

TERRORISM

WHAT IS TERRORISM? The FBI defines terrorism as, “the use of forces 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.”

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO? If you detect suspicious activity that may relate to terrorism, please contact your local police department as soon as possible.

HOW CAN I PREPARE? Many of the steps you take to prepare for natural disasters apply to a terrorist incident. Having a plan is the only way to make sure that you and your family know what to do, how to do it, and when to do it if disaster strikes. – See the BEFORE DISASTER STRIKES section in this guide.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SUSPECT I WAS EXPOSED TO A BIOLOGICAL, CHEMICAL, OR RADIOLOGICAL WEAPON?

Call 9-1-1

Biological Threat: A biological attack is the deliberate release of germs or other biological substances that can make you sick. Many agents must be inhaled, enter through a cut in the skin or be eaten to make you sick. Some biological agents such as anthrax do not cause contagious diseases. Others like the smallpox virus can result in diseases you can catch from people. Since these agents are undetectable to the senses, be alert for suspicious release of an unknown substance. Often symptoms are delayed and mimic common ailments such as the flu. Be alert for illnesses within the workplace that appear without warning or are out-of-season; illness limited to a small geographical area; an unusual disease that does not occur naturally in a given geographic area or a large number of unexplained diseases or death. Consult a physician when in doubt to the nature of your illness. Public health officials will provide information on what you should do as quickly as they can. However, it may take time for public health officials to determine exactly what the illness is, how it should be treated and who is in danger.

Chemical Threat: A chemical attack is the deliberate release of a toxic gas, liquid or solid that can poison people and the environment. Watch for signs of a chemical attack such as many people suffering from watery eyes, twitching, choking, having trouble breathing or losing coordination. Many sick or dead birds, or small animals are also cause for suspicion. If you see signs of a chemical attack, quickly try to the impacted area or where the chemical is coming from. Take immediate action to get away from the area. If you think you have been exposed to a chemical, strip and wash with soap, being careful not to scrub the chemical into your skin. Seek emergency medical attention as quickly as possible.

Nuclear Threat: A nuclear blast is an explosion with intense light and heat, a damaging pressure wave and widespread radioactive material that can contaminate the air, water and ground surfaces for miles around. While experts may predict at this time that a nuclear attack is less likely than others, terrorism by its nature is unpredictable. If there is a flash or fireball, take cover immediately, below ground if possible, though any shield or shelter will help protect you from the immediate effects of the blast, and the pressure wave. In order to limit the amount of radiation you are exposed to, think about shielding, distance and time. If you have a thick shield between yourself and the radioactive materials, it will absorb more of the radiation and you will be exposed to less. Similarly, the farther away you are from the blast and the fallout, the lower your exposure. Finally, minimizing time spent exposed will also reduce your risk.

Radioactive Threat: A radiation threat or “Dirty Bomb” is the use of common explosives to spread radioactive materials over a targeted area. It is not a nuclear blast. The force of the explosion and radioactive contamination will be more localized. While the blast will be immediately obvious, the presence of radiation may not be clearly until trained personnel with specialized equipment are on the scene. As with any radiation, you want to try to limit your exposure. Think about shielding, distance and time.

For more information about terrorism visit the following:

www.fema.gov

www.cdc.gov