

Should You Protect Your Business with Firearms During Civil Unrest?

Written by Steve Marr
Monday, 20 July 2020 16:19

Over the past several months civil unrest has caused substantial damage to private property, particularly business establishments. People ask me how far a business owner should go to protect their property. My perspective is not a simple answer. Above all, we need to seek the Lord's guidance concerning the steps we should take.

First, ask the Lord and discuss with family any decision about using firearms to protect property. Family is the first who will live with the good or bad consequences of our decisions. In several instances, armed business owners have successfully used firearms to fend off looters. In other circumstances, the decision had a tragic ending, such as the death of the former sheriff in St. Louis. I believe the Lord will give each person a peace about which steps to take. If you or your family do not have peace about taking up arms to protect your property, then back off.

Second, if you make the decision to use a firearm to protect your property, you must understand the serious responsibility you shoulder. Anyone who might use a firearm needs significant training not only to use it properly, but also to learn how to make good decisions in a stressful situation. If you utilize firearms, you must regularly practice to be familiar with the firearm and be ready to deal with real world stress.

Third, you must accept responsibility for understanding the legal ramifications of using a firearm. Many states have what is known as the castle doctrine. This gives homeowners the right to protect their property. However, this doctrine does not always extend to businesses. In most states a firearm is permitted when someone is under direct threat of death or great bodily harm. Many states do not apply this doctrine to the right to shoot when somebody walks out of a business with a television set.

In many legal jurisdictions, if a person uses a firearm without proper legal justification; it puts the owner in serious legal jeopardy. The business owner must take the time and effort to understand the law and understand in what specific situations the owner can use a firearm to protect a business.

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Fourth, as all firearm instructors will say, never carry or draw a weapon unless you are prepared to shoot and shoot to kill. This is a heavy responsibility. Talk to anyone who has been involved in a fatal shooting and they will tell you they carry the results for a lifetime.

In the Bible we see many instances where weapons were utilized. For example in the book of Esther we read, "The king's edict granted the Jews in every city the right to assemble and protect themselves." (Esther 8:11, NIV) In the book of Nehemiah where the Israelites were rebuilding the wall and feared enemies, we read that "Those who carried materials did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other." (Nehemiah 4:17, NIV)

My personal perspective is we have a right to protect personal property and ourselves with firearms within the ground rules of federal, state, and local laws. With this right comes a heavy responsibility. I will not tell somebody they should or should not take up arms to protect their property. This is an individual decision. However, this decision should be made with prayer and after carefully considering all legal and ethical responsibilities of firearm use.