

Healthcare and Public Health Sector Coordinating Council

Terrorism Vulnerability, Preparation, and Prevention Tools

TERRORISM VUNLERABILITIES OF HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

- Open access
- Limited background checks on employees, medical staff, contractors, students, volunteers
- Little or no screening of patients, relatives
- Infrequent use of intrusion devices
- Large number of access points
- Limited security force
- Building designs are not security oriented
- Multiple locations to place explosives or hazardous agents

INDICATORS OF PRE-OPERATIONAL SURVEILLANCE/PREPARATION FOR AN ATTACK

- Suspicious observation/unusual questions about security procedures
- Engaging in suspicious actions to provoke or observe response
- Interest in entry points, peak days, hours of operation: security personnel, cameras, and access controls (alarms, gates, locks, etc.)
- Observation of security reaction drills; multiple false alarms
- Loitering, parking, or standing in the same area over multiple days
- Unusual interest in speaking with building maintenance or security personnel
- Attention to/avoidance of security cameras
- Attempts to disguise appearance from visit to visit
- Interest in obtaining site plans, ingress and egress routes, and information on employees or the public
- Attempted or unauthorized access to rooftops or a sensitive area
- People or persons obtaining unusual quantities of weapons, ammunition, or explosive precursors (peroxide, acetone, propane, fertilizer)
- Clothing not appropriate to the season
- Staring at or quickly looking away from personnel or vehicles entering and/or leaving the facility or parking areas
- Increase in anonymous telephone/email threats in conjunction with suspected surveillance incidents – indicates possible surveillance of threat reaction procedures
- Discreet use of still cameras/ video recorders
- Note taking or sketching
- Suspicious purchases of unusual quantities of items that could be used to construct explosive devices
- New or increased advocacy of violence
- Sharing of media glorifying violent extremist acts in attempting to mobilize others to violence

PREVENTION STRATEGIES

- Review, update, and validate all emergency and crisis response plans
- Coordinate response plans across functional disciplines (public safety, healthcare, and private sector, fusion centers)
- Conduct exercises of the plan with partners
- Raise awareness among employees
- Raise employee and community awareness of potential threats and vulnerabilities
- Ensure that all emergency communications equipment is operational
- Report suspicious activity to proper authorities; including missing and stolen equipment, weapons, uniforms, etc.
- Install secure locks and protection on all internal/external doors and windows, with quick release capability from within
- Establish safe areas and evacuation zones within the facility for people to assemble and seek refuge during a crisis
- Update emergency communications system for personnel, such as phone trees or mass communication systems
- Consider installing CCTV systems, intruder detection systems, and lighting to cover key areas
- Train security personnel to watch for unattended or suspicious vehicles on or near facilities; repeated visitors or outsiders who have no apparent business in non-public areas, abandoned parcels, suitcases, backpacks, and packages; other unusual activities.
- Develop policies and procedures for dealing with hoaxes and false alarms
- Conduct threat analyses, vulnerability assessments, consequence analyses, risk assessments, and security audits on a regular and ongoing basis
- Provide appropriate signage to restrict access to non-public areas
- Remove vehicles that have been parked for an unusual length of time
- Identify key areas in or adjacent to buildings and prohibit parking in these areas
- Install fences or lightweight barriers that are easy to store
- Conduct background checks on all employees
- Incorporate security awareness and appropriate response procedures for security situations into employee training programs
- Maintain an adequately sized, equipped, and trained security workforce
- Develop policies and procedures for dealing with the media and the general public in the event of an incident – advise them of the situation and diffuse rumors and panic
- Identify entry and exit points to be used in emergencies
- Ensure that those points are free of obstruction and can be fully utilized
- Identify alternate gathering points where employees can meet for coordinated evacuation
- Require facility management and security staff to join a local and/or state fusion center to receive and share information about potential or real terrorist attacks

RESOURCES

Public Health Emergency Website: <http://www.phe.gov/preparedness/Pages/default.aspx>

ASPR TRACIE: <https://asprtracie.hhs.gov/>

Healthcare Active Shooter Guidance: <https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/office-of-partner-engagement/active-shooter-incidents/active-shooter-planning-and-response-in-a-healthcare-setting>

Healthcare Active Shooter Video: <https://vimeo.com/112455575>

Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN): <http://www.dhs.gov/homeland-security-information-network-hsin>

FBI Infragard: <https://www.infragard.org/>

Suspicious Activity Reporting for Healthcare and Public Health: http://nsi.ncirc.gov/training_online.aspx

US Postal Service Suspicious Package Poster: <https://about.usps.com/posters/pos84.pdf>

US Department of Homeland Security Prevention Terrorism: <http://www.dhs.gov/preventing-terrorism>