

How to Prepare for Widespread Civil Unrest

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 **COLLAPSE SURVIVAL SITE**

One of the first signs of collapse is civil unrest. As the basic necessities of life such as food and clean water become too expensive, people are going to lash out. Fights and mass shootings will become even more common, and protests will regularly morph into riots.

As climate change destroys crops and a lack of cheap energy causes everything to become more expensive, people are going to get desperate. Some people—who have never hurt anyone or stolen anything in their lives—will resort to burglary to get food for their families. And the people being burglarized will fight back.

The police will struggle to maintain law, and over time, they will gradually lose control of the cities they're supposed to protect. When criminals realize that the police are too busy to stop all of them, they will [take advantage of the chaos](#) to steal whatever they want and terrorize innocent people.

Eventually, the government will impose martial law, but it won't be enough. When people are on the verge of starvation, they'll have nothing left to lose, and friendly middle-class neighborhoods will become as dangerous as some of the most lawless places on Earth.

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Steps to Consider to Survive Civil Unrest

In the midst of [growing chaos](#), what's an individual, family, or small group to do? Fortunately, there are steps they can take to at least [get through the worst](#) and make the best of a new and confusing time.

Here are some specific steps to consider to prepare for widespread civil unrest:

Avoid It

It seems like a brilliant penetration of the realm of the obvious but the best way to survive any threat is to simply [avoid it in the first place](#). However, there are many instances of people walking into a riot; trying to awkwardly drive through a protest in the streets, or simply failing to lock their doors at a time of growing violence and crime.

Avoiding civil unrest requires a bit of research but it's often not hard to find. A lot of it has to do with something called "situational awareness." It's the ability to assess your surroundings and identify threats before or as they are happening. Here are some things to look for:

- **News reports** on local TV about a planned demonstration or gathering. Even the simplest protest will attract antagonists and that's where the violence begins.
- **The Internet** is awash with news about gathering points, possible destinations for a protest or assembly, or possible problems with various groups in certain areas. Take note of where and when anything may possibly occur and either find a way to stay away or go to that area if you must with great caution.
- **If you see an unusual gathering** of people that doesn't make sense for a location or if they are carrying the usual protest signs and flags, find another route if you are traveling or go into a building or store where you will at least have some distance from the possible threat.
- **The neighborhood grapevine** is another source for information and if your neighbors are aware of an area that could become a potential problem, avoid it and make sure your family and friends are aware of what you heard. There's a possibility that the whole story is a lot of gossip but if there have been incidents in your area it's better safe than sorry.

- **Common sense** can also be an ally. If you know a neighborhood has a history of problems or you get the sense that a location like a park, municipal building, court house or other location has the potential to be a target for any form of protest –avoid that location.

Street Survival in a Riot

In spite of your best efforts you may find yourself in the midst of civil unrest without warning. This can happen when you're leaving work for home and find that [a violent protest or riot](#) has occurred in front of your place of work. You probably won't notice it until you get to the exit door to the street, but what immediately becomes apparent is that the threat is real and it's happening.

Here are some things to consider:

- **Go back inside.** Whether it's an office building, store or other business –go back into your place of work. Let your fellow employees know what you've seen and see if anyone is aware of what's going on. Some businesses have plans in place to deal with various emergencies and that would be fortunate. If not, you're on your own.
- **Phone home.** Once you're safely back inside wherever you work, call home to not only alert your family to what's going on, but see if they have any information from local news or the Internet about what's happening.
- **Leave work in a group.** If you finally decide you must get out of the building try to do it with a group. Individuals are often seen as the most vulnerable and a group of you can get out of the area with at least some safety in numbers.
- **Avoid the darkness of night.** If you're leaving work, try to do it while it's still light out if possible. Darkness makes everyone anonymous and it will be

- difficult to see possible or approaching threats.
- **Don't try to drive through a demonstration.** If the streets are blocked with protesters or rioters you don't want to drive into that environment. There are too many examples of rioters overturning cars, carjackings, or in most instances senseless vandalism to vehicles. Get out of the area and if you simply can't continue driving, either find public transportation, call for a ride or if you must –walk either to a safer location or home if you can.

If You're Trapped in a Riot

Sometimes, in spite of our best efforts, bad things happen. Civil unrest often happens fast and spreads quickly. Once a large group decides or believes that the laws don't apply, the level and area of violence spreads like a wildfire.

If you're trapped in the midst of civil unrest your first priority should be to get out of the area. How you approach that will vary depending on the circumstances:

- **If you're [traveling on foot](#)** after getting off a bus, walking out of store or if it simply erupts around you –walk to an area that appears to be safer. Don't make eye contact with anyone but be aware of who and what is around you. Run if you must but running will often attract attention.
- **Look for the police.** This isn't about approaching a line of officers with riot shields. They may see you as a threat. However, staying in the vicinity of law enforcement may offer you at least the ability to call for help if attacked. Unfortunately, the police [tend to be at the center of events](#) and that's the area you want to avoid. Ideally, find an officer of two removed from the action and ask them what to do.

- If [you're in your car](#) and a [riot erupts around your vehicle](#), roll up the windows and lock the doors. Don't try to nudge your way through the people in front of you. Take out your cell phone and call 911 and put it on speaker. The sight of you holding your phone upright in front of you may imply you are video recording those around you and that may deter them. Then again, they may see it as a threat. If so, put the phone down but don't hang up.
- **If they start attacking your vehicle** start beeping the horn or hit the panic button/alarm on your key fob if your vehicle has that option. There's no guarantee this will stop the violence but it will hopefully alert any law enforcement in the vicinity to what's happening.

Defend Yourself

A mob mentality has no conscience. Once a target is selected (often at random) the mob descends. At this point you have to [defend yourself](#) and that will always be difficult if there is more than one attacker. Here are some possibilities in that event:

- **Scream for help.** We can only be so brave but asking for help (or screaming for it) could attract [some good Samaritans](#) or law enforcement to your predicament. No guarantees but what's the alternative if you're unarmed and overwhelmed.
- **Carry pepper spray.** Something like pepper spray could buy you a brief opportunity to run. Run to the police, run to an office building or any building that gets you out of the crowd and away from the violence.
- **Carry a gun.** [This is serious](#) but a small pistol will definitely stop an attack. It may also lead to an attacker pulling out their own gun, but if the situation is that desperate you can only hope your attacker takes

the bullet before you do. Once the attack has hopefully stopped, run but watch your back and don't carry the gun in your hand while running. Law enforcement probably won't see someone running with a gun as a good Samaritan or innocent victim.

- **In a car, should you floor it?** Definitely not but a mother or father in a vehicle with kids all under attack may feel they have no choice. There are many examples of [people "flooring it" into a demonstration](#) who have landed in jail. The biggest problem is that you may have defended yourself against an immediate threat, but will most likely run over innocent bystanders or non-violent participants. It all depends on who ultimately determines if the threat was real.
- **Join a non-violent crowd to leave the area.** Not everyone is going to be involved in the civil unrest. If you see others around you who are also attempting to leave the scene, join them and walk out with the group.

Home Security

How far you go to make your [home secure](#) is a matter of degree driven by your location, events and your level of concern. There are some [basic home security](#) steps that anyone should pursue, and then we'll cover some of the more extreme steps you can take if you live in a dangerous neighborhood or an area where civil unrest is common.

The critical thing to keep in mind is that in [a time of civil unrest](#), the respect for the law and fear of breaking it collapses. When people and groups or gangs start roaming the streets they will often act fearlessly, and you don't want your home to be one of those fearless targets.

Basic Home Security Steps

These are [simple security steps](#) that make sense regardless of the circumstances. They're relatively inexpensive but make sense from a security perspective.

Reinforced Deadbolt Locks

[Deadbolts](#) can make any door difficult to open and offer an added level of security to common locks on primary door handles. One thing to consider is a [reinforcement insert](#) over the door and just as importantly, [the strikeplate](#). Even a deadbolt can fail with sufficient force.

Deadbolts should be installed on all exterior doors although patio doors usually aren't designed for deadbolts.

Patio Door Bars

A simple security [solution for patio doors](#) is to lay [a bar of steel](#) or wood into the channel of a patio door. This makes it physically impossible to slide the door open. Patio doors have notoriously weak locking mechanisms and the back of a home is often the first choice for a break-in.

Clear the Brush

If your home is hidden behind overgrown bushes, trees and brush you should give everything a good trim. You want a clear line of sight to the outside and you don't want to give anyone a place to hide while they casually find a way to break-in.

Improved Window Locks

Some window locks are very weak with small screws. Even then there's not a lot of leverage when trying to lift a window but a pry bar might make short work of them. Buy and install [quality window locks](#) and you could even install two on each

window to enhance the re-enforcement.

Remove Your Home from the Internet

You may be wondering how your home got on the Internet but there's a good chance it's there. Not only your home but a 360 degree view of your neighborhood, a satellite image of your home location and surrounding area and the city and street address. It's all on Google Maps and if you go there right now and enter your street address you'll find the photos.

The important thing to do is to go to Google and request that your home imagery be removed or at least blurred. Here's the [link to the Google Maps help page](#) to show you how to do that.

You may also want to do the same for various real estate websites where your home may be shown even if it's not for sale. If you did list your home recently or recently purchased a new home the photo of the exterior will not only be online but a whole house, room by room tour.

Redfin and Zillow, for some reason, do not take down home listings and room by room images even after the home is sold. Worse, they will often show a photo of the home even if it's not for sale. If you have any doubts, go to [Redfin](#) or [Zillow](#) and type in your home address. You may be surprised to see it. Contact them and others and get your home off the Internet if it's not for sale or recently purchased.

A Dog

Anyone who owns a dog knows how they seem to sense when someone is close or in the vicinity of the home. This sixth sense is often accompanied by loud barking. [All of that is good](#) and can not only alert you to someone close to your home but deter anyone approaching or trying to get in. [Get a dog](#).

Form a Neighborhood Watch

If local emergency services become overwhelmed it will become more and more important to find safety and support in your local community. Neighbors are a good place to start and the next time you have that casual conversation over the fence or in an elevator in an apartment building –break the ice on local security.

If things are starting to go downhill fast it's a good bet they have the same concerns as you. Talk about it and reassure them that you've got their back and they most likely will watch yours as well. [Form a neighborhood watch](#).

Consider Basic Video Security Devices

This sounds expensive but if you shop around [on Amazon](#) and install them yourself they're actually economical. [Doorbell cams](#) are the most basic way to go, but you could also install a simple security camera in the back yard, on the side of the house and even outbuildings like a detached garage or workshop.

Most are wireless so they can be installed anywhere, and [some are even solar powered](#) so they don't require an electrical hookup. If you simply can't afford even basic video security there are [fake home video cameras](#) and [fake camera domes](#) that you can place around the house to deter a break-in.

Weapons

Hopefully it doesn't come to this but if a marauding gang of rioters make it into your home you either run or stand your ground. [Bear spray](#) may be the best non-lethal choice next to a [cattle prod](#) or [stun gun](#). [A firearm](#) is the weapon of last resort but if they have broken into your home with violent intent there are laws that give you the right to defend your

home and your family.

The firearm you choose is up to you but [some standard recommendations](#) for home security and firearms are a handgun and shotgun. Opinions vary so [do some research](#), understand your local laws and choose what you feel is right for you. This may sound like one of the extreme measures for home security but that feeling varies depending on the individual and their situation.

Extreme Home Security Solutions

These solutions are extreme for two reasons: they're expensive or they're very apparent and not necessarily cosmetically pleasing from a curb appeal standpoint.

A Fence

[A fence around your property](#) will discourage people from entering or crossing your property. We should say "discourage" with an asterisk because the type of fence will have a lot to do with how discouraged any trespassing will be.

Picket fences are probably the most ineffective. A solid fence about 6 feet high is a good start. Beyond that people have used barbed wire atop chain link fences and even electrified fences. It all depends on your location, the situation and your level of concern.

A Gated Driveway

If you have a driveway leading up to your home, something as simple as [a secure and locked gate](#) across your driveway can be enough to keep people from bypassing your fence and just walking up to your front door or garage.

Some of these are electronic with video while others are locked and unlocked manually. Even a cable or chain across the

driveway may be enough to deter some unwanted strangers from visiting unexpectedly. Any kind of barrier to entry is a good idea especially if you have a long driveway.

An Advanced Security System

[Advanced home security systems](#) cost more than basic video cameras and are usually interconnected to a monitor with audible alerts if the built in motion-detectors in the system detect any movement.

Many also have video recording capabilities; sound and many can be connected to a security service that will contact the local police or fire departments and [even your cell phone](#). Most have a panic button that will sound a loud, piercing alarm.

How complicated you make one of these systems is up to you, but if you're fairly handy with tools and basic home construction you can install some of these systems yourself. Others may require professional installation.

Window and Door Bars

This definitely falls in the category of cosmetically unappealing. It's always a bit unnerving driving through a neighborhood with bars on the doors and windows. Unfortunately, if you live in one of those neighborhoods (or your neighborhood is becoming one), burglar bars may be a consideration.

Most people don't take this step until they've endured an actual home invasion but if the level of violence and civil unrest around your home seems to be increasing it may be an inevitable precaution.

Perimeter Alarms

If you live on a large piece of property, or have a section of property that seems especially vulnerable to the general public, you may want to [consider perimeter alarms](#). Some of these are electronic and you can buy them on Amazon. Some even have a feature that will [trigger solar powered spotlights](#).

In a pinch you can [rig up your own perimeter alarms](#) although you may not hear them in the middle of the night. Then again, someone trying to approach your home doesn't want to make noise any more than they want to [hear a barking dog](#) so they might be a deterrent.

Bulletproof Windows and Doors

This is not cheap but you can buy bulletproof windows and doors and [bulletproof your home](#). There's also [a transparent adhesive](#) that might stop a bullet but the glass will break. There are homes in some neighborhoods that see bulletproof windows and doors as a necessity. Burglar bars may keep people out but they won't stop a bullet.

Hopefully It Doesn't Come to This

With any luck our daily lives will be simply surrounded by crimes and violence as usual. We hear about it all the time. It's when it's all we hear that things become severe. Take a little time to think about what you would do in any of the situations we outlined. At the very least, take some steps to improve your basic home security and at least get your home off those Internet web sites.

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