



*“We calculated in advance the number of casualties from the **enemy** who would be killed based on the position of the tower. We calculated that the floors that would be hit would be three or four floors. I was the most optimistic of them all... due to my experience in this field, I was thinking that the fire from the gas in the plane would melt the iron structure of the building and collapse the area where the plane hit and all the floors above it only. This is all that we had hoped for.”*

Osma bin Laden  
December 2001

The United States led War on Terror will be a long and demanding fight. A critical resource in this fight is an educated and alert citizenry. Maryland officials ask for your assistance by remaining alert and attentive to your surroundings as you continue to work and live your daily lives. Oftentimes, it is the private citizen that reports suspicious activity and provides law enforcement the first clue to a potential threat. You could be that person.

What is terrorism? *Terrorism is the use of force or violence against persons or property in violation of the criminal laws of the United States for purposes of intimidation, coercion or ransom, or to influence government policy. Terrorists often use threats to create fear among the public, to try to convince citizens*

*that their government is powerless to prevent terrorism, and to get immediate publicity for their causes.*

Most terrorist incidents involve small compartmented extremists. Terrorist cells can meld into a community and remain dormant for extended periods of time. Local, state and federal law enforcement officials work together to prevent or protect against potential attacks but face the difficult challenge of identifying these small radical cells.

A terrorist attack can take several forms, depending on the resources available to the cell, the nature of the political issue motivating the attack, and the points of weakness of the terrorist’s target. In the following paragraphs, you will find pre-incident indicators that can alert law enforcement to a potential terrorist attack, if properly reported.

Understand, the presence of one or two indicators does not presume terrorist activity, but the presence of several indicators should be reported immediately to your local law enforcement agency or the Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center (MCAC). Do not conduct your own investigation or dismiss indicators as unimportant. Allow law enforcement to do their job.

**Pre-operational Planning** - pre operational planning always takes place prior to an attack. A few indicators of pre-operational planning include:

- ★ Surveillance activity, e.g. note taking, use of binoculars, cameras or maps that appear out of context.
- ★ Theft of uniforms, official vehicles, access badges, or other resources that can be used to gain entry to restricted or protected areas.
- ★ Stockpiling/storage of weapons or explosives or explosive making materials, e.g. volatile chemicals, fertilizer, propane tanks.
- ★ Attempts to test physical security.
- ★ Presence of individuals who loiter or do not appear to belong in an area for an extended time and/or change or hide their behavior in the presence of law enforcement/ security personnel.

**Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED)** - Vehicle bombs are a common terrorist method of attack. A few potential indicators of VBIEDs include:

- ★ Rental, delivery, utility, limos, and other vehicles parked in unusual locations.



- ★ Drivers who operate the vehicle in an overly cautious manner, attempt to abandon the vehicle or act nervously.
- ★ Vehicle drivers who display non-compliant behavior, such as insisting on parking close to a building or crowded area.
- ★ Excessive vehicle weight or unusually uneven weight distribution; e.g. the vehicle appears overloaded.
- ★ Smoke, strong chemical, or fuel odors emanating from a vehicle.

**Suicide Bombers:** Individual suicide bombing attacks are a common tactic used in other parts of the world. Although the US has not experienced this type of threat, we must consider suicide bombing as a possible future tactic. Some suicide bomber indicators include individuals:

- ★ Wearing inappropriate attire such as heavy or bulky clothing inconsistent with weather conditions.
- ★ With protruding bulges or exposed wires under clothing.
- ★ With strange chemical odors associated with the individual.
- ★ Who display excessive sweating, mumbling to oneself, or displaying an unusually calm or detached demeanor.

**Threat of Secondary Explosive Devices:** In the event of a successful terrorist attack, anyone assisting the injured should be

aware terrorists commonly use secondary explosives to target first responders. So, first responders will search the response area for any suspicious items, such as unclaimed bags or abandoned vehicles, that could be used to hide a secondary explosive device. If you discover any suspicious items, leave the area and notify the on-site law enforcement personnel immediately.

Maryland's homeland security community is working to protect our citizens, facilities, and resources. Since September 11, 2001, federal, state, and local officials have developed a thorough and coordinated response to terrorist or other security related attacks. The threat of terrorism demands education and coordination at every level of government and society. If you witness any of these indicators, report your observations to your local law enforcement agency or the MCAC. Remain vigilant. The importance of this fight is best captured in the words of Martin Treptow, a U.S. soldier killed in action during World War I, who wrote,

*"America must win this war. Therefore, I will work, I will sacrifice, I will endure, I will fight cheerfully and do my utmost, as if the issue of the whole struggle depended on me alone."*

## SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITIES REFERENCE GUIDE



**CONTACT LOCAL LAW  
ENFORCEMENT AT**

**OR**

**THE MARYLAND COORDINATION  
AND ANALYSIS CENTER**

**Phone: 1-800-492-8477 (TIPS)**