



Civil Unrest Tip Sheet

August 2021

The Northwest Healthcare Response Network (NWHRN) continues to work with local response partners to prepare for potential civil unrest. This Civil Unrest Tip Sheet is designed to support facilities and organizations in their planning efforts and to reference if civil unrest impacts are anticipated. State and regional responses to a variety of man-made and natural hazards continues prove that organizations are most resilient and effective when partners are pro-active in their planning efforts, share and learn from each other, and most importantly, work together.

Stay Aware as Events Unfold

Partners are encouraged to maintain a high level of awareness around planned and unplanned public gatherings. We recommend accessing a blend of informational sources and utilizing rumor control “checks,” as the likelihood of misinformation is high—especially as the information may be unconfirmed in the early stages of events. Sources of information include:

1. **NWHRN**

We will closely monitor the situation, including information distributed from our emergency management colleagues, for any potential impacts to healthcare. We will send updated information when impacts are identified.

Please contact the **NWHRN Duty Officer at 425-988-2897** with any questions or concerns.

2. **Law Enforcement/Emergency Management**

We strongly encourage our healthcare partners to stay connected to local law enforcement and emergency management agencies to ensure they receive timely updates of ongoing incidents. Those connections might be direct and formal (e.g., receiving regular briefings) or informal (following them on social media and getting other auto-updates).

3. **Social Media**

a. **Resources and Tools**

Guides to utilizing social media for situational awareness

[Using Social Media for Enhanced Situational Awareness and Decision Support - DHS](#)
[Social Media in Emergency Response Guidance & Lesson’s Learned – ASPR Tracie](#)

Consider virtual staff or volunteer support for social media monitoring

[Introducing VOST: A Way to Make Social Media Work for Emergency Response](#)
[Social Media Analysis During Disasters – Digital Volunteer Organizations](#)

Social media platforms to monitor and associated tools

- Twitter – monitoring: [Tweetdeck](#), with geolocation function such as: [[Tweetmap](#), [Tweeplers](#)]
- Facebook

- Reddit – tips: monitor the following subreddits: [r/news](#), city-specific subreddit [\[example\]](#), event/incident-specific incident thread found in the comment section of a relevant post.
- Multi-platform monitoring tools: Hootsuite, Social Mention, Sintelix, etc.

b. Additional Strategies

- Have people familiar with social media conduct monitoring. There can often be a steep learning curve for effectively monitoring social media.
- Establish monitoring processes beforehand.
- Consider staffing shifts and utilizing volunteers.
- Monitor area-specific trending hashtags – this will provide information on which hashtags to follow and could provide an early indication if there is a Mass Casualty Incident (MCI). This can be done on Twitter using Tweetdeck or Tweepmap apps.
- Consider how and when you will vet social media information. Consider following up important information with key response partners to confirm.
- Ensure you are monitoring local law enforcement, emergency management, and local news accounts/pages.

4. Traditional Media – television, radio, print

Monitor broadcasts, websites, and social media channels

Stay Connected with Local Response and Healthcare Partners

Direct communication among healthcare and response partners can facilitate a common operating picture, the exchange of vital information, improved response coordination, and verification of critical information. One of NWHRN’s primary objectives is to facilitate communication between healthcare and response agencies; via host recurring or just-in-time coordination meetings; gather and disseminate situational awareness information; and when requested support regional response efforts by representing healthcare in emergency operation centers

Individual organizations should also be proactive in gathering information and coordinating response at the local level. Below is a short list of partnerships that should be established before an incident or event:

- Local law enforcement
- Local emergency management
- The NWHRN
- Area hospitals
- Local EMS

If You Are Close: Healthcare Planning in the Proximity of Anticipated Action

Those healthcare facilities who are in or near areas with a history of large gatherings or civil unrest should take additional steps to prepare for direct and indirect impacts.

Pre-planning

- Staff should carry facility badges / identification with them in case of roadblocks and other potential impediments.
- Determine if the facility will potentially feed and/or sleep staff overnight if it is unsafe for staff to get to or from work.
- Pre-establish healthcare incident command teams to centralize preparedness and response activities.

- Review existing plans and procedures. Consider adapting plans through the lens of the current situation. This should include active shooter and civil unrest plans.
- Consider upstaffing facility security personnel.
- Ask/keep current shift staff until their relief have arrived on shift.
- For those staff arriving for evening/PM shift, consider asking them to arrive earlier in case of road closures, protests, etc.
- Inspect external facility grounds to remove any objects that could be used as weapons such as landscaping rocks/stones, chairs/benches, signage, etc.
- Plan for discharging inpatients: consider both rapid-discharge protocols and a potential earlier cutoff time for discharging patients to home or other facilities.
- Identify essential exits/entrances that could be monitored and utilized.
- Identify secure entrances for vendor usage.

During a civil unrest event with proximity to a healthcare facility

- Consider there may be tensions between demonstrators in the proximity of your facility or between those arriving in the emergency department (ED). Plan accordingly and train staff on appropriate engagement techniques.
- Consider closing/locking all non-essential entrances/exits. Consider security/door attendants at other entrance or exit points.
- Ask vendors to use alternate entrances as needed.
- Use a 'buddy' system for staff leaving the facility: parking lots, transit points, etc.
- If staff may be targeted for their affiliation with healthcare, consider changing clothing before leaving the facility.
- Consider utilizing an outgoing message service for staff to stay up to date about important facility information.
- For healthcare facilities such as hospitals closest to any civil unrest, consider rapid emergency care services outside of normal space and staff for injuries related to projectiles, chemical/pepper spray exposure, gunshot wounds, etc.
- For acute care hospitals: regularly patrol ambulance bays, emergency department entrances, discharge locations, parking lots, etc. for any safety issues and impediments for those arriving or leaving.
- Provide staff additional opportunities to check in with family and friends.
- Keep external areas such as entrances well lit.
- Consider moving staff or patients near external facing windows closer to the facility's inner core.
- If possible, bring any facility-owned vehicles parked in open-air locations into a secure garage or enclosed area.

How to reach NWHRN

If you anticipate or are currently experiencing impacts from civil unrest, do not hesitate to reach out to the NWHRN team so we can support you.

Support from NWHRN

- 24/7 duty officer line - **Duty Officer at 425-988-2897**
- Regular NWHRN Coalition coordination calls
- District coordination meetings. These are held generally every month and are a good opportunity to discuss plans and concerns outside an immediate response. [Check the calendar](#) for the next district meeting or [contact your district coordinator](#)