



Notes from Meeting with Asheville Police Department, September 2020

- **Clarification of the rules regarding protestors entering private businesses** – while you are open for business to the public your business is considered private property. If someone enters your property that is not there for business or could disrupt operations, the staff member in charge is allowed to inform the protestors they are not welcome and need to leave. It is considered second degree trespassing if they do not leave, once informed. If they do not leave there are procedures within the APD to remove them from the property and for arrests.
- **What to instruct staff to do should they encounter anyone trying to enter the premises** – lock your perimeter down and utilize extra staff to help lock doors if protestors are approaching your property. You can call the police department on the non-emergency line. In addition, a police report can be filed after an incident with protestors.

If it is public access there is nothing preventing the protestors from entering the building. However, if a group like this is moving towards your business and there may be property damage or physical violence it is within your rights to lock your doors prior to their entrance. At this point protestors need to be informed to leave the property, including the parking lot.

Protestors must be told to leave the property by a member of management before the police have legal authority to make arrests, etc.

Police are working to let businesses and citizens know in advance if they are aware of possible protests and what rules they should follow.

- **How to avoid escalation** – select staff members for the front line that can stay calm in incidents that would normally cause someone to become emotionally hijacked or easily angered. The staff member needs to remain calm and clearly explain the rules of the property. The staff member should work to identify who is in charge of the protestor group and communicate the rules or requirement they leave the property using a calm tone, confident body language, etc.

Call the police using the non-emergency phone number (252-1110) if protestors are trespassing on your property and be sure to identify if there are any weapons that can be seen.

- **Additional notes:**

Hotels would desire some type of alert system that gives as much time as possible to prepare staff to properly handle the situations.

- Follow the APD's Twitter and Facebook page. APD is also planning to do more press releases when they know of protests ahead of time.
- Sergeant Lamb also indicated he could create an email group of the downtown hoteliers and stakeholders and send information via email.

When a protestor is arrested: charges vary based on behavior, what crime they commit or if they resist arrest. Typical charge is "failure to disperse". If they are arrested and they resist it is a more serious charge. Assaulting an officer also carries a serious charge.

Hoteliers should consider having a staff member monitor Matt Henson's Facebook page. He has videoed previous protests and would provide them with information on the protestor's current location.

NCRLA may be developing protestor safety training for front line staff and hoteliers are encouraged to look into this.