



5.4.10 Civil Unrest

The following section presents 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 unrest hazard in Monroe County.

5.4.10.1 Profile

Hazard Description

Civil unrest is a broad term typically used by law enforcement to describe one or more forms of unrest that may include peaceful demonstrations or acts of violence. A civil disturbance can be an individual or collective action seriously interfering with peace, security, and/or functioning of a community (e.g., riot). Demonstrations, civil unrest, public disorder, and riots happen for a number of reasons that include economic hardships, social injustices, ethnic differences, objections to world 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, during which a mob burns or otherwise destroys property and terrorizes individuals. Even in its more passive forms, group blockage of roadways, sidewalks, or buildings interferes with public order. Many protests intended to be peaceful demonstrations to the public and the government can escalate into general chaos.

Two types of large gatherings typically are associated with civil disturbances: a crowd and a mob. A crowd can be identified as causal, sighting, agitated, or mob-like:

- A causal crowd is identified as individuals or small groups with nothing in common to bind them together. If each has an agenda, it is his/her own. Casual crowds are made up of individuals or small groups occupying the same common place.
- Sighting crowds are similar to casual crowds; however, they gather for an event. People migrating as a crowd to sporting events, a group of people attracted to fires and accidents, and those attending music concerts are all types of sighting crowds. Individuals or small groups gather at these events for the same purpose. It is the event and/or individuals' curiosity that compels a crowd to come together.
- Agitated crowds add responses based on the elements (people, space, and event). Individuals with strong emotional feelings within a crowd can quickly spread and infect the rest of the crowd. As more people within the crowd become emotionally involved, a sense of unity may develop, causing changes in the overall demeanor of the crowd. Yelling, screaming, and name-calling all are associated with an agitated crowd.
- Mob-like crowds have all the elements of crowd types described above, in addition to aggressive, physical, and sometimes violent actions. Under these conditions, individuals within a crowd will often say or do things they usually would not do. Extreme acts of violence and property damage are often part of mob activities. These consist of, or involve elements of people and groups mixing together and becoming fluid (U.S. Army 2005).

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 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 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. Widespread unrest could cause fear among the populace and cause them to be absent from school or work activities. During an event, bystanders may be harmed because of activities of participants.
- **Responders:** Responses to civil unrest events are generally handled at the local level. Response to a large event of this type may exceed the resources of a local jurisdiction. 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:** An outbreak of widespread rioting or looting could impact the State's and County's ability to provide services and conduct normal operations. Protesters could occupy government buildings and interrupt normal functions of government, or targeted attacks on government facilities could halt 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 foci of protests or targets for vandalism. Damage during an event or inability of workers 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, civil unrest would minimally impact the environment. However, if petroleum or other chemical facilities become targets for vandalism or large-scale fires occur, effects on the environment could be significant.
- **Economic Condition of the County:** Civil unrest could prove economically crippling to Monroe County. Large-scale events are usually accompanied by wide-spread absenteeism and damage to private property.
- **Public Confidence in the County's Governance:** If an event becomes prolonged or is perceived to be mismanaged, it could greatly decrease public confidence in the governance of the County. If the response is seen to be inadequate, individuals may attempt to protect their properties by their own means and further exacerbate the situation.



Civil disturbances often occur with little to no warning; however, certain events may trigger riots. 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, a certain degree of warning time precedes a riot; however, predicting with 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. The most significant impact of civil unrest is the secondary hazard of interrupted continuity of government, which can also lead to other secondary hazards cited in the previous sentence. The extent of secondary hazards will vary significantly based on the extent and nature of the civil unrest.

Location

Government facilities, landmarks, prisons, and universities are common sites where crowds and mobs may gather. Concentration of buildings in and density of the City of Rochester, as well as educational institutions therein, may be targets of civil disturbance. Other types of institutions such as correctional facilities, treatment units, and youth development centers may be targets for civil unrest.

Extent

The magnitude or severity of a civil unrest depends on the nature of the disturbance. This can take form as a small gathering or a large group blocking access to buildings or disrupting normal activities. Civil unrest events can range from peaceful sit-ins to a full-scale riot.

Previous Occurrences and Losses

Many sources provided historical information regarding previous occurrences and losses associated with civil unrest events throughout Monroe County. The most notable occurrence in the County's history was the set of 1964 riots that occurred in the City of Rochester in the aftermath of an arrest at a street party off Joseph Avenue during the late evening hours of July 24, 1964. The July 1964 riots erupted in the 3rd Ward of the City of Rochester. Although the local press reported Joseph Avenue as the most noteworthy location of this activity, adjacent areas were also involved. Other disturbances in the City occurred in relation to the Rodney King case.

With so many sources reviewed for the purpose of this HMP, loss and impact information regarding many events varies depending on the source, and accuracy of monetary estimates of losses derive only from information acquired during research for this HMP.

Between 1954 and 2015, New York State did not undergo any FEMA civil unrest related disasters (DR) or emergencies (EM) (FEMA 2015). However, the Rochester riots of 1964 did elicit a city-wide state of emergency announcement from City Manager Porter Homer.

For this 2015 Plan Update, known civil unrest events that have impacted Monroe County between 2010 and 2015 are identified in Table 5.4.10-1. Because civil unrest documentation regarding New York and Monroe County varies so much, not all sources have been identified or researched. Therefore, Table 5.4.10-1 may not include all events that have occurred in the County.



Table 5.4.10-1. Civil Unrests in Monroe County, 2010 to 2015

Date(s) of Event	Event Type	FEMA Declaration Number (if applicable)	Monroe County Designated?	Description
May 1, 2015	March/Protest	N/A	No	Protesters marched in the City of Rochester in solidarity with people marching in Baltimore, after that City’s top prosecutor announced charges Friday against six officers involved in the arrest of a black man whose neck was broken in police custody. The court’s decision came amid outrage around the country over police brutality against African Americans. The Rochester protesters called for an end to the violence.
April 14-15, 2015	March	N/A	No	Marchers gathered on East Avenue and Mount Hope Avenue in the City of Rochester to fight for wage equality, including equal pay for women, higher wages for workers, and more options for workers to form unions. The marches were organized by a number of advocacy groups, workers, and churches.
November 30, 2014	Rally	N/A	No	Hundreds rallied in the downtown area of the City of Rochester to protest a grand jury’s decision not to indict Ferguson, MO Police Officer Darren Wilson for the killing of Michael Brown, an unarmed black teenager. The rally did not include city officials. No property damage or violence was reported.
September 21, 2014	Unruly Crowd	N/A	No	At least a thousand people took to the streets in the Village of Brockport overnight between Saturday night and Sunday morning when the Brockport Police Department ordered the bars to close an hour early at 1 a.m. over safety concerns. Homecoming weekend at the College at Brockport: State University of New York was the cause of such a large crowd gathering in the Village, and when ordered to exit the bars, people flooded the streets and started shouting "U-S-A!" and "Let's Go Brockport." More than 30 police officers from 13 different departments arrived at the scene, arresting 28 people, at least 3 of whom were students. Police Chief Daniel Varrenti told a news reporter that the event was not a riot.
September 15, 2014	Protest	N/A	No	Homeless advocates were arrested and charged with criminal trespassing after protesting outside a Monroe County office building in the City of Rochester. The dissenters protested cancellation of a scheduled meeting of County officials to discuss the City’s homeless problem and emergency housing shelter availability.
August 11, 2013	Riots	N/A	No	The City of Rochester Police Department arrested 16 people following the annual Puerto Rican Festival after festival participants allegedly threw rocks, bottles, and eggs at police officers. Pepper balls, a helicopter, and other crowd control measures, along with about 100 police officers in riot gear, were deployed to calm the situation.
October 31, 2011	Protest	N/A	No	Two men with the “Occupy Rochester” protesters were arrested for violating city ordinances at a park in the City of Rochester where 32 demonstrators had been rounded up on trespassing charges three nights earlier. One man was accused of violating Rochester’s municipal code for tying a “Liberation Square Rochester” sign to a Civil War monument in Washington Square Park. Another was ticketed for sleeping in the park. However, Mayor Thomas Richards said that the arrests had been intended to prevent confrontations over health and safety concerns related to the multi-week occupation.



Table 5.4.10-1. Civil Unrests in Monroe County, 2010 to 2015

Date(s) of Event	Event Type	FEMA Declaration Number (if applicable)	Monroe County Designated?	Description
March 25, 2010	Vandalism	N/A	No	A brick was thrown at the office door of the Monroe County Democratic Committee in the City of Rochester by opponents of President Obama's contentious healthcare reform measure that had been signed into law earlier in the week.
July 24-27, 1964	Riots	N/A	No	<p>Riots raged for 3 days in the City of Rochester in the aftermath of an arrest of a young black male at a street block party and dance off Joseph Avenue, during the late evening hours of July 24, 1964. The riots started with roughly 400 people in two of the City's predominantly black wards, near the intersection of Nassau Street and Joseph Avenue. Adjacent areas of the City, including downtown, were involved over the coming days, when rioting crowds swelled to more than 2,000 people. City police, state troopers, and sheriff's deputies were all called to the scene.</p> <p>On July 25, City Manager Porter Homer ordered an 8:00 p.m. city-wide curfew, and closed all liquor stores in the City and surrounding municipalities. However, violence surged as rioters threw Molotov cocktails, rocks, and bottles from rooftops and store windows. Governor Nelson Rockefeller declared a state of emergency and called in the New York National Guard—the first use of those troops for that purpose in a northern city.</p> <p>The riots left 4 people dead (3 in a helicopter crash) and 350 injured. Almost a thousand people were arrested, the majority between 20 and 40 years old, employed, with no prior record. Fifteen percent of those arrested were white. Stores either looted or damaged numbered 204.</p>

Sources: Democrat and Chronicle 2013; PBS 2015; Rochester Homepage 2015; Syracuse.com 2011; Syracuse.com 2014; The Guardian 2010; Time Warner Cable News 2015.



Probability of Future Occurrences

Many civil unrest incidents are spontaneous and can occur at any time, rendering prediction of probability of future occurrences difficult. When these incidents occur, they can become extremely disruptive and difficult to control. Assumedly, civil unrest incidents including marches, protests, demonstrations, and gatherings will continue to occur throughout Monroe County.

In Section 5.3, the identified hazards of concern for Monroe County were ranked. Probability of occurrence, or likelihood of the event, is one parameter used for hazard rankings. Based on historical records and input from the Planning Committee, the probability of occurrence of civil unrest in the County is considered “frequent” (likely to occur within 25 years, as presented in Table 5.3-3).

Climate Change Impacts

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



5.4.10.2 Vulnerability Assessment

To understand risk, a community must evaluate what assets are exposed or vulnerable within the identified hazard area. For the civil unrest hazard, all of Monroe County has been identified as the hazard area. Therefore, all assets in the County (population, structures, critical facilities, and lifelines) as described in the County Profile (Section 4), are vulnerable to civil unrest. This section evaluates and estimates potential impacts of the civil unrest hazard on the County, including:

- Overview of vulnerability
- Data and methodology used for the evaluation
- Impacts on (1) life, health, and safety of residents; (2) general building stock; (3) critical facilities; (4) economy; and (5) future growth and development
- Effect of climate change on vulnerability
- Change in vulnerability from that presented in the 2011 Monroe County Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Further data collections that will improve understanding of this hazard over time.

Overview of Vulnerability

Overall, it is difficult to quantify potential losses of civil unrest due to the many variables and human elements.

Data and Methodology

For this hazard, data were obtained from Monroe County and the Planning Committee.

Impacts on Life, Health, and Safety

The entire County is considered vulnerable to this hazard. Potential losses from civil unrest 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 innocent bystanders. If a civil disturbance turns violent, it can lead to injury and/or death for personnel responding to the incident. The number of people exposed to a civil disturbance depends on population density. Increases in population or hosting of major political, economic, or social events could increase the likelihood and severity of a civil unrest incident.

Impacts on General Building Stock

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

Impacts on Critical Facilities

Critical facilities may be targets of civil unrest disturbances. Refer to Section 4, County Profile, which summarizes the number and types of critical facilities in Monroe County. Disruptions to critical facilities may have cascading secondary effects such as power outages and utility failure. Because these facilities are vulnerable to civil unrests and may be focal points during a protest, these facilities must be protected during incidents.

Impacts on Economy

Civil unrest events can have negative economic and social effects on Monroe County as a whole. Economic conditions could be adversely affected, depending on time and length of cleanup and investigation of the incident. Some incidents may target the business sector, impacting the economy of the municipality where the incident occurs. For the purpose of this assessment, all of Monroe County's economy is considered exposed to effects of civil unrest incidents.



Future Growth and Development

As discussed in Sections 4 and 9, areas targeted for future growth and development have been identified across Monroe County. Any areas of growth could be impacted by the civil unrest hazard because the entire County is exposed and vulnerable. Increases of development and population could increase likelihood of a civil unrest incident, as could future migration to larger jurisdictions. 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.

Effects of Climate Change on Vulnerability

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

Change of Vulnerability

Overall, the County's vulnerability has not changed since the 2011 HMP, and the entire County will continue to be exposed and vulnerable to civil unrest events.

Additional Data and Next Steps

For the Plan Update, any additional information regarding localized concerns and past impacts will be collected and analyzed. These data will be developed to support future revisions to the plan. Mitigation efforts could include building on existing New York State, Monroe County, and local efforts.