Preventing Soft Target Terrorist Attacks

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TERRORISM INDICATORS OF POTENTIAL ATTACKS ON SOFT TARGETS

Airport Terminals

- Vulnerable to insider threats
- Multiple locations to place explosives
- Open accessibility—outside security
- Large number of people in a small area
- Numerous targets and adjacent structures
- Size and remote location of some facilities

Shopping Malls

- Unrestricted public access
- Large number of access points
- Unrestricted access to adjacent buildings
- Access to suppliers, vendors, and maintenance workers
- Limited employee background checks
- Limited security force

Stadiums/Arenas

- Large number of people entering with varying levels of inspection
- Limited control of vehicles entering area
- Limited or no inspection of items carried in by event participants, vendors, contractors, etc.
- Limited facility security between events
- Large number of people at scheduled and publicly announced events

Convention Centers

- Open access
- Large urban locations
- Limited background checks on employees/vendors
- Little or no screening of patrons
- Little standoff for parking areas
- Infrequent use of intrusion detection systems
- Deliveries are unmonitored

Hotels

- Unrestricted public access
- Unrestricted access to areas adjacent to buildings
- Limited employee background checks
- Limited security force
- Unprotected HVAC systems
- Building designs are not security-oriented
- Multiple locations to place explosives or hazardous agents

Data sourced to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *Infrastructure Protection Series*, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation/U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *Attack on Nairobi Mall Highlights Continued Threat From Al-Shabaab* (September 2013)

INDICATORS OF PREOPERATIONAL 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
- 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/e-mail 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 (hydrogen peroxide, acetone, gasoline, propane, or fertilizer)
- Suspicion that a storage facility is being used to construct/store explosive devices
- Attempted or unauthorized access to rooftops or a sensitive area

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SOLUTIONS

- Review, update, and validate all emergency and crisis response plans
- Coordinate response plans across functional disciplines (police, fire, medical, and private sector)
- Conduct exercises of the plan
- Raise awareness among employees by conducting all-hazards training
- Raise 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 within the facility for people to assemble and seek refuge during a crisis
- Consider establishing/implementing an emergency communications system for personnel, such as phone trees or text messages
- 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 nonpublic 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 nonpublic 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 force
- Develop policies and procedures for dealing with the media and the general public in the event of an incident
  - Advise them of the situation
  - Defuse rumors and panic
- Identify entry and exit points to be used in emergencies
- Ensure that those points are free of obstructions 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 in order to receive and share information about potential or real terrorist attacks

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