

SECTION 7- FIRE SERVICE

UNIT 8 - UNDERSTANDING AND RECOGNIZING TERRORISM

UNIT GOAL

The students will be able to recognize circumstances that indicate a potential terrorist act.

UNIT OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- 1. Define domestic and international terrorism per the current Department of Justice definition.
- 2. Illustrate, through case histories, various types of potential incidents.
- 3. Define differences and similarities between responding to terrorist and non-terrorist incidents.
- 4. Recognize suspicious circumstances which may indicate possible terrorism.

KEY TERMS

Terrorism

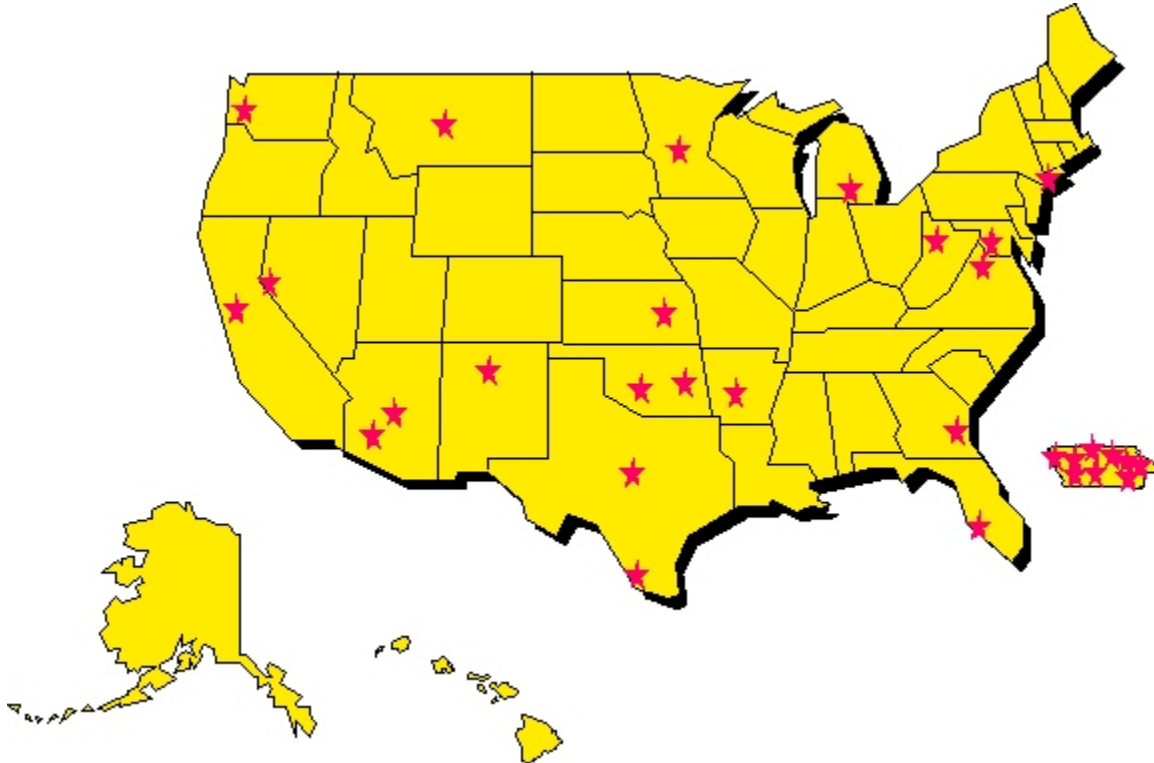
Domestic Terrorism

International Terrorism

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INTRODUCTION

The threat of terrorism affects all communities both nationally and internationally. History has shown that no community is immune. Terrorism transcends all geographic and demographic boundaries. All jurisdictions, suburban, urban and rural are at risk. Terrorists, both international and "home grown," have demonstrated they have the knowledge and capability to strike anywhere in the world. While not all the incidents we cite here have been determined to be terrorism, they are all suspicious criminal acts which may be linked to terrorist activity.



A Sampling of Suspicious Incidents in Recent History

Eastern USA (East of the Mississippi River).

- In February 1993, the World Trade Center was damaged by a vehicle bomb, killing 6 people.
- In July 1993, a member of the Animal Liberation Front set a fire in a Michigan State University research facility.
- In April 1996, members of the Georgia Militia were arrested for plotting to make dozens of pipe bombs.
- In October 1996, seven men with connections to a local anti-government paramilitary group were arrested on charges of plotting to blow up the Criminal Justice Information Services complex near Clarksburg, WV.

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- In 1995, a Harrisonburg, VA neurologist was charged with possession of ricin with intent to use it to kill his former boss.
- In September 1996, a Staten Island, NY man accused of stockpiling weapons was arrested by ATF agents.
- In 1996, a Romanian immigrant was stopped as he attempted to board a flight in Tampa, FL carrying five explosive devices, weapons, and 180 rounds of ammunition.
- In January 1997, several letter bombs were sent to the offices of the Al Hayat Publishing Company offices in the National Press Building in Washington, DC.
- In 1996 and 1997, numerous bombing incidents occurred in the Atlanta area including at least two with confirmed secondary devices.

Central USA.

- In April 1995, the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City was bombed. 168 people were killed and hundreds injured.
- In March 1995, members of the Patriot's Council in central Minnesota were arrested and charged with manufacturing ricin to kill law enforcement officers.
- In November 1995, charges were filed against an "anti-government prophet" in Muskogee, OK, for plotting a series of bombings against abortion clinics, civil rights offices and government facilities.
- In May 1996, an explosion blew out the windows in a building housing an FBI field office in Laredo, TX.
- In August 1996, a person was sentenced for plotting to bomb the office of the IRS in Austin, TX.
- In December 1995, a man charged with possession of ricin in Arkansas killed himself in his jail cell.
- Also in 1996, a man identified as a member of an anti-government freeman group was apprehended in Topeka, KS, and authorities found a bomb-triggering device in his car.

Western USA.

- In October 1995, the Amtrak Sunset Limited was derailed by sabotaged tracks near Hyder, AZ. This incident killed one and seriously injured 12.
- In December 1995, there was an attempted bombing of the IRS building in Reno, NV.
- In January 1996, an explosion took place outside of a U.S. Forest Service headquarters in Espanola, NM.
- In April 1996, a bomb exploded in the truck of a federal employee, injuring him and his wife in Vacaville, CA.
- In April 1996, Theodore Kaczynski was arrested as the suspected Unibomber.
- In June 1996, members of the Viper Militia were arrested in Phoenix, Arizona and charged with conspiracy to make bombs and use deadly weapons.
- In June 1996, members of the Washington State Militia and a Seattle-based Freeman group were arrested on federal conspiracy charges.

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Most of these items were taken from either Terrorism in the United States 1995 published by the FBI or Security Awareness Bulletin, number 3-96, published by the Department of Defense Security Institute, Richmond, VA. Several articles, including the one from which much of this material was obtained, are in Appendix A of your Student Manual.

In addition to the above, according to materials provided on the FEMA Internet site, attacks in Puerto Rico accounted for about 60 percent of all terrorist incidents between 1983 and 1991 that occurred on United States territory.

DEFINING TERRORISM

The general definition of terrorism is as follows:

Terrorism — A violent act or an act dangerous to human life, in violation of the criminal laws of the United States or any segment to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives (US Department of Justice).

The Federal Bureau of Investigation further defines two types of terrorism that occur in the United States.

Domestic terrorism involves groups or individuals whose terrorist activities are directed at elements of our government or population without foreign direction.

International terrorism involves groups or individuals whose terrorist activities are foreign-based and/or directed by countries or groups outside the United States or whose activities transcend national boundaries.

We indicated earlier that incidents involving B-NICE agents are considered technological hazardous incidents. This is a broad field that includes hazmat as one subtopic. Criminal incidents also comprise a broad field. Where those two types of incidents overlap, we find a select group of incidents including arson, environmental crime, industrial sabotage, non-terrorist bombings, weapons of mass destruction, and, of course, B-NICE terrorism.

While the Department of Justice uses a very narrow definition of terrorism, the concerns of public safety responders go well beyond that limited scope. In this program we will study terrorism, bombings and weapons of mass destruction described as Biological, Nuclear, Incendiary, Chemical, and Explosive (B-NICE) incidents. However, criminals that resort to weapons of mass destruction regardless of their motive will not be restricted by any definition or category. We need to be concerned with the broader field of criminal incidents that offer a variety of threats to public safety and responders alike.

Bombings include a wide variety of incidents not related to terrorism. The following information is taken from the FBI Bomb Data Statistics page. The Internet address for this site is in your bibliography:

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To request additional information or for inclusion on the EU-BDC mailing list, send a fax at (202) 324-3784 or mail your request to:



Federal Bureau of Investigation
 Laboratory Division Explosives Unit-Bomb Data Center
 J. Edgar Hoover Building, Room 3918
 935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
 Washington, DC 20535-0001

1990 ----- Criminal Bombing Incidents ----- 1995

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
TOTAL	1,582	2,499	2,989	2,980	3,163	2,577
Actual Explosive	931	1,551	1,911	1,880	1,916	1,562
Attempted Explosive	254	395	384	375	522	417
Actual Incendiary	267	423	582	538	545	406
Attempted Incendiary	130	130	112	187	180	192

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Damage (in millions)	9.6	6.4	12.5	518.0	7.5	105.1
Persons Injured	222	230	349	1,323	308	744
Persons Killed	27	29	26	49	31	193

A SHORT HISTORY OF TERRORISM

Terrorism has been with humanity ever since societies started having arguments. Infected corpses were used long before the germ theory of disease. Biological toxins extracted from plants were used to poison wells and assassinate leaders as far back as any history can trace. Here are some examples of terrorism over the past 300 years.

18th century:

- Infected corpses were used by the Russians against areas held by Sweden;
- The Puritans performed many acts of violence against other religious groups, especially the Catholics and Quakers prior to and after the Revolutionary War;
- Organized violence against government taxation included Shay's Rebellion (1786) and the Whiskey Rebellion (1791); and
- British officials provided blankets from smallpox patients to Native Americans.

19th Century:

- Planned assassination of Tsar Alexander II;
- 12 additional assassinations of public officeholders took place following that of President Lincoln;
- The Ku Klux Klan began acts of terrorism;
- In 1886, a peaceful labor rally at the Haymarket Square in Chicago was disrupted when an unknown person threw a bomb, killing seven;
- Catholic churches were burned in Boston, Philadelphia and other cities from the 1830s - 1850s; and
- Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) activists use 3,000 pounds of dynamite to blow up the Hill and Sullivan Company mine at Wadner, Idaho, along with a boarding house and bunkhouse.

20th Century:

- The 1950 assassination attempt on President Truman by Puerto Rican nationalists resulted in the death of one DC police officer during a gun battle outside the Blair House;
- In 1954, five members of congress were wounded by gunfire during an attack by Puerto Rican nationalists;
- One of 49 bombings attributed to the Puerto Rican group FALN between 1974 and 1977 was the Frances Tavern bombing in New York City. Four people died in this event;
- In 1975, a bombing by Croatian nationalists killed eleven and injured 75 at LaGuardia Airport in New York City;
- In 1976, Orlando Letelier, a former Chilean ambassador to the United States, was killed along with one of his associates in a car bombing in Washington, DC;
- In 1981, a man was killed when a bomb planted by a group calling itself the Puerto Rican Armed Resistance detonated in a men's bathroom at Kennedy International Airport in New York City;

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- In 1983, a bomb detonated in the cloak room next to the U.S. Senate in the Capitol Building. Two left-wing radicals plead guilty to the attack;
- During the latter half of the 20th century there were numerous airline hijackings and bombings;
- The 1993 World Trade Center bombing;
- The 1995 Oklahoma City bombing;
- The 1994 Matsumoto and 1995 Tokyo chemical attacks; and
- Multiple bombings in Atlanta in 1997.



Victims of the Tokyo Subway Incident

As you can see, extremists have used property destruction and violence to generate fear and compel societal change throughout history. However, one major change has happened recently. Prior to modern times, terrorists usually granted certain categories of people (e.g., women, children, clergy, elderly, infirm, etc.) immunity from attack. Like other warriors, terrorists recognized innocents - people not involved in conflict. For example, in late nineteenth-century Russia, radicals planning the assassination of Tsar Alexander II, the leader of Russia, aborted several planned attacks because they risked harming innocent people. Historically terrorism was direct; it intended to produce a political effect through the injury or death of the victim.

The development of bureaucratic states resulted in a philosophical change among terrorist groups. Since modern governments are designed to be more dependent upon processes and structure than unique individuals, the death of a single individual, even a president or prime minister, will not necessarily produce the major disruption terrorists desire. Terrorists have reacted by turning from targeting prominent individuals to attacks aimed at a wider range of targets including those historically considered immune.



*Nighttime Operations at
Oklahoma City*

Events such as the World Trade Center and Oklahoma City incidents, and various clinic bombings are designed to create a public atmosphere of anxiety and undermine confidence in government. Their unpredictability and apparent randomness make it virtually impossible for governments to protect all potential victims.

Modern terrorism offers its practitioners many advantages. First, by not recognizing innocents, terrorists have an infinite number of targets. They select their target and determine when, where, and how to attack. The range of choices gives terrorists a high probability of success with minimum risk. If the attack goes wrong or fails to produce the intended results, the terrorists can deny responsibility.

THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE CHALLENGE

The emergency response challenge is profound. On the one hand, you have a hazardous materials or mass casualty incident. From that standpoint, you can and should use recognized protocols such as the Incident Command System (as referenced in 29 CFR 1910.120) in order to effectively respond to the needs of the victims and the public. On the other hand, the scene is compounded by two complicating factors which all responders will have to take into account ³/₄ deliberate targeting of responders and crime scene considerations.



*Preparing Responders for
Entry*

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Automobiles damaged in a bombing

Terrorists have a history of utilizing **secondary devices** and/or booby traps to target emergency responders. In January 1997, a bomb went off outside of an Atlanta abortion clinic. One hour after the initial detonation, a second bomb went off close to the point at which the incident command post had been established. It resulted in several injuries to responders. If parked automobiles had not absorbed some of the blast, several deaths could have occurred.

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If the incident is a potential act of terrorism, it is also a crime scene. While there will be similarities between terrorist and non-terrorist events such as mass casualty incidents (e.g., major transportation and hazmat accidents), crime scene considerations will add a complicating factor to responder operations. This will be discussed further in modules 3 and 5.



Regardless of the mechanism or motive behind the incident, responders should remain focused on reducing the impact of the event as efficiently and safely as possible. Terrorist or non-terrorist event, all responders should follow established operating guidelines that are pertinent to their respective agency. All responders on the scene should operate under an incident command system (as referenced in 29 CFR 1910.120) and utilize some type of personnel accountability system that is compatible with all participating agencies.



Decontamination Operations

Recognizing suspicious incidents may be difficult, but being extremely alert to clues, surroundings and events will greatly assist in identification. Clues such as occupancy location, type of event, timing of the event and on-scene warning signs will help with this process. Examples of these clues are:

1. Occupancy or location:

Symbolic and historical targets include those which represent some organization or event which is particularly offensive in the minds of extremists. Examples of this might include Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF) offices for those who oppose all forms of gun control or Internal Revenue Service (IRS) offices for tax resisters.

Public buildings or assembly areas provide the opportunity for attention-getting mass casualties. Some of these public buildings are also symbolic targets, so the terrorist can cause massive casualties and link the owner/operator of the building or assembly area with danger in the minds of the public. Examples of these would include shopping malls, convention centers, entertainment venues, and tourist destinations.

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Controversial businesses are usually those which have a history of attracting the enmity of recognized groups which include extremist elements. Abortion clinics, nuclear facilities, and furriers all fall into this category.

Infrastructure systems include those operations which are necessary for the continued functioning of our society. Major cities are full of targets such as power plants, phone companies, water treatment plants, mass transit, and hospitals. Attacks on any of these have the potential to disrupt entire regions and cost hundreds of millions of dollars to correct.

2. Type of event:

Certain types of events should raise your awareness of possible terrorism involvement. In general they can be categorized as follows.

Explosions and/or incendiaries are among the favorite weapons of terrorists. Any bombing or suspicious fire may involve terrorist involvement, especially combined with location or occupancy factors as listed above.

Incidents involving firearms are always treated as suspicious. If they occur in conjunction with other indicating factors, terrorism is a definite possibility.

Non-trauma mass casualty incidents have occurred as the arsenal of terrorism increases in sophistication. When large numbers of victims are generated without obvious (physical) injury, you may suspect terrorist involvement.

3. Timing of the event:

For many years to come, April 19 will be a day around which government facilities operate at heightened state of security awareness. Since it is the anniversary of both the fire at the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas and the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah building in Oklahoma City, it has become a rallying point for anti-government extremists.

Outside of significant anniversaries, events that occur on specific days of the week and times are worth treating with suspicion. A fire at a government building during the weekend or during a time when few people are likely to be present may also involve terrorism or other criminal activity.

4. On-scene warning signs

When you arrive on the scene, you should always watch for signs that you are dealing with a suspicious incident. Unexplained patterns of illnesses or deaths can be due to chemical, radiological or biological agents. Some of these substances have recognizable odors and/or tastes. Unexplained signs and symptoms of skin, eye, or airway irritation may be due to chemical contamination, as can unexplained vapor clouds, mists and plumes.

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Always keep on the lookout for chemical containers, spray devices or lab equipment in unusual locations. Watch for items or containers that appear out of place at unusual incidents, which might indicate a secondary device. When dealing with fires, spot fires and fires of unusual behavior may also arouse your suspicions, as can anything that appears not to be "normal" for a given incident scene.

SUMMARY

The threat of terrorism is real and can potentially affect all of us. According to Terrorism in the United States 1995, published by the Department of Justice,

"Terrorists in the United States continued a general trend in which fewer attacks are occurring in the United States, but individual attacks are becoming more deadly."

"Extremists in the United States continued a chilling trend by demonstrating interest in - and experimenting with - unconventional weapons. Over the past ten years, a pattern of interest in biological agents by criminals and extremists has developed."

"America and Americans have also been a favorite choice of target for terrorists. Reprisals for U.S. legal action against domestic and international terrorists increase the likelihood that Americans will be the target of terrorist attacks either in the United States or overseas."

Emergency responders need to always be aware of their surroundings and alert for any suspicious incidents. Protecting yourself from a violent terrorist act begins with recognition of the event.