



# ***BASIC TERRORISM AWARENESS FOR CITIZENS***

It is the goal of this publication to raise public awareness concerning the potential threat of terrorism and provide some general safety guidelines as established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The information provided was taken directly from the FEMA website at, [www.fema.gov/hazard/terrorism/info.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/hazard/terrorism/info.shtm)

## **General Information About Terrorism**

Terrorism is the use of force or violence against persons or property in violation of the criminal laws of the United States for purposes of intimidation, coercion, or ransom.

Terrorists often use threats to:

- Create fear among the public.
- Try to convince citizens that their government is powerless to prevent terrorism.
- Get immediate publicity for their causes.

Acts of terrorism include threats of terrorism; assassinations; kidnappings; hijackings; bomb scares and bombings; cyber attacks (computer-based); and the use of chemical, biological, nuclear and radiological weapons.

High-risk targets for acts of terrorism include military and civilian government facilities, international airports, large cities, and high-profile landmarks. Terrorists might also target large public gatherings, water and food supplies, utilities, and corporate centers. Further, terrorists are capable of spreading fear by sending explosives or chemical and biological agents through the mail.

Within the immediate area of a terrorist event, you would need to rely on police, fire, and other officials for instructions. However, you can prepare in much the same way you would prepare for other crisis events.

### **General Safety Guidelines:**

- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Move or leave if you feel uncomfortable or if something does not seem right.
- Take precautions when traveling. Be aware of conspicuous or unusual behavior. Do not accept packages from strangers. Do not leave luggage unattended. You should promptly report unusual behavior, suspicious or unattended packages, and strange devices to the police or security personnel.
- Learn where emergency exits are located in buildings you frequent. Plan how to get out in the event of an emergency.
- Be prepared to do without services you normally depend on—electricity, telephone, natural gas, gasoline pumps, cash registers, ATMs, and Internet transactions.
- Work with building owners to ensure the following items are located on each floor of the building:
  - Portable, battery-operated radio and extra batteries.
  - Several flashlights and extra batteries.
  - First aid kit and manual.
  - Hard hats and dust masks.
  - Fluorescent tape to rope off dangerous areas.

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The American **Red Cross** also provides some common-sense recommendations to citizens for preparing not only for natural disasters but also potential terrorism attacks.

- In the event of an attack, remain calm and be patient.
- Follow the advice of local emergency officials.
- Listen to your radio or TV for news and instructions.
- If the disaster occurs near you, check for injuries. Give first aid and get help for seriously injured people. (Before rendering First Aid be sure the victim is not contaminated. Avoid direct contact if contamination is suspected.)
- If the disaster occurs near your home while you are there, check for damage using a flashlight. **Do not light** matches or candles or turn on electrical switches. Check for fires, fire hazards and other household hazards. Sniff for

gas leaks, starting at the water heater. If you smell gas or suspect a leak, turn off the main gas valve, open windows, and get everyone outside quickly.

- Shut off any other damaged utilities.
- Confine or secure your pets.
- Contact your family – do not use the telephone again unless it is a life-threatening emergency.
- Check on your neighbors, especially those who are elderly or disabled.

If there has been an attack involving chemical, biological, or radiological weapon follow these recommendations:

First of all, be familiar with your surroundings, whether at work, home or traveling. Be ready to leave or depart quickly if needed to do so. Have a personal evacuation plan for home and work. Include primary and alternate routes to leave the area. Practice your plan at home with family members and at work with fellow employees. Be familiar with community evacuation routes and the evacuation alert procedures. Secondly, be alert to the signs that may indicate the presence of chemical, biological, or radiological materials.

The **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)** student training manual, FEMA publication SM-317, provides some basic environmental indicators for citizen awareness. These are referred to as B-Nice Indicators.

### **B-NICE Indicators**

You need to be alert to changes in the environment as a clue to a possible terrorist attack.

Environmental indicators of a biological or chemical attack could include:

- Numerous sick or dead animals, fish, or birds. Wildlife are often more sensitive to chemical or biological agents than humans. Animals, fish, or birds that are obviously sick, dying, or dead may indicate the presence of a biological or chemical attack.
- Unscheduled spraying or abandoned spray devices. Several September 11 terrorists are known to have made inquiries into purchasing and learning to fly crop dusters. Many other types of agricultural sprayers can be used to disperse biological and (more likely) chemical agents.
- Vapor clouds or mists that are unusual for the area or for the time of day. Although many biological and chemical agents cannot be seen with the naked eye, the substances in which they are suspended when dispersed may be visible for a period of time after an attack.

- The absence of crops, wildlife, or insects that are common for the area, time of day, or time of year. Being aware of what is not in the environment that should be is as important as being aware of what is in the environment but is out of place.
- Out of place and unattended packages, boxes, or vehicles. Terrorists have a long history of hiding explosive devices in packages, boxes, or vehicles. Items that are out of place and unattended could signal a possible terrorist attack.
- Packages that are leaking may be harmless—but they may also signal a terrorist incident. The terrorists who released Sarin in the Tokyo subway system (Aum Shinrikyo) merely poked holes in bags containing Sarin, then left the area as the poison leaked out.
- Materials or equipment that are unusual for the area. Dispersal devices, lab equipment, or quantities of hazardous materials that are not typically located in the area may indicate that a terrorist attack is occurring or is about to occur.
- Small explosions that disperse liquids, mists, or gases are an obvious sign that something is wrong.
- Unusual odors or tastes.

You may observe physical indications of a terrorist attack. Some possible physical indicators include:

- Multiple casualties without obvious signs of trauma. This may indicate a biological or chemical attack.
- Multiple victims who are exhibiting similar symptoms. Symptoms may range from difficulty breathing to skin necrosis to uncontrolled salivating, uncontrolled muscle twitching, or convulsions. All of these symptoms indicate that a chemical attack may have taken place.
- Large numbers of persons seeking medical attention with similar symptoms that are not characteristic of the season. The symptoms of many biological agents mimic the flu or other common illnesses. An unusually large number of persons seeking medical attention for the flu in July could indicate that a biological attack has taken place.

### **How Do I Report suspected terrorism activity?**

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) provides a electronic form to report suspected terrorist activity at; <https://tips.fbi.gov/>

The U.S. Office of Homeland Security also provides a link to the FBI site and provides a link for a directory of local FBI offices at; <http://www.dhs.gov/xinfo/share/reportincidents/>

## **What is the Homeland Security Advisory System?**

A color coded Threat-Level System is used to communicate with public safety officials and the public at-large through a threat-based, color-coded system so that protective measures can be implemented to reduce the likelihood or impact of an attack. Raising the threat condition has economic, physical, and psychological effects on the nation; so, the Homeland Security Advisory System can place specific geographic regions or industry sectors on a higher alert status than other regions or industries, based on specific threat information.

Here are some recommended actions for citizens depending on the threat level:

### **RED – Severe Risk**

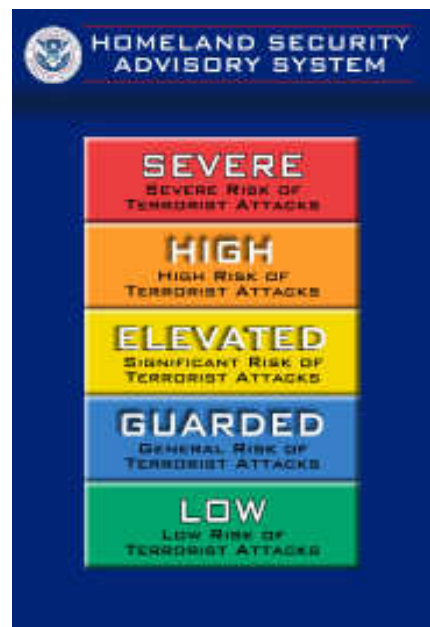
- Listen to local emergency management officials.
- Stay tuned to TV or radio for current information/instructions.
- Be prepared to shelter-in-place or evacuate, as instructed.
- Expect traffic delays and restrictions.
- Provide volunteer services only as requested.
- Contact your school/business to determine status of work day.
- *Complete all recommended actions at lower levels.*

### **ORANGE – High Risk**

- Exercise caution when traveling, pay attention to travel advisories.
- Review your family emergency plan and make sure all family members know what to do.
- Be patient. Expect some delays, baggage searches and restrictions at public buildings.
- Check on neighbors or other that might need assistance in an emergency.
- *Complete all recommended actions at lower levels.*

### **YELLOW – Significant Risk**

- Ensure disaster supply kit is stocked and ready.
- Check telephone numbers in family emergency plan and update as necessary.
- Develop alternate routes to/from work or school and practice them.
- Continue to be alert for suspicious activity and report it to authorities.



- *Complete all recommended actions at levels green and blue.*

### **BLUE – General Risk**

- Review stored disaster supplies and replace items that are outdated
- Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities.
- *Complete all recommended actions at levels green.*

### **GREEN – Low Risk**

- Develop a family emergency plan. Share it with family and friends, and practice the plan. Visit [www.Ready.gov](http://www.Ready.gov) for help creating a plan.
- Create an “Emergency Supply Kit” for your household.
- Be informed. Visit [www.Ready.gov](http://www.Ready.gov) or obtain a copy of “Preparing Makes Sense, Get Ready Now” by calling 1-800-BE-READY.
- Know how to shelter-in-place and how to turn off utilities (power, gas, and water) to your home.
- Examine volunteer opportunities in your community, such as Citizen Corps, Volunteers in Police Service, Neighborhood Watch or others, to donate your time.
- Consider completing an American **Red Cross** first aid or CPR course, or **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)** course.

(\* *Developed with input from the American Red Cross*)