

ESP

FOCUS

Terrorism



Terrorists are not in charge!

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.

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. The terrorists are not in charge. We have control over our peace of mind and can 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.

The simple steps on the reverse side of this Focus Sheet will help you maintain your sense of control, and they could make a big difference in your personal safety in any emergency.



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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-state contact: Think how you will get in contact with your family if you become separated. Choose an out-of-state contact that your family members or friends can call to check on each other.
- Meeting place: Decide where you and family members will 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.

Finally, review your emergency plan and assemble and maintain an emergency supply kit at home, at work, and in your car.

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 can take to protect yourself and others.

- If there is flying debris, drop down; take cover under something sturdy, and hold on to it with one hand while protecting your head and neck with the other.
- 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, try to do so calmly. Use only marked exits and stairways. Never use elevators. Help others who are moving more slowly or who may be disoriented. Condition Red indicates an actual eruption. The USGS estimates such an alert will be issued once every few centuries.

If you are not directly affected by the attack, try to stay calm, think before you act, 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

Try to stay calm. Think before you act. Don't let terrorists get what they want most: to hurt a few people in order to intimidate many.

- 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-state contact of your location and status.
- Be aware of the psychological impact that terrorism can inflict, even when it happens to people you do not know personally.

HEALTH TIP: Acts of terrorism may result in little physical damage, but they can bring fear, confusion and uncertainty into everyday life. It is important to understand that strong emotional reactions to such events are normal. Re-establish daily routines for work, school, play, meals, and rest. Work with the support networks within your community.

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