

# ESP FOCUS

## Understand Terrorism



Earthquakes, floods and wildfires are frightening experiences for most of us. Fear is a natural human reaction to natural disasters and other events that hit suddenly and seem to threaten our safety, our loved ones, and our daily lives. Terrorists use this natural reaction to multiply the effect of their actions in order to advance their political or social goals. Like bullies in the schoolyard, terrorists want to intimidate and frighten others to get their own way.

Until recently, many Americans believed that terrorism only affected other countries. Now we know that it *can* happen here, but we don't know where or when. Much of the fear caused by terrorism—or the threat of it—is based on this uncertainty: not knowing whether it will hurt us or our loved ones directly, or whether it will target our own community or workplace.

But the terrorists are *not* in charge. Governmental officials are working hard to find terrorists and to limit their ability to harm Americans. At the same time, there is a lot that *each of us* can do to limit the terrorists' ability to frighten us.

We can take back control over our peace of mind and help ensure our safety by taking some of the same actions that we would take to prepare for earthquakes, floods, or fires. We can also contribute to the safety of others by becoming more aware of our surroundings and reporting suspicious activities or items to local officials.

## TAKE ACTION

Check out the reverse side of this sheet for practical, affordable and useful things you can do for yourself, your family, your neighborhood and your co-workers. These simple steps will help you regain your sense of control, and they could make a big difference in your personal safety in any emergency.

## LEARN MORE

Knowledge is power. The more you understand about potential emergencies, the better you can respond if they occur.

## CHECK THESE WEBSITES

- [www.espfocus.org](http://www.espfocus.org) (Emergency Survival Program)
- [www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov) (United States Department of Homeland Security)
- [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov) (Federal Emergency Management Agency)
- [www.oes.ca.gov](http://www.oes.ca.gov) (California Governor's Office of Emergency Services)
- [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) (American Red Cross)
- [www.lacoa.org](http://www.lacoa.org) (County of Los Angeles Operational Area)
- [www.sdcounty.ca.gov/oes](http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/oes) (County of San Diego)
- [www.ci.riverside.ca.us/fire](http://www.ci.riverside.ca.us/fire) (City of Riverside Fire Department)
- [www.cert-la.com/education/Terrorism.htm](http://www.cert-la.com/education/Terrorism.htm) (Community Emergency Response Team)



# JANUARY

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## WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

Preparing for terrorist attacks is the same as preparing for earthquakes, fires, and other emergencies. It all starts with a family emergency plan.

- Evacuation:** Whether you are at home, at work, or in a public place, think of how you could leave quickly and safely. Locate stairways and emergency exits. Pay attention to posted evacuation signs in buildings, subways and crowded public areas.
- Out-of-town contact:** Think how you would get in contact with your family if you became separated. Choose an out-of-town contact that your family members or friends could call to check on each other.
- Meeting place:** Decide where you and family members would meet if the emergency affects your home, or if officials have to evacuate your neighborhood.
- School plans:** Learn the emergency plans at your children's schools, and make sure the school has your updated emergency contact information. Give written permission to a trusted friend or neighbor to pick up your children from school or day care in case you cannot get there on time.
- Preparation for children:** Teach your children what to do in an emergency, and make sure they know their own names and addresses, as well as the full names and contact information for parents and a second adult emergency contact.

Assemble and maintain an **emergency supply kit** at home, at work, and in your car.

- A battery-powered radio, flashlights, and extra batteries.
- A whistle to signal your location to rescuers.
- A first aid kit and a manual.
- An extra pair of eyeglasses and any prescription medications you need.
- Drinking water.
- Cash and credit cards.
- Sturdy shoes and a jacket in case you have to walk some distance.
- A current map of your area in case of detours.
- An extra set of car keys.
- A notebook and pen to write down observations or special instructions.
- Names, addresses, telephone numbers and photos of family members.
- Special items for infants, children, elderly or disabled family members.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO DURING AN ATTACK

Terrorists are counting on surprise, fear, and confusion to add to the impact of their actions. If you realize an attack is underway, gather all your strength to pause and think. Look around you to see what is happening, and what immediate steps you should take to protect yourself and others.

- If there is flying debris, **duck** under something sturdy, **cover** the back of your neck with your arms, and **hold on**, just as you would for an earthquake.
- If there is smoke, get near the floor, cover your mouth and nose with a cloth, and move carefully toward the nearest marked exit.
- If it is necessary to evacuate, do so calmly. Use only marked exits and stairways. Never use elevators. Help others who are moving more slowly or who may be disoriented.

If you are not directly affected by the attack, remain calm, encourage others, and comfort children. Turn on news radio or television, and listen for official instructions. Follow the directions of authorities.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO AFTER AN ATTACK

Remain calm. Think before you act. Don't let terrorists have what they want most: to hurt a few people in order to intimidate millions.

- Stay informed. Listen to official reports and instructions on the radio or television.
- If officials order an evacuation, cooperate quickly and follow their instructions regarding evacuation routes and shelter locations.
- If officials tell you to "Shelter in Place," they mean for you to stay inside your home, vehicle or workplace until it is safe to come out. They will provide you with detailed instructions.
- Do not leave your sheltered location or return to the evacuated area until local officials confirm that it is safe to do so.
- Implement your family emergency plan, and notify your out-of-town contact of your location and status.



This focus sheet is produced as part of the Emergency Survival Program (ESP). ESP is an awareness campaign designed to increase home, neighborhood, business and school emergency preparedness. ESP was developed by the County of Los Angeles. The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) and representatives from Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles, Mono, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, and Ventura counties, Southern California Edison, the Southern California Earthquake Center and the American Red Cross assist in the development of campaign materials and coordination of the campaign.