

ESP

BULLETIN

2001, VOL. XII, ISSUE 1

TERRORISM

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines terrorism as "the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives."

Images of the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon in Virginia, the plane crash in Pennsylvania, the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City and the Olympic Centennial Park in Atlanta are hard to forget.

These terrorist incidents caused thousands of deaths and injuries and billions of dollars in property losses. They also inflicted a huge emotional toll within the impacted communities and throughout the world.

According to the FBI, sporting events, political conventions and other special occasions are attractive opportunities for domestic and foreign terrorists.

Although bombing has been the most popular method used in recent terrorist incidents in the United States, terrorism can occur in several forms. In recent years, terrorists have used arson, hijackings and shootings to attain their political and social goals.

Terrorists can also use chemical or biological agents. Because people may not become ill immediately after being exposed to a biological agent, it may take some time for government officials to determine that such an attack has occurred.

In the event of an attack, government officials will instruct the public on what actions they should take. It's important that you remain calm and cooperate fully with local officials. Failure to follow instructions from local officials could cost you and others their lives.

In the event of a chemical or biological attack, instructions will be provided by local public health and safety officials on personal protection, decontamination and health warnings. Information will be provided via radio, television and the print media.



Preparing For All Hazards!

Monthly Preparedness Items and Actions

January
Floods

February
Landslides

March
Tsunamis

April
Earthquakes

May
Africanized Honey Bees

June
Hazardous Materials

July
Bomb Threats

August
Heat Wave

September
Volcanoes

October
Wildfires

November
Windstorms & Tornadoes

December
Carbon Monoxide & Radon

COMBATING TERRORISM

As we've seen in the last several years, domestic and international terrorists can strike at any time.

To combat the threat of terrorism, emergency services officials representing all levels of government continue to work together to develop and implement effective strategies for preventing and responding to incidents.

The public also has a role in reducing the impact of terrorism on their lives. Suggestions on how to be better prepared at home and work follow:

BEFORE AN ATTACK

Prepare for the possibility of a terrorist attack which may affect you.

- **Learn about the nature of terrorism.**
 - Terrorists look for highly visible targets such as international airports, large cities, major international events, resorts and high-profile landmarks.
 - Prior to an attack, terrorists try to blend into the local community. Report any suspicious activities to your local authorities.
- **Preparing for terrorist attacks is the same as preparing for earthquakes, fires and other emergencies.**
 - Observe the environment. Terrorists most often strike with little or no warning.
 - Use caution when you travel. Observe and report unusual or suspicious activity to the proper authorities. Keep your packages with you at all times. Do not accept packages from strangers.
 - Locate stairways and emergency exits and develop plans for evacuating buildings, subways and crowded public areas.
 - Create an emergency communications plan. Choose an out-of-town contact that your family or household can call to check on each other.

BEFORE AN ATTACK (CON'T)

- Conduct periodic evacuation drills.
- Establish a meeting place away from your home in case your home is affected by the disaster or is in the area evacuated.
- Check on the school emergency plan for your children. Make sure the school has your updated emergency contact information.
- **If you live or work in a multi-level building:**
 - Identify the location of fire exits and review emergency evacuation procedures.
 - Locate and maintain fire extinguishers in working order. Train responsible personnel on how to use them.
 - Obtain training in first aid and CPR.
- **Assemble and maintain an emergency supply kit at home, at work and in your car.**
 - Battery-powered radio, flashlights, batteries
 - Whistle
 - First aid kit and manual
 - Hard hats, dust masks and eye goggles
 - Duct tape
 - Fluorescent tape to rope off dangerous areas
 - Water
 - Food (canned, no-cook, packaged snacks)
 - Manual can opener
 - Cash and credit cards
 - Change of clothing, rain gear, and sturdy shoes
 - Blankets or sleeping bags
 - Fire extinguisher (A-B-C) type
 - Infant and feminine hygiene supplies
 - Essential medicines and eyeglasses
 - Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of doctors and pharmacist
 - Food and water for pets
 - Large plastic bags for trash, waste, water protection
 - Toilet paper and paper towels
 - Charcoal grill or camp stove for out-door cooking

DURING AN ATTACK

- **If there's an explosion:**
 - Remain calm. Take cover under a desk or sturdy table if ceiling tiles, bookshelves, their contents, etc., begin to fall.
 - Exit the building as quickly as possible.
- **If there's a fire:**
 - Crawl low in smoke and exit the building as quickly as possible.
 - Use a wet cloth to cover your nose and mouth.
 - Use the back of your hand to feel the lower, middle and upper parts of closed doors. If the door is not hot, brace yourself against the door and open it slowly. Do not open the door if it is hot. Seek another escape route.
 - Use appropriate fire exits, not elevators.
- **If there's a biological or chemical attack:**
 - Remain calm.
 - Follow the advice of local emergency officials.
 - Listen to the news media for instructions.

AFTER AN ATTACK

- **If you are trapped in debris:**
 - Think before you act.
 - If possible, use a flashlight to signal rescuers regarding your location.
 - Avoid unnecessary movement so that you don't kick up dust. Cover your mouth with a handkerchief or clothing.
 - Tap on a pipe or wall so that rescuers can hear where you are.
 - Use a whistle if one is available. Shout only as a last resort—shouting can cause a person to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.
 - Trained rescue personnel will respond. Their first priority is rescue.

PROTECTIVE ACTIONS

Protective actions are actions we take to safeguard our family members and ourselves from harm. The most common emergency protective actions are evacuation and shelter-in-place.

- Evacuation means to leave the area of actual or potential hazard.
- Shelter-in-place means to stay indoors. This includes additional precautions such as turning off air-conditioning, ventilation systems and closing all windows and doors.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

- Remain calm. Think before you act.
- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Have a Family Preparedness Plan.
- Stay informed.
- If an evacuation is ordered, follow the instructions of local officials regarding evacuation routes and the location of shelters.
- If shelter-in-place is recommended, local officials will provide instructions on necessary actions.
- Do not leave your sheltered location or return to the evacuated area until it is deemed safe to do so by local officials.

WEBSITES

Listed below are a few websites that provide emergency preparedness information.

www.fema.gov
(Federal Emergency Management Agency)

www.oes.ca.gov
(California Office of Emergency Services)

www.redcross.org
(American Red Cross)

www.bt.cdc.gov
(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

www.labt.org
(County Public Health)

www.co.la.ca.us
(County of Los Angeles)

<http://dmh.co.la.ca.us>
(County Department of Mental Health)

This Bulletin is produced as part of the Emergency Survival Program (ESP). ESP is an awareness campaign designed to increase individual and home emergency preparedness. ESP was developed by the County of Los Angeles. The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES), Southern California Edison, and representatives from Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles, Mono, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura and Yuma counties assist in the development of campaign materials and in coordination of the campaign.