



Preparedness Committee
Security and Life Safety
Commercial Office Building Protective Measures

Topic:	Suspicious Items / Behaviors
Date:	Jan 2014; Revised May 2018

Background At some point we have all heard the Department of Homeland Security’s “If You See Something, Say Something” campaign. The campaign recognizes the importance of cooperation and reporting suspicious behaviors to law enforcement. For more information on the DHS and its programs, refer to <http://www.dhs.gov/if-you-see-something-say-something>. The goal of this module is to:

- Raise awareness to “our” role in local and national security measures
- Identify what “suspicious” items, behaviors and/or actions may be
- Provide resources to turn to for questions or suspicious circumstances
- Support DHS’s goal of implementing a *“more effective means for the private sector to join us (government) in meeting our goals for the safety and security of the nation”* – Janet Napolitano
- Empower all persons (employee, tenant, client, contractor, visitor, vendor, etc.) to identify and report suspicious circumstances



Did You Know?

- Since the September 11 attacks, there have been at least 60 known cases, involving over 130 individuals, in which terrorist activities were plotted on American soil
- With very few exceptions, each of the cases were foiled because of early detection
- The plots have affected all geographical area of the nation, and the vast majority of perpetrators were U.S. citizens
- Almost all terrorist attacks or foiled plots have targeted transportation or commercial facilities or other public-gathering spaces
- Most incidents have distinct “pre-event indicators” prior to the actual event/attack

Pre-Event Indicators

- A pre-event indicator is an action, or behavior that may be considered:
 - Something out of the ordinary
 - Odd or “out of place” behaviors
 - It can be a gut feeling that “something just is not right”...
 - Strange or inconsistent behaviors
 - Pre-event indicators can be exhibited by anyone, such as a co-worker, tenant, contractor, or guest
- The DHS has identified the following Seven Signs of Terrorism:
 - Surveillance
 - Elicitation
 - Tests of Security
 - Acquiring Supplies
 - Suspicious Persons Out of Place
 - Dry / Trial Run
 - Deploying Assets

Examples of Suspicious Activity / Behavior

- Loitering, staring or watching employees, customers, or operations
- Photo taking of equipment, building or secure areas
- Unusual level of interest in operations, equipment or personnel
- Dressed inappropriately for conditions
- Acting nervous or anxious
- In an unauthorized or restricted area
- Unusual or inappropriate comments / actions
- Leaving items such as bags, briefcases or boxes unattended (see below)

Suspicious Items

- A suspicious item could be almost anything, but usually seem “out of place”
- Examples may be, but are not limited to:
 - Items left unattended that may be emitting unusual sounds, odors or vapors
 - Items with wires, or with oily residues
 - Items may be of any size, but again, seem “out of place”

Examples of Suspicious Items



***Call 911 for any suspicious item**


National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS)

- The National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS) replaced the color-coded Homeland Security Advisory System in spring 2011
- The new system more effectively communicates information about terrorist threats by providing timely, detailed information to the public, government agencies, first responders, airports and other transportation hubs, and to the private sector regarding specific and credible threats

The revised National Terrorism Advisory System covers the following items:

- **Imminent Threat Alert** - Warns of a credible, specific, and impending terrorist threat against the U.S.
- **Elevated Threat Alert** - Warns of a credible terrorist threat against the U.S.
- **Sunset Provision** - An individual threat alert is issued for a specific time period and then automatically expires. It may be extended if new information becomes available or if the threat evolves.

Revised DHS Alert Format

National Terrorism Advisory System		
	Alert <small>www.dhs.gov/ntas</small>	
DATE & TIME ISSUED: XXXX		
SUMMARY The Secretary of Homeland Security informs the public and relevant government and private sector partners about a potential or actual threat with this alert, indicating whether there is an "imminent" or "elevated" threat.	DURATION An individual threat alert is issued for a specific time period and then automatically expires. It may be extended if new information becomes available or the threat evolves.	
DETAILS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This section provides more detail about the threat and what the public and sectors need to know.• It may include specific information, if available, about the nature and credibility of the threat, including the critical infrastructure sector(s) or location(s) that may be affected.• It includes as much information as can be released publicly about actions being taken or planned by authorities to ensure public safety, such as increased protective actions and what the public may expect to see.	AFFECTED AREAS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This section includes visual depictions (such as maps or other graphics) showing the affected location(s), sector(s), or other illustrative detail about the threat itself.	
HOW YOU CAN HELP <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This section provides information on ways the public can help authorities (e.g. camera phone pictures taken at the site of an explosion), and reinforces the importance of reporting suspicious activity.• It may ask the public or certain sectors to be alert for a particular item, situation, person, activity or developing trend.	STAY PREPARED <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This section emphasizes the importance of the public planning and preparing for emergencies before they happen, including specific steps individuals, families and businesses can take to ready themselves and their communities.• It provides additional preparedness information that may be relevant based on this threat.	STAY INFORMED <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This section notifies the public about where to get more information.• It encourages citizens to stay informed about updates from local public safety and community leaders.• It includes a link to the DHS NTAS website http://www.dhs.gov/alerts and http://twitter.com/NTASAlerts
If You See Something, Say Something™. Report suspicious activity to local law enforcement or call 911.		
<small>The National Terrorism Advisory System provides Americans with alert information on homeland security threats. It is distributed by the Department of Homeland Security. More information is available at: www.dhs.gov/ntas. To receive mobile updates: www.twitter.com/NTASAlerts If You See Something Say Something™ used with permission of the NY Metropolitan Transportation Authority.</small>		

Response Measures If you or if one of your employees comes across a suspicious item or behavior, consider the following measures:

- Call 911 to provide specific street address and report issue to law enforcement
- If the event involves a suspicious item, do not touch item and vacate immediate area
- Alert others of the issue, to include Security and Building Management
- If the event involves a suspicious behavior or individual, try to document the following circumstances, if it is safe to do so:
 - Description of subjects
 - If a vehicle is involved, note the car make, color, and license number
 - Description of events or direction of travel
- Security should attempt to identify video/camera footage of the incident and individual(s)

Best Practices / Considerations From a proactive standpoint, a strong security presence can be a deterrent. To strengthen your security presence, consider the following:

- Have a visible security presence, such as mobile patrols
- Consider having a visitor management system or process in place so all visitors are vetted prior to entering building
- Have Officers “meet and greet” *every* visitor, guest, or tenant that enters building
- Utilization of security systems such as cameras and alarms
- Strong rapport with local law enforcement
- Communication and training program for employees, tenants and contractors to report suspicious behaviors or items to Security and Building Management

Conclusion / Follow Up A strong security presence can be a deterrent to a malicious act or an attempted act. In addition, a strong security presence will incorporate education and awareness measures in its programs, so that others will recognize suspicious items, behaviors and / or actions. At the conclusion of an incident, consider the following:

- Obtain relevant information for an Incident Report
- Return building back to normal operations (security posts, elevators, etc.)
- Conduct after-action-review with team to identify gaps in response measures and opportunities for improvement
- Report findings with Building Management and update emergency plans as necessary
- Report losses to insurance carriers, risk management and ownership
- Continually work and coordinate with law enforcement

Note: The above measures are provided for informational purposes only and do not constitute any set standard, guideline, or code. They are offered as possible options to consider when developing response measures to issues in a commercial office building. When developing response measures, consider all variable, such as building size and design, staffing, time of day, etc. The purpose of these measures is to provide general information to those persons responsible for developing site-specific protective measures, to serve as practices to consider when drafting emergency operations plans, and do not constitute any set policy or procedure.