
UNIT 8: TERRORISM AND CERT

In this unit you will learn about:

- **What Terrorism Is:** The definition of terrorism and terrorist goals.
- **Terrorist Weapons:** The weapons that terrorists are known or are suspected to have and the risk posed by various terrorist weapons.
- **B-NICE Indicators:** Cues that help to identify a when a terrorist attack has occurred or may be imminent.
- **CERTs and Terrorist Incidents:** CERT protocols for terrorist incidents and protective action following an event.

UNIT 8: TERRORISM AND CERT

INTRODUCTION AND UNIT OVERVIEW

In his January 29, 2002, State of the Union address, the President asked Americans to volunteer their services to improve and safeguard our country and created the Citizen Corps program to help Americans meet this call to service.

One of the volunteer opportunities offered to the American public under the Citizen Corps umbrella is the CERT program.

Given the increased threat of terrorist attacks on American soil, CERT members must be educated about CERT protocols and procedures for terrorist incidents and the actions that CERTs should take following a possible terrorist attack.

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Define terrorism.
 - Identify potential targets in the community.
 - Identify CERT operating procedures for a terrorist incident.
 - Describe the actions to take following a suspected terrorist incident.
-

WHAT IS TERRORISM?

The U.S. Department of Justice's definition of terrorism is:

. . .the unlawful use of force or violence committed by a group or individual against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.

Terrorism may be perpetrated by foreign or domestic individuals or groups. While the United States has not had as many terrorist incidents as some other countries, we have had several serious attacks, including:

- The bombing of the World Trade Center (1993).
- The bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City (1995).
- The bombing at the Atlanta Olympic Games (1996).
- Bombings at family planning clinics and gay bars in the Atlanta area (1996 and 1997).
- The destruction of the World Trade Center and a portion of the Pentagon (2001).
- The sending of anthrax through the U.S. Mail (2001).

Each of these incidents demonstrates that we live with the possibility of additional terrorist attacks on our own soil.

Terrorist attacks can occur with or without warning. Because of the nature of terrorist attacks, they can—and are often intended to—result in:

- Mass casualties.
 - Loss of critical resources.
 - Disruption of vital services.
 - Disruption of the economy.
 - Individual and mass panic.
-

TERRORIST TARGETS

Terrorists choose their targets to meet their goals. For example, the Oklahoma City bombing was a strike against the Federal government that caused mass panic in the Oklahoma City area. The 9/11 attacks struck both our economy and our military establishment, while raising casualty levels to new heights and changing the way America thinks about its safety.

Terrorist select “soft” or lightly protected targets over “hard” or very secure targets.

Terrorists may also be drawn to major events such as parades or athletic events. Because of this, you may see increased security measures to help deter and prevent terrorism.

TERRORIST WEAPONS

Experts generally agree that there are five categories of possible terrorist weapons. The acronym B-NICE will help you to remember.

The weapons thought to be available to at least some terrorist groups include:

- Biological weapons
 - Nuclear weapons and radiological dispersal devices
 - Incendiary devices
 - Chemical weapons
 - Explosive devices
1. **Biological weapons.** Biological agents are found in nature. Some countries, however, have devised ways to weaponize biological agents so that they can be disseminated to affect broad segments of the population, animal populations, or crops.

Some biological agents are contagious, but many are not. Routes of exposure for biological weapons are:

- Inhalation.
- Ingestion.
- Absorption.

Many, but not all, biological agents take days or even weeks for their symptoms to appear. It is possible for a biological attack to occur and remain unnoticed for some time.

TERRORIST WEAPONS (CONTINUED)

It is also possible for some biological agents to spread far beyond their initial point of contamination as the daily routines of affected individuals broaden the reach of the agent.

Fortunately, most biological agents are very delicate and are easily destroyed by heat, light, and other environmental factors. Additionally, the technical complexities of milling agents small enough for them to remain suspended in the air is beyond the capability of most terrorist groups.

2. **Nuclear weapons.** A terrorist attack with a nuclear weapon would be much different from an attack with a conventional explosive device. There would be potential for physical injury and death to persons who were not injured in the initial attack. The affected area would be much larger than in a conventional attack, and debris and other usually harmless items would be contaminated. The long-term health effects would be more difficult to ascertain and manage. Fortunately, experts believe that the complexities of a terrorist group obtaining a nuclear weapon and maintaining the tolerances that are required for the weapon to function make the use of nuclear weapons by terrorist groups a low risk.

Radiation dispersal devices (RDDs) are considered to be a much higher threat because radiological materials are much easier to obtain than enriched nuclear materials and the technology required to detonate an RDD is similar to that involved in detonating conventional explosives.

Radiological materials are readily available in hospitals and other medical facilities, in university science laboratories, and in many products with commercial uses. Terrorists who would attack using an RDD would need relatively small amounts of radioactive material to make an effective device.

3. **Incendiary devices.** Incendiary devices are mechanical, electrical, or chemical devices used intentionally to initiate combustion and start a fire. Incendiary devices consist of three basic components:
 - An igniter or fuse
 - A container or body
 - An incendiary material or filler

Incendiary devices are relatively easy to make. A device containing a chemical incendiary would usually be metal or other nonbreakable material (but not plastic because many chemicals are corrosive); a device containing a liquid incendiary material would usually be a breakable material such as glass.

4. **Chemical agents.** Unlike biological agents or nuclear materials, which are difficult to produce or purchase, the ingredients used to produce chemical weapons are found in common products and petrochemicals. Terrorists can turn these common products into lethal weapons.

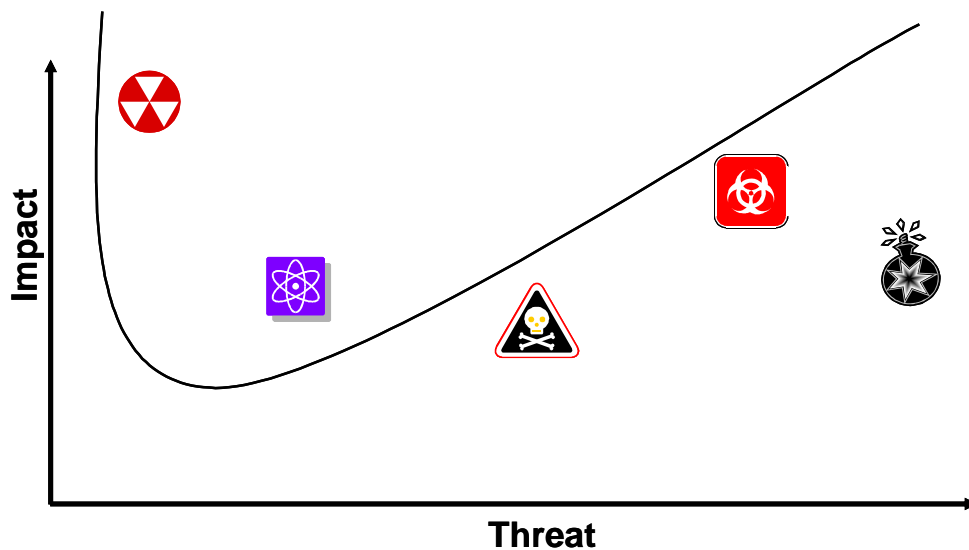
TERRORIST WEAPONS (CONTINUED)

There are five categories of chemical weapons:

- Blister agents cause blisters, burns, and other tissue damage. Exposure may be made through liquid or vapor contact with any exposed skin, inhalation, or ingestion. Blister agents include several families of chemicals, including mustard and lewisite. The effects of blister agents may be similar to those experienced with riot control agents (e.g., CS gas) but do not clear upon movement into fresh air. In fact, the effects of most blister agents increase with time and may not reach their full impact for 12 to 18 hours.
 - Blood agents are absorbed into the bloodstream and deprive blood cells of oxygen. Exposure may be made through liquid or vapor contact with any exposed skin, inhalation, or ingestion. Blood agents include two main families of chemicals, including hydrogen cyanide and cyanogen chloride. Those who are affected by blood agents may appear “bluish” across the nose and cheeks and around the mouth. As the symptoms of blood agents progress, the victim will convulse and lose consciousness.
 - Choking agents attack the lungs. Following exposure through inhalation, the lungs fill with fluid, which prevents oxygen from being absorbed by, and carbon dioxide from being removed from, the blood. Death results from lack of oxygen and is similar to drowning. Two common examples of choking agents are phosgene and chlorine.
 - Nerve agents affect the central nervous system. These agents act most quickly and are the most lethal of all chemical agents, acting within seconds of exposure. Victims of nerve agents experience constricted pupils, runny nose, shortness of breath, convulsions, and cessation of breathing. Sarin is an example of a nerve agent.
 - Riot-control agents cause respiratory distress and tearing and are designed to incapacitate rather than kill. Riot-control agents cause intense pain, especially in the moist areas of the body. Common riot-control agents include CS (also known as “tear” gas) and capsicum (also called pepper spray).
5. Conventional explosives have been the “weapon of choice” for most terrorists who have used them in more than 80 percent of attacks. While terrorists have used military munitions such as grenades, mortars, and shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles, experts rate conventional explosives in the form of improvised explosive devices as a greater threat.

Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) include any device that is created in an improvised manner, incorporating explosives or other materials designed to destroy, disfigure, distract, or harass. Most bombs used by terrorists are improvised. The raw materials required for many explosives can be purchased commercially (e.g., ammonium nitrate, which is also used as fertilizer), purchased from commercial blasting supply companies, or developed using readily available household ingredients.

TERRORIST WEAPONS (CONTINUED)



This graphic illustrates the impact versus the likelihood of the various types of terrorist weapons. Remember that:

- Although nuclear weapons present the highest impact, they are considered the lowest risk because of the difficulty in obtaining enough weapons-grade material and the technical complexity of developing and maintaining the tolerances required for a nuclear device to detonate.
- Incendiary, chemical, and conventional devices are considered higher-risk but lower-impact weapons.
- Biological weapons are considered both high-risk and high-impact weapons—but only for diseases that are highly contagious. Other types of biological weapons (i.e., those requiring dispersal devices) are considered a lower risk because of the sensitivity of the biological agents to heat, light, and shock.

B-NICE INDICATORS

You need to be alert to changes in the environment as a clue to a possible terrorist attack.

Environmental indicators of a biological or chemical attack could include:

- Numerous sick or dead animals, fish, or birds. Wildlife are often more sensitive to chemical or biological agents than humans. Animals, fish, or birds that are obviously sick, dying, or dead may indicate the presence of a biological or chemical attack.
- Unscheduled spraying or abandoned spray devices. Several September 11 terrorists are known to have made inquiries into purchasing and learning to fly crop dusters. Many other types of agricultural sprayers can be used to disperse biological and (more likely) chemical agents.
- Vapor clouds or mists that are unusual for the area or for the time of day. Although many biological and chemical agents cannot be seen with the naked eye, the substances in which they are suspended when dispersed may be visible for a period of time after an attack.
- The absence of crops, wildlife, or insects that are common for the area, time of day, or time of year. Being aware of what is not in the environment that should be is as important as being aware of what is in the environment but is out of place.
- Out of place and unattended packages, boxes, or vehicles. Terrorists have a long history of hiding explosive devices in packages, boxes, or vehicles. Items that are out of place and unattended could signal a possible terrorist attack.
- Packages that are leaking may be harmless—but they may also signal a terrorist incident. The terrorists who released Sarin in the Tokyo subway system (Aum Shinrikyo) merely poked holes in bags containing Sarin, then left the area as the poison leaked out.
- Materials or equipment that are unusual for the area. Dispersal devices, lab equipment, or quantities of hazardous materials that are not typically located in the area may indicate that a terrorist attack is occurring or is about to occur.
- Small explosions that disperse liquids, mists, or gases are an obvious sign that something is wrong.
- Unusual odors or tastes.

B-NICE INDICATORS (CONTINUED)

You may observe physical indications of a terrorist attack. Some possible physical indicators include:

- Multiple casualties without obvious signs of trauma. This may indicate a biological or chemical attack.
 - Multiple victims who are exhibiting similar symptoms. Symptoms may range from difficulty breathing to skin necrosis to uncontrolled salivating, uncontrolled muscle twitching, or convulsions. All of these symptoms indicate that a chemical attack may have taken place.
 - Large numbers of persons seeking medical attention with similar symptoms that are not characteristic of the season. The symptoms of many biological agents mimic the flu or other common illnesses. An unusually large number of persons seeking medical attention for the flu in July could indicate that a biological attack has taken place.
-

PREPARING AT HOME AND WORK

Because team safety is the first priority, CERT members should treat possible terrorist incidents as a stop sign. CERTs are not equipped or trained to respond to terrorist incidents.

There are ways to prepare for a terrorist incident. Some of the steps for preparing for a terrorist incident are the same as for natural hazards but some require special planning.

The steps to take to prepare for a terrorist attack include:

- Assembling a disaster supply kit. Disaster supplies for terrorist incidents are the same as for other hazards and should definitely include a battery-powered radio with extra batteries and a cordless or cellular telephone. Those who live in high-risk areas (such as those who live within the 10-mile emergency planning zone around a nuclear facility) will be provided with additional information by their local emergency management agencies.
- Identifying a safe room in the home or workplace and a meeting place outside of the home or workplace. Because the public will not know in advance whether to evacuate or shelter in place, it is necessary to plan for both. Because many chemicals are heavier than air, a safe room in the house should be on the main level or second level (not in the basement) and should have as few doors and windows as possible. A meeting place outside of the home should be outside of the area and upwind from the incident.

PREPARING AT HOME AND WORK (CONTINUED)

- Develop a family communication plan. Depending on the family members' locations at the time of an attack, it may not be possible to get to the meeting place. Identifying an out-of-state or out-of-area contact or other family communication plan will facilitate the knowledge that family members are safe.
- Learn shelter-in-place procedures and prepare a sheltering kit. Shelter-in-place procedures for a chemical or biological attack include are shown in the visual.

Procedures for sheltering in place during a chemical or biological attack include:

- Shutting off the ventilation system and latching all doors and windows to reduce airflow from the outside.
- Using pre-cut plastic sheeting to cover openings where air can enter the room, including doors, windows, vents, electrical outlets, and telephone outlets! When cut, the sheeting should extend several inches beyond the dimensions of the door or window to allow room the duct tape the sheeting to the walls and floor.
- Taping the plastic sheeting around all doors and windows using duct tape to ensure a good seal.
- Seal with duct tape other areas where air can come in, such as under doors and areas where pipes enter the home. Air can be blocked by placing towels or other soft objects in areas where air could enter, then securing them with duct tape.
- Listen to a battery-powered radio for the all clear. Chemicals used in an attack will be carried on the wind and will dissipate over time. Listen to EAS broadcasts to know when it is safe to leave the safe room.

CERTS AND TERRORIST INCIDENTS

Remember that:

- Team safety is the number one priority. All CERT members owe it to themselves and their loved ones not to become victims while trying to help others.
- Always do a thorough sizeup and stop, look, listen, and think before taking any action. Consider:
 - Dangers, both existing and possible.
 - Team capabilities, including how many CERT members are available, the training that they have had, and the equipment that is available at the scene.
 - Team limitations.

CERTS AND TERRORIST INCIDENTS (CONTINUED)

CERT protocols for terrorist incidents:

- As with hazardous materials, terrorist incidents are a stop sign for CERT members.
- Take in the whole area during the sizeup. If any of the indicators of a terrorist incident are present, do not proceed with the response.

If terrorism using WMD is suspected, CERTs will be very limited in what they can do. Professional responders will need specialized equipment and personnel to respond to a terrorist incident.

If you observe any of the indicators of a terrorist incident, you should:

- Not touch it!
- Move away from the object or area.
- Report it to authorities immediately.

Cellular phones and two-way radios create static electricity and may detonate explosive devices. CERT members should always report suspected explosive devices via landline.

SELF-CARE DURING TERRORIST INCIDENTS

It is important to know what actions to take in a terrorist incident.

There are three factors that significantly affect safety at a terrorist incident:

- Time. Limiting the amount of time in the area of an incident limits exposure.
- Distance. Evacuate the area. Professional responders suggest maintaining distance of between 1,000 and 1,500 feet from the incident. Move upwind and uphill from the incident site.
- Shielding. The shielding provided by a sturdy building or even a wall can increase protection from contamination, radiation, or blast effects.

Time, distance, and shielding requirements are based on an initial sizeup of the situation. If you are inside a building that is not damaged and you are not in immediate danger, you should listen to Emergency Alert System (EAS) broadcasts for information about whether to evacuate or shelter in place.

CERTS AND TERRORIST INCIDENTS (CONTINUED)

If there are any reason to believe that chemical, or radiological contamination has occurred in your area put distance between you and the agent. If exposed to a chemical agent or radiation, use basic decontamination procedures.

Be sure to make the points listed below:

- Leave the contaminated area immediately (at least 1,000 to 1,500 feet upwind and uphill) to limit the time of exposure and reduce contamination levels.
- Take decontamination action. Seconds count! The goal is to limit the time that the agent is in contact with the skin.
 - Remove everything from the body, including jewelry. Cut off clothing that would normally be removed over the head to reduce the probability of inhaling the agent.
 - Wash hands before using them to shower.
 - Flush the entire body, including the eyes, underarms, and groin area, with copious amounts of cool water. Hot water opens the pores of the skin and can promote absorption of the contaminant. Using copious amounts of water is important because some chemicals react to small amounts of water.

If soap is immediately available, mix the soap with water for decontamination. Avoid scrubbing with soap because scrubbing can reduce the layer of protective skin, thus increasing absorption of the contaminant.

If working with a buddy, work together to decontaminate each other. If hosing someone else off, avoid both physical contact with the person and with the runoff.

- Blot dry using an absorbent cloth. Do not rub the skin! Put on clean clothes.
- Report for decontamination as soon as possible. Professional responders will be setting up decontamination stations somewhere around the site.

CERTS AND TERRORIST INCIDENTS (CONTINUED)**TREATING OTHERS**

The first priority for CERT teams is personal safety. CERT members should take self-protective measures only. You should not attempt to treat victims in the contaminated area. CERT members can tell people who are leaving the area about using basic decontamination procedures and waiting for responders.

WHAT PROFESSIONAL RESPONDERS WILL DO

There are several measures that you can expect professional responders to take when you arrive at the scene of a terrorist incident.

The first step that professional responders will take when they arrive at the scene is to conduct a thorough sizeup. You will follow steps that are very similar to those that CERTs take to determine:

- What is going on.
- How bad the situation is and how much worse it could get.
- What measures can be taken to control the incident safely.
- What resources will be needed.

CERTs can expect professional responders to treat terrorist incidents much the same as hazardous materials incidents. As such, the next step that they will take is to establish three incident zones to minimize the risk of spreading contamination from the incident site.

- The hot zone includes the incident scene and the contaminated area around the scene. If the incident is outdoors, the hot zone will spread downwind, taking wind speed into consideration.
- The warm zone is upwind from the hot zone and is used to isolate victims during decontamination. It is called the warm zone because the evacuees can carry or spread a contaminant into this area. Professional responders will hold those who require decontamination in the warm zone until decontamination is complete so that contaminants do not spread.
- The cold zone is located upwind and beyond the warm zone. Those who are not contaminated or who have been decontaminated will be evacuated to the cold zone and kept there until professional responders authorize them to leave.

Activity: Applying CERT Principles to a Suspected Terrorist Incident

Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to enable you to apply CERT protocols to a suspected terrorist incident.

Instructions: Follow the steps below to complete this activity:

1. Assume that you are a CERT graduate and have been assigned to a team.
 2. Working in your table group, read the scenario assigned to your group and determine as a team what actions to take.
 3. You will have 10 minutes to read and discuss your scenarios.
 4. Select a spokesperson to present the team's response to the class.
-

Scenario 1:

It is a bright, sunny spring day. You are stopping at the Post Office on your way home from work. As you enter the parking lot, you are shaken by an explosion and see glass from the Post Office windows fly through the air across the parking lot. Although it takes you a few seconds, you realize that there has been an explosion inside the Post Office.

Scenario 2:

It is a bright sunny day. You are stopping at the Post Office on your way home from work. As you enter the parking lot, you see several people exiting the building. All seem to be disoriented. Some are clutching their chests and rubbing their eyes. One has fallen to the ground and seems to be having some sort of convulsion.

UNIT SUMMARY

Terrorism may be perpetrated by foreign or domestic individuals or groups. Terrorists attack to:

- Intimidate the government or the civilian population.
- Further their objectives.

When terrorists attack, their goals are to:

- Create mass casualties.
- Disrupt critical resources, vital services, and the economy.
- Cause individual and mass panic.

Terrorist groups are known to have—or are suspected of having—five types of weapons.

Using the acronym B-NICE will help you to remember the types of weapons that terrorists might be expected to use.

There are a range of environmental and physical indicators for terrorist attacks. Paying attention to what is not present in the environment that should be is as important as what is present that should not be.

CERT members should treat possible terrorist incidents the same as they would HazMat incidents—as a stop sign. If they observe indicators of a possible terrorist incident, they should:

- Not touch it!
- Move away from the object or area.
- Report it to authorities immediately.

CERTs can help limit their exposure to the harmful effects of terrorist weapons by:

- Limiting their exposure time.
- Evacuating the area to a minimum distance of 1,000 to 1,500 feet upwind and uphill.
- Using the protection of a sturdy building as shielding.

UNIT SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

CERT members should take immediate action to protect themselves and, if exposed, follow basic decontamination procedures immediately. Because the safety of CERT members is the number one priority, CERT members should not attempt to treat anyone who has been contaminated or perform decontamination procedures for them.

Terrorist incident scenes are crime scenes. CERT members should avoid taking any action that may disturb potential evidence.
