

Potential Indicators of Terrorist Activities Related to the General Public

What Should I Consider Suspicious?

People involved in terrorist activity often exhibit indicators that if observed could identify a potential impending crime or terrorist attack. The following is a list of some of the characteristics of such persons that you should be aware of .

- Unusual requests for information –
 - questions regarding sensitive information such as security procedures or systems
 - questions regarding facility operations
- Unusual interest in high risk or symbolic targets
 - surveillance
 - note taking
 - drawing of diagrams
 - annotating maps
 - inappropriate photographs or videos

- people over dressed for the weather
- Unusual activity –
 - people acting suspiciously
 - people departing quickly when seen or approached
 - people in places where they do not belong
 - vehicles that appear to be overloaded



What Should I Do?

It is important to give a thorough report when notifying law enforcement. Keep in mind the responding officer may only have the information you gave at the time of your call. Providing a detailed description of persons or vehicles is imperative for a successful follow up by law enforcement personnel.

If something seems wrong, notify law enforcement authorities.

Do not jeopardize your safety or the safety of others.

**Columbus, Ohio Division of Police
Homeland Security Section
Terrorism Early Warning Unit
614-645-5410
1-866-759-8005**

Terrorism may be national or international in scope, but terrorist incidents occur locally and are preceded by a number of pre-incident activities. Individuals in the community are key to identifying these pre-incident activities. By learning what to look for, **you** can aid law enforcement officials in protecting the homeland.

By being aware of what to look for and knowing how to report suspicious behavior, **you** can make a positive contribution in the fight against terrorism. The **partnership between the community and law enforcement** is essential to the success of anti-terrorism efforts.

It is important to remember that just because someone's speech, actions, beliefs, appearance, or way of life is different, it does not mean that he or she is suspicious. Instead, focus on behavior and activities that are unusual or out of place for the situation and that appear to be suspicious.

The activities outlined on this handout are by no means all-inclusive but have been compiled from a review of terrorist events over several years. Some of the activities, taken individually, could be innocent and must be examined by law enforcement professionals in a larger context to determine whether there is a basis to investigate.

This project was supported by Grant Number 2007-MU-BX-K002, awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Potential Indicators of Terrorist Activities Related to the General Public



**Columbus, Ohio Division of Police
Homeland Security Section
Terrorism Early Warning Unit
614-645-5410
1-866-759-8005**