this type is a group assembled to protest.
- **Aggressive Crowd:** An aggressive crowd is composed of individuals who have assembled for a specific purpose. This crowd often has leaders who attempt to arouse the members or motivate them to action. Members are noisy and threatening and will taunt authorities. They may be more impulsive and emotional and require only minimal stimulation to arouse violence. Examples of this type of crowd could include demonstrators and strikers, though not all demonstrators and strikers are aggressive.



A mob can be defined as a large disorderly crowd or throng. Mobs are usually emotional, loud, tumultuous, violent, and lawless. Similar to crowds, mobs have different levels of commitment, and can be classified into the following four categories (Alvarez and Bachman 2007):

- **Aggressive Mob:** An aggressive mob is one that attacks, riots, and terrorizes. The object of violence may be a person, property, or both. An aggressive mob is distinguished from an aggressive crowd only by lawless activity. Examples of aggressive mobs are the inmate mobs in prisons and jails, mobs that act out their frustrations after political defeat, or violent mobs at political protests or rallies.
- **Escape Mob:** An escape mob is attempting to flee from something such as a fire, bomb, flood, or other catastrophe. Members of escape mobs are generally difficult to control and can be characterized by unreasoning terror.
- **Acquisitive Mob:** An acquisitive mob is one motivated by a desire to acquire something. Riots caused by other factors often turn into looting sprees. This mob exploits an authority's lack of control in safeguarding property.
- **Expressive Mob:** An expressive mob is one that expresses fervor or revelry following some sporting event, religious activity, or celebration. Members experience a release of pent up emotions in highly charged situations.

Civil unrest and disturbances affect the following factions of society:

- **The Public:** The general population could serve as participants or targets in actions of civil unrest. Wide spread unrest could cause fear amongst the populace and cause them to be absent from school or work activities. During an event, bystanders may be harmed because of the activities of participants.
- **Responders:** Responses to civil unrest events are generally handled at the local level. In a large event, the resources of a local jurisdiction may be exceeded. In this instance, State resources would be activated to fill the need. During an event, responders may become targets, which could hamper their effectiveness.
- **Continuity of Operations, including delivery of services:** The outbreak of widespread rioting or looting could have potential impact on the State's ability to provide services and conduct its normal operations. Protesters could occupy government buildings and interrupt the normal functions of government, or targeted attacks on government facilities could interrupt operations entirely.
- **Property:** Private property often serves as a target in instances of civil unrest. Businesses can be targeted for looting or vandalism. If an event is particularly large, damage could reach millions of dollars and recovery could take years.
- **Facilities:** Often in acts of civil unrest government facilities become the focal point of protests or targets for vandalism. Damage suffered during an event or the inability of a worker to enter a facility may greatly reduce a facility's effective capacity or close it completely.
- **Infrastructure:** Similar to government facilities, public and private infrastructure can become targets of civil unrest. Damage to transportation, communications, or utilities infrastructure could further exacerbate the situation.
- **Environment:** Normally, instance of civil unrest will have a minimal impact on the environment. However, if petroleum or other chemical facilities were a target for vandalism or large-scale fires occurred, the impact on the environment could be significant.
- **Economic Condition of the State:** Civil unrest could prove economically crippling to the State of New Jersey. Large-scale events are usually accompanied by wide-spread absenteeism and damage to private property.
- **Public Confidence in the State's Governance:** If an event becomes prolonged or is perceived to be mismanaged, it could greatly decrease public confidence in the governance of the State. If the response is seen to be inadequate, individuals may attempt to protect their property by their own means and further degrade the situation.



Civil disturbances often occur with little to no warning; however, certain events may trigger riots. As demonstrated in the Previous Occurrences and Losses subsection and discussions regarding severity, riots can occur as a result of controversial court rulings, unfair working conditions, or general unrest. Riots can also be triggered as a result of favorable or unfavorable sports outcomes. Thus, generally there will be a certain degree of warning time that a riot may occur; however, achieving certainty that an incident is imminent is not possible.

Civil disorders can result in numerous secondary hazards. Depending on the size and scope of the incident, civil unrest may lead to widespread urban fire, utility failure, transportation interruption, and environmental hazards. There is potential for a mass casualty incident to occur during the course of a civil disorder event should rioters or protestors become violent and clash with law enforcement or opposing groups. This could lead to possible casualties or fatalities. The most significant impact of civil unrest is the secondary hazard of interruption of continuity of government, which can also lead to several of the aforementioned secondary hazards. The extent of secondary hazards will vary significantly based on the extent and nature of the civil unrest.

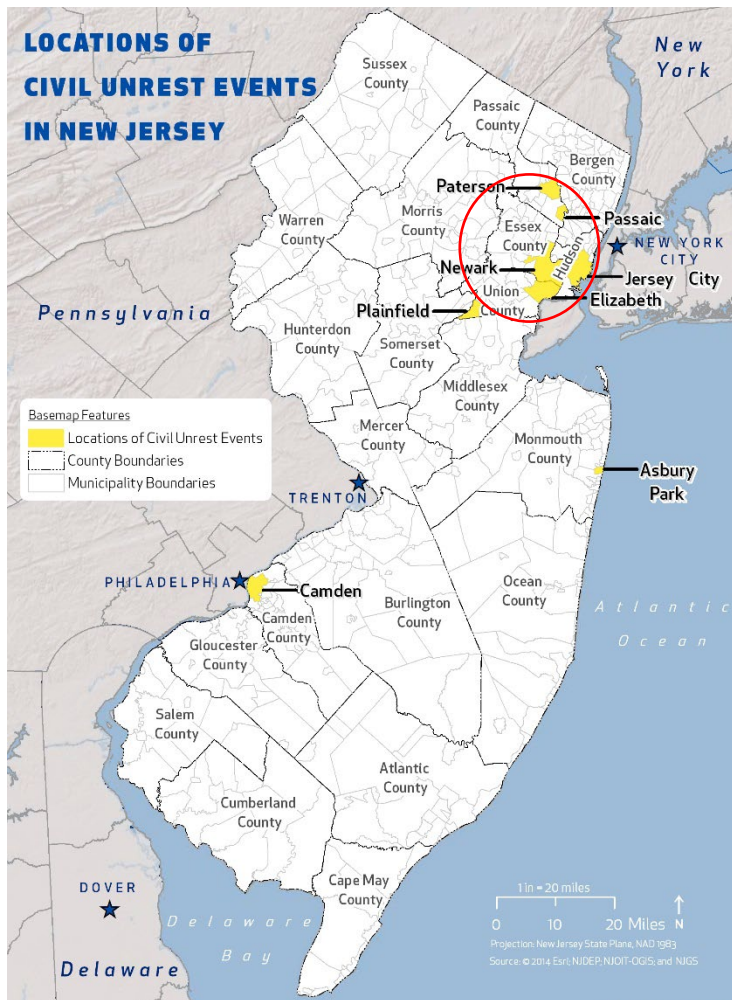
In the State of New Jersey, a municipality in which a civil disorder occurs bears the first and primary responsibility to control the disturbance. Civil unrest that remains uncontrolled warrants local mutual aid from neighboring municipal and/or county resources. If the civil unrest remains beyond the capabilities of local law enforcement agencies alone, limited State Police assistance may be requested. If the restoration of law and order is beyond local, county and state abilities, the Governor may declare a State of Emergency calling on federal support such as the New Jersey National Guard to restore order (NJOEM 2011).

Civil disorder can also be identified as crime, which is classified into four major classifications: violent crime, property crime, public order crime, and hate crime. Violent crimes are physical acts against an individual such as murder, robbery, or assault. Property crimes are acts against the property of others such as burglary, theft, or vandalism. Public order crimes are crimes that have no specific victim, such as prostitution, drugs, or insider trading. Hate crimes can be either violent or property crimes motivated by bias against a particular social group (Essex County HMP 2007).

Location

Government facilities, landmarks, prisons, and universities are common sites where crowds and mobs may gather. The concentration of buildings in and density of northeastern New Jersey, and State government buildings in Trenton may be targets of civil disturbance. New Jersey also has correctional facilities, treatment units, and youth development centers, as well as federal prison facilities and local and private facilities throughout the State that may be targets for civil unrest (NJOEM 2019). Figure 4.3.11-1 illustrates historic civil disorder events in the State since the early 1900's with several that have occurred in Essex County.

Figure 4.3.11-1. Locations of Civil Unrest Events in New Jersey from 1913 to Present



Source: NJOEM 2019

The red circle marks the location of Essex County.

Extent

The magnitude or severity of a civil disorder depends on the nature of the disturbance. They can take form as small gatherings or large groups blocking access to buildings or disrupting normal activities. They can range from peaceful sit-ins to a full-scale riot (NJOEM 2019).

Previous Occurrences and Losses

Many sources provided historical information regarding previous occurrences and losses associated with civil disorders events throughout Essex County. With so many sources reviewed for the purpose of this HMP, loss and impact information for many events could vary depending on the source. Therefore, the accuracy of monetary figures discussed is based only on the available information identified during research for this HMP.

Between 1954 and 2019, the State of New Jersey has not been included in any FEMA civil disorder related disasters (DR) or emergencies (EM) (FEMA 2019).

The most significant civil disorder event to occur within the State of New Jersey was the 1967 Newark Riots. The event was fueled by police brutality, political exclusion of African Americans, urban renewal, inadequate



housing, unemployment, and poverty. These riots took place between July 12 and July 17, 1967. At the conclusion of 6 days of rioting, 26 people were dead, an estimated 725 people were injured, and close to 1,500 people had been arrested (NJOEM 2019).

No significant civil disorder events that have impacted Essex County between 2014 and 2019 were identified.

Probability of Future Occurrences

While the probability of future civil unrest incidents is difficult to predict, given past occurrences and significance of New Jersey and its communities, civil unrest incidents are possible. As discussed in the Location section above, areas that are important to the State, region, and greater United States may be targets for civil unrest. These areas include universities, landmarks, correctional facilities, major industrial facilities, and others similar in nature. It is also worth noting that while the last major civil disturbance in New Jersey occurred in the 1970s, it is still possible for a future event to occur. Societal trends and emerging social issues should be watched closely as these types of issues have led to instances in the past.

In Section 4.4, the identified hazards of concern for Essex County were ranked. The probability of occurrence, or likelihood of the event, is one parameter used for hazard rankings. Based on historical records and input from the Steering and Planning Committees, the probability of occurrence for civil disorder in the County is considered ‘occasional’.

Climate Change Impacts

Because civil unrest is a short-term, human-caused hazard, no climate change impacts are associated with the hazard.

4.3.11.2 Vulnerability Assessment

To understand risk, a community must evaluate what assets are exposed or vulnerable to the identified hazard. The following discusses Essex County’s vulnerability, in a qualitative nature, to the civil disorder hazard.

Impact on Life, Health and Safety

Potential losses from civil disorder incidents include human health and life and property resources. Civil disorder incidents can lead to injury and/or death for both the involved persons and the innocent bystanders. If a civil disorder turns violent, they can lead to injury and/or death for personnel responding to the incident. The number of people exposed to a civil disorder depends on the population density and the location of the civil disorder. Increases in population or the hosting of major political, economic or social events could increase the likelihood and severity of a civil disorder incident.

Impact on General Building Stock

The general building stock of Essex County may be damaged or destroyed during a civil disorder incident. Depending on the scale of the incident, damages could range from broken windows to the destruction of major pieces of infrastructure.

Impact on Critical Facilities

Critical facilities may be targets for civil unrest disturbances. Refer to Section 3- County Profile, which summarizes the number and type of critical facilities in Essex County. Disruptions to critical facilities may have cascading secondary effects such as power outages and utility failure. Because these facilities are vulnerable to civil disorders and may be a focal point during a protest, these facilities will need to be protected during incidents.



Impact on Economy

Civil disorder events can have negative economic and social effects on Essex County as a whole. Measuring the economic impact of civil unrest in the County is difficult. Elements that contribute to this are the volatility of the nature of civil disturbances, and the uncertainty of the duration of an incident. Economic conditions could be adversely affected and dependent upon time and length of cleanup and investigation of the incident. Some incidents may target the business sector, impacting the economy of that municipality where the incident is occurring. For the purpose of this assessment, all of Essex County’s economy is considered exposed to the effects of civil disorders.

Future Changes that May Impact Vulnerability

Understanding future changes that impact vulnerability in the County can assist in planning for future development and ensuring that appropriate mitigation, planning, and preparedness measures are in place. The county considered the following factors to examine potential conditions that may affect hazard vulnerability:

- Potential or projected development.
- Projected changes in population.
- Other identified conditions as relevant and appropriate, including the impacts of climate change.

Projected Development and Changes in Population

As discussed in Sections 3 and 9, areas targeted for future growth and development have been identified across Essex County. Any areas of growth could be potentially impacted by the civil disorder hazard because the entire County is exposed and vulnerable. The limited number of instances of civil unrests within the State has only shown one clear and consistent similarity, which is that each instance occurred in large, densely populated cities. An increase in development and population has the ability to increase the likelihood of a civil disorder incident. Future migration to larger jurisdictions may also increase the likelihood of a civil disorder incident. Please refer to the specific areas of development indicated in tabular form and/or on the hazard maps included in the jurisdictional annexes in Volume II, Section 9 of this plan.

According to population projections from the State of New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Essex County will experience an increase in population through 2034 (approximately 40,000 people between 2017 and 2034). An increased in population within Essex County, particularly in urban areas, could increase the total number of people exposed to civil disorder events.

Climate Change

Because a civil disorder is a short-term, human-caused hazard, no climate change impacts are associated with the hazard.

Change of Vulnerability Since the 2015 HMP

Overall, the County’s vulnerability has not changed and the entire County will continue to be exposed and vulnerable to civil disorder events.