



5.4.1 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 Genesee County.

5.4.1.1 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 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. Definitions of each of these types of crowds are listed below:

- 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:

- **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 (Alvarez and Bachman 2007).

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 Genesee 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 Batavia, as well as educational institutions around the County (including Genesee Community College in the Town of Batavia), may be targets of civil disturbance. The Darien Lake theme park—which includes amusement rides, concert venues, and camping facilities, and sees roughly 1.5 million attendees each year—may also be a target. 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. A disturbance 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 Genesee County. The 2008 Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) details information from the Genesee County Historian’s Office. The Office had indicated that no major occurrence of civil unrest has been recorded in the 20th or 21st centuries. The most notable occurrence of civil unrest in the County’s history was in 1836 when farmers marched on Batavia to protest the Holland Land Company’s changes to the fiscal policies regarding land holdings.

With so many sources reviewed for the purpose of updating this HMP, loss and impact information regarding many events varies depending on the source. Accuracy of monetary loss estimates is based only from information acquired during research for the 2019 HMP.

Between 1954 and 2018, New York State did not undergo any Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) civil unrest-related disasters (DR) or emergencies (EM) (FEMA 2018). For this 2019 Plan Update, known civil unrest events that have impacted Genesee County between 2008 and the present are identified in Table 5.4.1-1. Because civil unrest documentation regarding New York and Genesee County varies so much, not all sources have been identified or researched. Therefore, Table 5.4.1-1 may not include all events that have occurred in the County.



Table 5.4.1-1. Civil Unrests in Genesee County, 2008 to Present

Date(s) of Event	Event Type	FEMA Declaration Number (if applicable)	Genesee County Designated?	Description
April 13, 2012	Protest	N/A	No	Protesters spoke out against an unfair labor practice from the PepsiCo Project Wave site in Batavia. The protesters accused PepsiCo and Project Wave of taking millions in taxpayer dollars through tax incentives, while giving nothing back to the local community by finding labor workers from other states and regions to work on the project.
January 12, 2014	Protest	N/A	No	“The Shot Heard Round New York” was an organized protest in opposition to New York State’s SAFE Act. The protest involved gun owners gathering at gun clubs around the state and firing a single shot at noon. In Genesee, the protest occurred at the Northwoods Sportsman Club on Gulf Road in LeRoy.
January 18, 2014	Protest	N/A	No	Over 100 gun-rights advocates protested the SAFE Act at the New York State Police barracks in the Town of Batavia. The protest was amplified by comments from Governor Cuomo that seemed to belittle the protesters.
April 8, 2017	Protest	N/A	No	About 40 members from Citizens against Collins, GLOW Progressives, Le Roy Voices for Change, Metro Justice, and Stronger Together WNY gathered to protest “Coffee with Collins.” This was a fundraiser held by Congressman Chris Collins at Miss Batavia Diner in the City of Batavia, in which tickets to the event were \$55 each. Protesters were angered that they had tried to meet with the Congressman to discuss numerous issues and that he has shown a lack of interest in hosting an open Town Hall meeting. The protesters saw this fundraiser as “Pay to Play.”

Sources: *The Batavian 2014; ALIGN 2012; WBTA, Rochester First 2017*



Probability of Future Occurrences

Many civil unrest incidents are spontaneous and can occur at any time, which makes predicting the 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 could occur throughout Genesee County.

Section 5.3 of this HMP ranks the identified hazards of concern for Genesee County. 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 5.3-1).

Climate Change Impacts

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

5.4.1.2 Vulnerability Assessment

To understand risk, a community must evaluate exposed or vulnerable assets within the identified hazard area. For the civil unrest hazard, all of Genesee 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 2008 Genesee County HMP
- Further data collections that will improve understanding of this hazard over time

Overview of Vulnerability

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

Data and Methodology

For this hazard, data were obtained from Genesee County and the Planning Committee as well as media sources.

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 Genesee 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. Section 4 of this HMP, County Profile, summarizes the number and types of critical facilities in Genesee County. Disruptions to critical facilities may have cascading secondary effects such as power outages and utility failure. Because critical facilities are vulnerable to civil unrests and may be focal point during a protest, these facilities must be protected during incidents.

Impacts on Economy

Civil unrest events can have negative economic and social effects on Genesee County as a whole. Economic conditions could be adversely affected, depending on time and length of cleanup and investigation of the incident. For example, an incident at the Darien Lake theme park would likely result in a temporary closure to the park, resulting in significant economic loss. 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 Genesee County’s economy is considered exposed to effects of civil unrest incidents.

Future Growth and Development

As discussed in Sections 4 and 9 of this HMP, areas targeted for future growth and development have been identified across Genesee County. Any areas of growth could be impacted by the civil unrest hazard because the entire County is exposed and vulnerable. Increases in development and population could increase the likelihood of a civil unrest incident, as could future migration to larger jurisdictions. Specific areas of development are 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 2008 HMP, and the entire County will continue to be exposed and vulnerable to civil unrest events.

Additional Data and Next Steps

For the 2019 HMP 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, Genesee County, and local efforts.