



Hazard Risk Assessment

Riots

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This section introduces riots. Although not common in small rural communities they can happen. Resources are available to assist you in completing this assessment in the Risk Assessment Resources section.

Definition

A riot is a violent public disorder, specifically a disturbance of the public peace by a group of persons with either a common or random intent to destroy property, assault persons or otherwise disturb the peace.

Discussion

When riots and looting occur, there is often a significant loss of property to businesses, especially small businesses. The publicity that riots generate also serves to scare many people away from the area, for fear of a repeat event. This adds to the economic losses of the impacted area.

Often of equal or greater concern are the social and political impacts. When riots develop, there is a feeling that things are generally out of control; and this feeling of vulnerability and sense of helplessness adds to impact of the riot itself. Not only do media tend to give a high priority to such events, but the public also demands for control and order to be brought to the site and retribution to the offenders. Politicians quickly become accountable for the actions that were or were not taken to control the riot and the subsequent aftermath.

It Happened Here...

On July 11, 1990 members of the militant Mohawk Warrior's Society set up roadblocks over land claim issues near the Kahnawake Reserve, Oka, Quebec (population 1500)¹. The military was called in to deal with it and 10,000 people in the surrounding were evacuated. The standoff last 78 days and one officer died.

Just after midnight on 7th August, 2008, vandals destroy nine of the world-famous "Tournament of Champions" sandcastles at Harrison Lake near the village of Harrison Hot Springs, BC. Each one was created by a team of previous world champions who were flown in by the Harrison Hotspring Sand Sculpture Society to build them in May 2008. Six of the vandalized sculptures



had to be taken down because there was too much damage and each one of the sculptures costs \$15,000.²

Following the Sand Castle Festival weekend in 1997, in Parcsville, BC, store windows were smashed by a crowd of 600 to 1,000 young people - more than 100 arrests were made. The Sand Castle Festival was subsequently cancelled.³

Risk Rating

The following includes factors that can lead to riots and demonstrations.

Riots^{4, 5, 6} - Human-caused

Hazard Rating	High Risk <input type="checkbox"/>	Low Risk <input type="checkbox"/>	Need More Info <input type="checkbox"/>	Not Applicable <input type="checkbox"/>
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Yes	No	Need More Info	Not Applicable	FACTORS
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Riots can break out after a huge sports victory or loss. Does your community have a stadium, arena, or other sports venue where competitive games occur?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Riots can occur during or after large gatherings such as concerts, festivals, rallies, etc. Does your community host large gatherings?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If a riot has occurred in a community previously the factors that triggered the riot may still exist putting the community at risk for a future riot. Has your community experienced riots in the past?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Heated or controversial elections can trigger a riot. Does your community have a history of heated and/or controversial elections?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Celebratory riots are often composed of young people. Does your community host events where there are large numbers of young people in attendance?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Riots are often associated with high levels of alcohol consumption by participants. Does your community host events where large amounts of alcohol are consumed (by lots of individuals)?

References

- ¹ Public Safety Canada. Retrieved February 25 2011 from <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/em/cdd/dtts-eng.aspx?disno=1990.014&page=>
- ² CBC News. Retrieved on April 12 2011 from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/story/2008/08/07/bc-harrison-sand-sculptures-vandalized.html>
- ³ *The Province*, July 27 1997
- ⁴ Brass, P. R. (2004). Development of an institutionalised riot system in Meerut city, 1961 to 1982. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 39(44), pp. 4839-4848.
- ⁵ Hawkins, E. R., & Brice, J. H. (2010). Fire jumpers: Description of burns and traumatic injuries from a spontaneous mass gathering and celebratory riot. *The Journal of Emergency Medicine*, 38(2), 182-187.
- ⁶ Rosenfeld, M. J. (1997). Celebration, politics, selective looting and riots: A micro level study of the Bulls Riot of 1992 in Chicago. *Social Problems*, 44(4), pp. 483-502.