SECURITY EVENTS · PREPAREDNESS

Civil Unrest Safety Checklist

Prepare · Avoid · Get out — a printable companion to the Civil Unrest Safety Guide

Local authorities' instructions always come first. This checklist is general guidance based on crowd-safety research (G. Keith Still; Stott, Drury & Reicher), the CDC and lessons from real unrest in Latin America, Europe, the US and Africa.

PART 1 Before — prepare at home

Target: be able to stay home for **14 days** without shopping. Blockades hit supermarkets, pharmacies and fuel stations first.

Supplies for 14 days

- ☐ **4 L of water per person per day**
  People _____ × 14 days = _____ L
- ☐ Food you already eat (rice, beans, pasta, oats, canned fish, oil)
- ☐ Spare cooking gas cylinder (if you cook with LPG)
- ☐ Prescription medicines for 1 month + first aid kit
- ☐ Cash in small bills
- ☐ Car fuel never below **half a tank** in tense periods
- ☐ Charged power banks and a battery radio
- ☐ Offline maps downloaded on your phone
- ☐ Supplies kept out of sight (no pantry photos online)

Family plan

- ☐ Meeting point near home: _____
- ☐ Meeting point outside the neighborhood: _____
- ☐ Out-of-town contact: _____
  Phone: _____
- ☐ Who picks up the kids: _____
- ☐ Rule agreed: **"Head home; if you can't, send your location and stay put"**

Home basics

- ☐ Deadbolt with a reinforced strike plate
- ☐ Bar in sliding-door tracks
- ☐ Window locks and bars well anchored
- ☐ Exterior lights on, hedges trimmed
- ☐ House blurred on Google Street View
- ☐ Old photos removed from property listing sites

Your building — lessons from Cali, Los Angeles and France

- ☐ One entry open, all others locked
- ☐ Gate rota in pairs **from behind the gate**: watch and call, don't confront
- ☐ Lights on at entrances at night, blinds open on the street side
- ☐ **Cars away from the walls, bins and flammables inside**
- ☐ Extinguishers on every floor, hose connected, water and sand at the entrance
- ☐ Evacuation route if a fire starts next door + grab bag by the door
- ☐ List of residents who need help
- ☐ One verified-info channel: **no rumor acted on until confirmed**
- ☐ Crowd approaching → **everyone in, gates shut, call the police**
- ☐ **Last resort:** attacked with no way out → self-defense is legitimate. Only the force needed, only to protect life

PART 2 Stay away — evasion

Level	What it looks like	What to do
1 · Tension	Strike announced, big court ruling or price hike due	Adjust routes and times, top up supplies
2 · Local disorder	Riots, looting or clashes in parts of the city, often at night	Get home early, avoid hotspots, stay in if you can
3 · Sustained crisis	Days or weeks of blockades, curfews and shortages	Live off supplies, coordinate with neighbors, very low profile

Triggers to watch

- ☐ Announced national strikes
- ☐ Big court rulings or arrests of political figures
- ☐ Fuel, transport or price hikes
- ☐ Contested elections
- ☐ Anniversaries of past unrest

Timing and routes

- ☐ Leave early, **home before dusk**
- ☐ Work remotely during strikes if you can
- ☐ Route A home: _____
- ☐ Route B home: _____
- ☐ Both avoid avenues, squares, government buildings, universities and malls

Be the grey person

- ☐ Neutral clothes: **no political colors, team shirts or symbols**
- ☐ Nothing flashy: no expensive watch, no big camera
- ☐ Phone in your pocket
- ☐ No politics in the street, at blockades or on transport

At a blockade

- ☐ Turn back if you can
- ☐ Stopped? Stay calm and polite, **stay in the car**
- ☐ No filming, no arguing
- ☐ Follow instructions to go around or wait
- ☐ A small "toll" is not worth a fight

Information you can trust

- ☐ Official source 1 (city, transport): _____
- ☐ Official source 2: _____
- ☐ One serious local news outlet: _____
- ☐ Never share anything you haven't checked

Don't go and look

- ☐ Chanting, sirens or bangs? **Move away from the sound**, not toward it. Curiosity is not a safety strategy.

PART 3 If it erupts around you — quick reference

Situation	What to do
First 30 seconds	**STOP** · **LOOK**: where is it, which way is it moving? · **DECIDE**: go or stay. In a solid building, **staying is often safest**: keep away from glass
On foot	Walk, don't run · move **perpendicular** to the crowd, toward side streets · stay on the edges, near walls · join calm groups leaving
Crowd too dense	Can't move freely? **Leave early and diagonally** · arms bent in front of your chest · go with the pressure, drift sideways · if you fall, get up, or curl on your side and protect your head
Tear gas	Out of the cloud, **upwind, to higher ground** · don't rub your eyes, rinse with water, remove contact lenses · at home: bag clothes, wash with soap and water · **get medical help** for breathing problems or severe eye pain
Police lines	**Never stand between police and protesters** · approach officers only away from the action, hands visible · obey orders instantly · carry ID
Projectiles	Turn your face away, **protect your eyes**, get behind something solid · clear glasses or goggles if you must cross tense areas
Gunfire	**Get down**, get behind something solid, then move away under cover
In a car	Turn back at the first sign · keep the rear tires of the car ahead in view · boxed in: doors locked, windows up, no filming, no honking, call emergency services · attacked with a safe exit? **Leave the car**
Public transport	Get off a stop or two early · don't wait in stations near a hotspot

DON'T: × go and look · × enter a store being looted · × drive into a crowd · × film or argue

PART 4 Emergency contacts

	Name	Phone
Local emergency number		
Nearest police station		
Building security / doorman		
Out-of-town contact		
Family member 1		
Family member 2		
Doctor or clinic		
Embassy or consulate (travellers)		

PART 5 If it lasts weeks · After it ends

If it lasts weeks

- ☐ Ration from day one: **fresh → dry → canned**
- ☐ Shop early and locally (corner stores, local farmers)
- ☐ Follow the curfew **to the letter**
- ☐ Pool resources with neighbors: one trip, shared transport, shared gas
- ☐ Check on vulnerable people (elderly, dialysis, chemotherapy, pregnancy)
- ☐ Keep routines, limit doom-scrolling, call family

After it ends

- ☐ **Don't go out the first night** after it "ends"
- ☐ Photograph damage for insurance before cleaning up
- ☐ **Never buy goods that might be looted**
- ☐ Check on your neighbors
- ☐ What was missing from our plan?

  _____
- ☐ Plan updated on: _____

Mindset in 7 rules

- ☐ **Distance beats gear.** Every block between you and the trouble counts
- ☐ **Time beats bravery.** Leave early, home before dark
- ☐ **Don't go and look.**
- ☐ **Be boring.** Neutral clothes, no politics, phone away
- ☐ **Staying put is a valid choice.** A solid building often beats the street
- ☐ **Things are replaceable. You aren't.** Hand over the car or phone and walk away
- ☐ **Verify before you react.** Rumors cause panic; panic gets people hurt

Sources: CDC (Riot Control Agents) · G. Keith Still, crowd science · Drury, Novelli & Stott (2013); Stott & Reicher on crowd behaviour · reporting on Santiago 2019, Cali 2021, Quito 2019 & 2025, Buenos Aires 2001, Los Angeles 1992, South Africa 2021, France 2018–19, Spain 2012 & 2021, Kyiv 2014.

Track civil unrest live: security-events.com · **Full guide:** security-events.com/blog/civil-unrest-safety-guide-latin-america