



PREPARING FOR TERRORISM

MAYOR'S OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

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INTRODUCTION

The threat of terrorism was brought home last September to America in a shockingly personal manner. However, terrorism is not a new threat and you can do something about it. For years, San Franciscans have waged war on crime and have prepared for a variety of potential disasters. These techniques can help.

1. GET THE FACTS

While terrorist attacks with chemical, biological or nuclear agents are *possible*, the likelihood of their use is not high.

- **Chemical agents** are poisonous gases, liquids or solids. They are difficult to manufacture and to deliver in quantity. For example, the Pentagon estimates that a *ton* of sarin would be necessary to produce 10,000 casualties.
- **Biological agents** are organisms or toxins that have illness-producing effects. Again, they are difficult to manufacture and to deliver. Aum Shinrikyo, with millions in funding and sophisticated staff, was unable to produce a biological weapon after five years of trying.
- **Nuclear agents** are substances that generate harmful radiation. Nuclear devices and materials are closely monitored and difficult to obtain.

The preferred terrorist weapon of choice continues to be conventional explosives. They can be easily manufactured and transported, as we saw in the Oklahoma City bombing. Fortunately, good physical security practices and public awareness can help prevent this type of attack.

2. ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY

An aware and informed public is our best defense against terrorism. We must all do our part to keep our community safe. Terrorism is a crime and crime prevention strategies work very well. These include:

- Be aware of your surroundings. Notice where emergency exits are located. Think ahead about how to evacuate a building, subway or congested public area in a hurry.
- Report suspicious objects, packages, vehicles or persons to the appropriate authorities.
- Cooperate with security procedures at your place of work and in public places.
- Take precautions when traveling. Be aware of conspicuous or unusual behavior. Do not accept packages from strangers. Do not leave luggage unattended.
- Don't spread rumors – confirm questionable information with a credible source.

3. PREPARE FOR ALL EMERGENCIES

San Francisco is prone to many disasters, not just terrorist attack. The same preparedness measures work well for many different types of emergencies. Some key things you can do:

- Make copies of important personal/business documents and store them in a safe place.
- Identify an out of state contact person so family and friends can communicate with you during an emergency.
- Develop an individual/family/business emergency plan.
 - Plan for a meeting place if you cannot meet at home
 - Discuss what children should do if at school
 - Coordinate with neighbors for pick-up if children attend the same school
 - Designate a surrogate parent for your children if you are not able to tend to them
 - Provide all of this information to your child's school
- Learn how to locate and shut-off (if necessary) power, water, and gas.
- Stockpile emergency supplies for 3-7 days, including prescription medicines and a first aid kit.
- Know your community resources

4. VOLUNTEER TO HELP

A successful response to an emergency requires a great deal of help. Several volunteer groups have been pre-trained and are part of City emergency plans. Joining one of these organizations ***NOW*** increases your personal preparedness and your value to the City in emergencies. Some key organizations are:

- **SF Fire Department Neighborhood Emergency Response Team (NERT)** –training disaster preparedness and light search and rescue. Call (415) 558-3456 or check the website at www.nertnews.com.
- **Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS)**– HAM radio operators providing vital communications links when normal communications systems are inoperative or overloaded. Call (415) 558-2700 or check the website at www.sfacs.org.
- **American Red Cross** –provides victim services including on call Disaster Action Teams (DAT) and emergency shelter teams. Call (415) 427-8000 or check the website www.bayarea-redcross.org.
- **Volunteer Center of San Francisco** - Acts as a “clearinghouse” for volunteers. Call (415) 982-8999.

IF A TERRORIST ATTACK OCCURS:

- Remain calm and follow the instructions of emergency services personnel.
- Be alert to secondary hazards such as falling debris or additional devices.
- Follow the instructions of emergency personnel.
- Listen to your AM radio – KCBS 740AM for official emergency information and bulletins.
- Do not rush to the scene to volunteer – City emergency services will establish volunteer reception sites and will announce these sites through the media.

IF YOU ARE TRAPPED IN DEBRIS:

- Stay in your area so that you don't kick up dust. Cover your mouth with a handkerchief or clothing.
- Tap on a pipe or wall so rescuers can hear where you are. Use a whistle if one is available. Shout only as a last resort--shouting can cause you to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.

IF A BIOTERRORISM ATTACK OCCURS:

- **Call 911 or 553-8090.**
- Do not handle, shake, or empty the letter or package. Place it in plastic such as a ziploc bag or plastic sheet protector.
- Wash your hands with soap and warm water for 30 to 60 seconds, then wash your face. Blow and wipe your nose.
- Close the doors and windows of the room where the package or letter is located and turn off air conditioning, heating and fans.
- Collect the names of all persons who have had contact with the letter or package.
- If you develop flu-like symptoms, see your health care provider immediately.

HOW TO REPORT AN EMERGENCY:

Call 911 or 553-8090

- Give your exact location
- Give the telephone number you are calling from.
- Describe the emergency
- What happened?
- Where did it happen?
- Who is involved?
- Any injuries or weapons involved?
- Stay on the phone as long as it is safe to do so.

RECEIVING AND REPORTING A BOMB THREAT:

- Try to ask the caller
 - WHEN is the bomb going to explode?
 - WHERE is the bomb right now?
 - WHAT KIND of bomb is it?
 - WHAT does it look like?
 - WHY did you place the bomb?
 - WHERE are you calling from?
- **Once the caller has hung up - Call 911 or 553-8090**
- Be prepared to answer the following questions:
 1. What was the time and date of threat?
 2. How was the threat received?
 3. What were the exact words of the caller?
 4. Describe the caller's voice
 5. Describe background noise
 6. What time the caller hung up?

USEFUL EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

Police, Fire, Ambulance - 911 or 553-8090

FBI 415-553-7400

Poison Control 800-876-4766

PG&E 800-PGE-5000

Out of state contact _____

Personal physician _____

School _____

Caregiver _____

If you need to talk to someone in a time of crisis, call the Department of Public Health's Crisis Line at 781-0500