

NC BLET Crowd Management Study Guide

I. Introduction to Crowd Management

- Crowd management is necessary when officers deal with **three or more individuals** in a group.
 - **Understanding crowd behavior** is crucial for officer and community safety.
 - The **First Amendment** protects peaceful assembly but does not cover unlawful acts like riots or violence.
 - Law enforcement's role is to **prevent escalation, maintain order, and protect life and property**.
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II. Categories of Crowds

1. Physical Crowd (Casual Crowd)

- Unorganized, no common purpose.
- Members come and go freely.
- Example: **Mall crowd, festival attendees.**

2. Psychological Crowd

- Common interest, emotionally responsive to events.
- Examples: **Sporting events, political rallies, parades.**

3. Subcategories:

- **Sightseer Crowd** – Curiosity seekers, usually cooperative.
- **Expressive/Agitated Crowd** – Emotionally charged, can become aggressive.

4. Mobs (Hostile Crowds)

- Intense excitement and agitation lead to lawlessness.
 - **Types of Mobs:**
 - **Escape Mob** – Panic-driven, chaotic.
 - **Aggressive Mob** – Violent, destructive, attacks property/people.
 - **Acquisitive Mob** – Looting, theft (e.g., Black Friday incidents).
 - **Expressive Mob** – Party/revelry-driven destruction.
 - **Flash Mob** – Organized via electronic communication, sudden gathering.
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III. Crowd Behavior & Social-Psychological Influences

- **Factors influencing crowd behavior:**
 - **Anonymity** – People feel unidentifiable, leading to bolder actions.
 - **Universality** – “Everyone is doing it” mentality.
 - **Inability to Withdraw** – Peer pressure prevents individuals from leaving.
 - **Increased Hostility (Convergence Theory)** – Frustration leads to confrontation.
 - **Social Suggestion** – Following the lead of others.
 - **Emotionality & Irrationality** – Group emotions override logic.
 - **Group Mindset (Homogeneity of Mental State)** – Shared dissatisfaction.
 - **Emotional Contagion** – Excitement spreads rapidly.
 - **Tactics for Counteracting Crowd Behavior:**
 - **Disperse the crowd early.**
 - **Use photography/video to reduce anonymity.**
 - **Selective arrest to break the feeling of “everyone is doing it.”**
 - **Call individuals by name if known.**
 - **Communicate clearly and professionally.**
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IV. Types of Civil Disturbances

1. **Mass Demonstration**
 - Large groups (hundreds/thousands), mostly peaceful but overwhelming.
 - Example: Political protests, marches.
2. **Civil Disobedience**
 - Nonviolent, participants willingly submit to arrest.
 - Example: Sit-ins, student protests.
3. **Labor Disputes**
 - Strikes, picketing.
 - Police must balance free speech and employer rights.
4. **Idealistic Protest**
 - Highly dedicated activists, often young males.
 - Less deterred by arrests or force.

5. Riot

- Violent public disturbance, three or more people.
 - **Types of Riots:**
 - **Conventional Mob Riot** – Spontaneous violence.
 - **Race Riot** – Ethnic/religious conflict.
 - **Organized Riot** – Pre-planned, instigators involved.
 - **Guerrilla Riot** – Targeted attacks, often against police.
 - **Spontaneous Riot** – Triggered by a sudden event.
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V. Law Enforcement Roles in Protests & Demonstrations

Non-Violent Protest Handling

- Officers should **observe and monitor**, not interfere unless laws are broken.
- **Legal actions:**
 - **Picketing:** Allowed under specific conditions.
 - **Parades/Marches:** Typically require permits.
- **Illegal actions:**
 - Violence, blocking entrances, unlawful trespassing.

Violent Crowd Control

- **Dispersal is the primary goal.**
- **Mass arrest is not the priority;** use selective enforcement.
- **Key strategies:**
 - Maintain **professionalism, discipline, and composure.**
 - Control **fatigue and stress factors** for officers.
 - Avoid **overreaction or excessive force.**

Protester Tactics

- **Blocking entrances** – Prevents business access.
 - **Locking arms/padlocking chains** – Delays response.
 - **Singing/chanting** – Psychological tactic.
 - **Name-calling/harassment** – Attempts to provoke officers.
 - **Use of protester devices (lockboxes, tripods, bicycle locks).**
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VI. Riot Control & Use of Force

General Crowd Control Tactics

1. **Observation and intelligence gathering** – Identify agitators.
2. **Verbal communication** – Attempt diplomacy before force.
3. **Selective arrests** – Reduce leadership influence.
4. **Use of force must be:**
 - **Reasonable**
 - **Necessary**
 - **Lawful**

Crowd Control Formations

- Officers must practice **riot baton techniques and formations**.
- Formation teams should consist of **8-12 officers**.

Chemical Munitions & Special Impact Munitions

- **HC (Smoke)**: Used for visibility control.
- **CN (Tear Gas)**: Mild irritant, disperses crowds.
- **CS (Riot Control Agent)**: Stronger than CN, causes disorientation.
- **OC (Pepper Spray)**: Best for small group control.

Color Coding for Chemical Agents:

- **Smoke**: Yellow
 - **CN**: Red
 - **CS**: Blue
 - **OC**: Orange
 - **Additional Crowd Dispersal Tools:**
 - **Special Impact Munitions (SIMs)**.
 - **Distraction Devices (Flash-Bangs)**.
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VII. Large-Scale Civil Disturbance Response

Containment & Isolation

- **Primary goal: Protect lives.**
- **Tactics:**
 - Roadblocks and barricades.
 - Building clearing.
 - Perimeter patrols.

Crowd Control Options

1. **Monitoring** – Watching crowd progress.
 2. **Containment** – Restrict movement within an area.
 3. **Blocking** – Preventing access to key locations.
 4. **Dispersion** – Breaking up the crowd into smaller groups.
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