

Crowd Control

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Definitions

Crowd: A group of people whose presence or expected behavior necessitates preventative measures to maintain order.

Demonstration: A crowd expressing support for authority or voicing opposition to a political, economic, or social condition.

Riot: A violent breach of peace by a group of people with a common purpose, acting together against anyone opposing them.

Disaster: An extreme or catastrophic condition that endangers or results in the loss of life and/or property.

Preparation and Response

While the thought of being involved in crowd control may be unsettling, security guards must be prepared for such situations. Even if it's hard to imagine being directly involved in controlling a riot, security guards must be ready if rioting, vandalism, or looting occurs on the property they are responsible for. Similarly, strikes or demonstrations at the assigned site can quickly escalate into violent and unruly crowds.

Handling Pre-Riot Situations

It's important to note that a solitary security guard or even a small team cannot significantly alter the course of a full-scale riot. However, with appropriate training, security personnel can effectively manage pre-riot situations, dealing with crowds on equal and non-lethal terms before violence erupts. Security guards must strive to stay calm and neutral, even under the intense stress of a mob situation.

Legal and Effective Actions

Security guards have a primary role in safeguarding property, equipment, and information. All actions taken by security must be strictly legal, regardless of the surrounding chaos. In such situations, guards may not be able to do much more than identify leaders or gather enough information to later identify offenders in court. If they can achieve this, they have fulfilled their duty effectively.

In summary, security guards must be prepared for crowd control situations, maintaining order legally and effectively, while protecting the property and people under their care.

Psychological Factors

Understanding the psychological factors that cause crowds to form and transform peaceful gatherings into disorderly mobs is crucial for those managing crowd control. Small crowds often attract initially disinterested individuals, rapidly increasing in size due to several key psychological factors:

1. **Security:** Some individuals are drawn to crowds for the sense of security and safety they provide. This is especially common during civil unrest when large gangs roam the streets, looting and threatening public safety. Fearful citizens may join these gangs for the perceived security they offer.
2. **Suggestion:** Individuals who join a crowd tend to adopt the ideas of a dominant member without conscious realization or objection. A forceful and persuasive leader can influence the crowd's judgment and common sense, leading even rational individuals to accept extreme ideas and become unthinking followers.
3. **Novelty:** The break from routine offered by joining a crowd can attract individuals. Through persuasion and suggestion, these individuals may enthusiastically engage in activities they deem appropriate in the new circumstances.
4. **Loss of Identity:** Similar to the security factor, individuals may lose their self-consciousness and identity within a crowd. This anonymity makes them feel safe and believe they will not be detected or punished for any wrongdoing they participate in.
5. **Release of Emotions:** Crowds can provide an outlet for individuals' prejudices and unsatisfied desires, which are usually kept in check. The temporary release of these emotions can strongly motivate individuals to join in the crowd's activities, allowing them to act on desires they previously did not dare to express.

Understanding these psychological factors can help security personnel better manage and mitigate the risks associated with crowd control, ensuring public safety and order.

Types of Crowds

Understanding the behavior and motivations of different types of crowds is essential for effective crowd control and security measures. Here are the primary types of crowds that might be encountered:

1. **Acquisitive Crowd:**
 - **Motivation:** Desire to acquire something.
 - **Example:** Shoppers at a sale or auction.
 - **Characteristics:** No leaders, little in common among members, each focused on their own interests.
2. **Expressive Crowd:**
 - **Motivation:** Expression of feelings or support.
 - **Example:** Conventions, political rallies.

- **Characteristics:** Generally well-behaved, but may become hostile if restrained or thwarted.
- 3. **Spectator Crowd:**
 - **Motivation:** Interest, curiosity, instruction, or entertainment.
 - **Example:** Sporting events, parades.
 - **Characteristics:** Initially well-behaved and good-natured, but emotions can quickly escalate, leading to unruly and violent behavior.
- 4. **Sightseer Crowd:**
 - **Motivation:** Curiosity.
 - **Example:** Gathering at the scene of a fire, accident, or disaster.
 - **Characteristics:** Cooperative and willing to assist, but can interfere with professional operations due to overzealousness.
- 5. **Hostile Crowd:**
 - **Motivation:** Feelings of hate and fear, willingness to fight for their cause.
 - **Example:** Strikes, political demonstrations, rival mobs.
 - **Characteristics:** May have leaders who maintain high hostility levels, but can also be leaderless if all participants share the same intensity of emotions.

Effective security measures depend on recognizing and understanding the type of crowd being dealt with to maintain order and ensure safety.

Managing Hostile Crowds

Hostile crowds can escalate into violence if not managed carefully. Security personnel must be vigilant and prepared to address these situations effectively, adhering to the following strategies:

Key Points on Managing Hostile Crowds

- **Leadership Influence:** Hostile crowds often have forceful leaders who incite violence. Security guards must recognize and mitigate these influences promptly.
- **Provocation:** Individuals within the crowd may try to provoke security guards into using unnecessary force to discredit them or incite further violence. Guards must remain composed and avoid reacting to verbal abuse.
- **Manpower:** Adequate manpower is essential for managing potentially dangerous crowds. Do not hesitate to request immediate assistance if a peaceful gathering shows signs of hostility.

Effective Crowd Control Techniques

1. **Remove or Isolate Agitators:**
 - Identify and isolate individuals inciting the crowd before they unify the group.
 - Remove these individuals quickly to prevent the crowd from escalating into violence.

- Use minimal force to avoid turning the crowd against you.
- 2. **Fragment the Crowd:**
 - Divide the crowd into smaller groups to diminish collective excitement and prevent mass hysteria.
 - Ensure sufficient manpower is available to manage the fragmented groups.
 - Display a strong presence to deter escalation, even if force is not used.
- 3. **Remove Crowd Leaders:**
 - Target the most vocal and excited individuals who act as informal leaders.
 - Ensure adequate manpower is present before attempting to remove these individuals to avoid provoking violence.
- 4. **Divert Crowd Attention:**
 - Use public address systems to urge the crowd to disperse.
 - Amplify authoritative commands to break the influence of excited crowd members.
- 5. **Random Arrests:**
 - Make random arrests on the edges of the crowd to shift focus from the group's objectives to individual safety.
 - This can create fear and lead to spontaneous dispersal.
- 6. **Use Recognized Leaders:**
 - Employ respected public figures, such as labor leaders, clergy, or civil rights leaders, to appeal for order and reason.
 - Select a figure appropriate to the crowd's origin and cause for maximum effectiveness.
- 7. **Prevent Panic:**
 - Panic often arises in escape crowds fleeing from perceived threats. Provide clear escape routes to prevent blockage and panic.
 - Use loudspeakers to give calm, confident directions and helpful information.
 - Involve rational crowd members to help calm others and provide first-aid to the injured.
 - Use security to channel movement and avoid actions that might panic the crowd.
- 8. **Handle Escape Crowds:**
 - An escape crowd, motivated by fear, is disorganized and leaderless.
 - Once the crowd reaches safety, manage individuals separately as their collective behavior dissipates.
 - Be cautious during the period of blind panic when the crowd is in motion.

By understanding and applying these strategies, security personnel can manage hostile crowds more effectively, ensuring the safety of people and property while maintaining order.

Security and Demonstrations

Security organizations tasked with overseeing demonstrations bear a dual responsibility. Regardless of personal beliefs, they must ensure the safety of peaceful demonstrators exercising their right to protest. Spectators who oppose the demonstration can pose a potential

threat of violence, often exacerbated by counter-demonstrations, whether planned or spontaneous.

Control forces are also responsible for protecting the general public from demonstrators who infringe upon the rights of others. Common issues arise when demonstrators participate in actions like "sit-ins," which can violate the property rights of others.

Formation of a Mob

A crowd or demonstration can devolve into a mob if it has been preconditioned by aggravating events, stirred up by rumors, and incited by professional agitators who target emotions rather than reason. Hostility becomes dominant, and unity replaces confusion and disorganization. The initial frustrations fueled by agitation and rumors often need a climactic incident to trigger mob behavior. This incident can occur for various reasons, and it is often influenced by the perceived weakening of the strength and resolve of the security forces tasked with maintaining peace.

Responsibility and Behavior of Protective Groups

Protection must be extended to all individuals, ensuring fair and equal treatment for everyone. Maintain a stance of neutrality and avoid granting any special privileges. Act with firmness, but avoid belligerence or the use of unreasonable force. Once an order is issued, it must be enforced to preserve public peace, protect the life and property of citizens, and ensure the basic rights of all people.

If you notice a hostile crowd forming, do not hesitate to request assistance. In such situations, it is safer to overestimate the number of personnel needed to restore order rather than attempt to act alone or underestimate your requirements. A show of strength not only restrains the crowd but also provides the necessary manpower.

Order must be established. Addressing the more vocal individuals in a crowd is an effective way to manage the group. When communicating with these individuals, be firm and carefully phrase your commands. Avoid engaging in arguments. Use simple language and inform them of the violations they are or may be committing. Request that the violations cease and that the group disperse. Give the crowd an opportunity to withdraw peacefully without interference. If the crowd defies authority and the apparent leaders make no effort to disperse, arrests should be made, or police assistance should be sought.

When dealing with an excited or hostile crowd, remember that it is potentially dangerous and may only require a slight incident to turn into a mob. Your example and ability to maintain order are the best deterrents to mob action.

How to Deal with the Media

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees everyone in Canada “freedom of thought, belief, opinion, and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication.” This is commonly known as “freedom of the press,” meaning that the media, as part of a democratic society, can express their views without fear of punishment.

The media may show a strong interest in speaking with you if you are guarding a site where something noteworthy has occurred, such as an accident, crime, visit by a celebrity, labor strike, etc. Your primary duty is to protect the people and information at your site, not to speak on behalf of the company.

Check your post orders to see if a Public Relations person is listed as a contact. This individual is authorized to give interviews or press releases to the media. If a Public Relations person is not designated:

- Refer the media to a site manager or your employer.
- Avoid making any statements or sharing your personal views, even if told it is “off the record.”
- Refrain from using the “no comment” response, as it can be used against you.