OPERATIONAL INFORMATION NOTE
Public disorder

▶ INFORMATION

- Verbal abuse can unfortunately be common at incidents and although those participating in public disorder may not target the fire and rescue service, personnel should be aware that their role may put them at risk during disturbances.
- Public order may go through phases, perhaps starting with tension in a community, group, or crowd.
  This could turn into disorder, with actions including disruption, damage, or violence. It may then deteriorate to serious disorder or rioting, with violent protest, criminal damage, looting and the use of weapons or fire.
- Disorder may be contained at a single location, but may spread to a wide geographic area, sometimes at a fast-moving pace. It can range from being loosely organised or opportunistic, through to being well-organised, sometimes using social media.

Figure 1: Working directly from a hydrant using hand controlled dividing breaching

⚠ HAZARDS

- Violence and aggression
- Thrown or dropped objects
- Fireworks
- The use of knives, firearms, or improvised weapons
- Incendiary devices
- Fire setting
- Booby traps
- Ambushes
- Damage to, or theft of, fire and rescue service equipment and vehicles
- Improvised obstructions or barricades to delay or trap emergency responders and their vehicles
- Biohazards, especially if there have been physical attacks on people

⚖ LEGISLATION AND POLICY

- HE/02/22 – Procedure for dealing with work related violence
- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (Section 11)
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (Section 4)
- Emergency Workers (Obstruction) Act 2006 (Section 1)

OPERATIONAL INFORMATION NOTE
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📋	OPERATIONAL TACTICS

Avoid confrontation
- Consider requesting Police to escort appliances or define safe route – gather updated information and intelligence from Police continuously
- Use a silent approach (No blue lights or sirens)
- Ensure personnel avoid confrontation if there is a risk of violence or aggression
- If personnel are confronted remain calm, avoid prolonged eye contact, keep distance, tone of voice and body posture are important speak softly and slowly and try to appear relaxed, try to negotiate and diffuse the situation
- Inform the fire control room that personnel may be affected in confrontation or public disorder

Secure personnel, equipment, and vehicles
- Ensure that full PPE is worn as soon as possible including eye protection/visors down
- Establish a suitable inner cordon with police before deployment
- Consider deploying the minimum amount of equipment during public disorder
- Maintain the security of fire and rescue service vehicles and equipment during public disorder, i.e. Lock doors and keep windows closed. Ensure that equipment lockers are secured
- Consider using jets direct from hydrant using controlled breach and remove key and bar to prevent public from tampering or using as a weapon
- Ensure the security of handheld radios and use with discretion

Withdrawal from public disorder
- Consider withdrawal if police not in attendance
- Establish and communicate the signal and plan for rapid withdrawal during public disorder
- Gather regularly updated information and intelligence from the police
- Consider requesting advice or assistance from the National Inter-agency Liaison Officer (NILO)
- Maintain situational awareness with regard to the behaviour and movement of members of the public gathered at the scene
- Ensure operational activities allow for rapid withdrawal of personnel, vehicles, and equipment during public disorder
- Consider defensive tactics including controlled burn

ℹ	FURTHER INFORMATION

- See NOG guidance - Operations – Public Disorder for more general considerations