

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT



Terrorism Disaster

(Emergencies can occur at any time)

STAY INFORMED - BE VIGILANT - PREPARE

Background

Terrorism is the use of force or violence against persons or property in violation of the criminal laws of the United States. Terrorists look for visible targets where they can avoid detection before or after an attack. There are five categories of possible terrorist weapons; acronym CBRNE will help you remember the five categories, which are Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High-yield Explosives. Terrorists are also capable of spreading fear by sending explosives or chemical and biological agents through the mail.

History

- The Boston Marathon Bombing (2013)
- The bombing of the World Trade Center (1993)
- The bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City (1995)
- The bombing at the Atlanta Olympic Games (1996)
- Bombings at family planning clinics and bars in the Atlanta area (1996 and 1997)
- The destruction of the World Trade Center and a portion of the Pentagon (2001)
- The sending of anthrax through the U.S. mail (2001)

Motivations & Goals for Terrorism

- Create fear among the populace.
- Try to convince citizens that their government is powerless to protect them.
- Get immediate publicity for their causes.
- Mass casualties
- Loss of critical resources
- Disruption of vital services
- Disruption of the economy

Acts of Terrorism

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

Psychological Disaster Symptoms

- Anger, grief, withdrawal, self-blame, memory or concentration problems.

Physiological Disaster Symptoms

- Loss of appetite, sleep problems, low energy, headaches, increase usage of alcohol/drug consumption.

Terrorism Awareness

- Be alert and aware of your surroundings.
- Report suspicious behavior.
- Take precautions when traveling.
 - Do not accept packages from strangers.
 - Do not leave luggage unattended.
 - Promptly report unusual behavior, suspicious or unattended packages and strange devices to the police.
- Learn where emergency exits are located in buildings you frequently occupy.
- Plan evacuation routes.
- Be prepared to do without services on which you normally depend on electricity, telephone, natural gas, gasoline pumps, cash registers, and ATMs.

Terrorism Awareness & (Continued)

- 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
 - Fire extinguishers
 - Fluorescent tape to cordon off dangerous areas
- Mobile devices are an important way to stay informed and connected before, during and after an emergency. Here are some tips to prepare yourself and your mobile device; more information is [online](#):
 - Communicate with friends and family via text, email, Twitter, Facebook and other social media. Texting takes less bandwidth than phone calls and is often the best way to get through to each other in an emergency.
 - Make sure your mobile phone has an electric charger, inverter or solar charger.
 - If you lose power, you can charge your cellphone in your car. Just be sure your car is in a well-ventilated place (remove it from the garage) and do not go to your car until any danger has passed. You can also listen to your car radio for important news alerts.
 - If you do not have a cellphone, keep a prepaid phone card to use if needed during or after a disaster.
 - Save important phone numbers to your phone.
 - Prepare a family contact sheet. This should include at least one out-of-town contact that may be better able to reach family members in an emergency.

You should also prepare simple [plans](#) such as a [Family Communications Plan](#) and [emergency contact cards](#) for your children.

Mail Handling Information

For businesses and organizations that operate internal mail facilities or clearinghouses, the U.S. Postal Service has guidance online for [handling suspicious mail or packages](#). The Department of Homeland Security also has online an extensive guide, "[Best Practices for Safe Mail Handling](#)." Among the guidance:

- Train workers to recognize and handle a suspicious piece of mail.
- Identify a single point of contact to open mail.
- Screen all incoming mail.
- Do not open mail in unauthorized areas.
- Establish procedures for isolating a suspicious package.
- Conduct training sessions for mail room, security and management personnel.
- Conduct unannounced tests for mail center personnel.
- Have appropriate protective wear available for mail handler's use, such as gloves, masks and protective glasses.
- Know the phone number, location, time and response ability of the local HAZMAT team.

If Disaster Strikes

- Remain calm and be patient.
- Follow the advice of local emergency officials.
- Listen to your radio or television for news and instructions.
- If the disaster occurs near you, check for injuries. Give first aid and get help for seriously injured people.
- 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.
- Call your family contact - do not use the telephone again unless it is a life-threatening emergency.

Check on your neighbors, especially those who are elderly or disabled.