

## Terrorism and Chemical, Biological, and Radiological Attacks

**Terrorism** is the use of force or violence against persons or property for purposes of intimidation, coercion, or ransom.

Acts of terrorism people are most aware of include: bombings, hijackings, use of chemical, biological, or radiological weapons, and computer-based activities. While individual citizens can't do much to prevent a terror attack, there are some precautions that can be taken in advance of such an event.

Although most residents of Marlborough may not consider it a likely terrorist target, our residents must be aware of such threats while at home or while traveling.

- Be aware of your surroundings
  - Move or leave if you become uncomfortable or if something doesn't seem right
  - Trust your instincts
- Take precautions when traveling
  - Don't accept packages from strangers
  - If you are traveling to foreign countries check with the U.S. Department of State at [www.State.gov](http://www.State.gov) for reports of criminal and possible terrorist alerts before you go.
  - Report unusual or suspicious behavior to security or police  
It may make you uncomfortable, but you could be right
- Learn where emergency exits are in any building that you enter
  - Develop a mental plan on how to exit
- Be prepared to do without services you normally depend on—phone, electricity, gas, ATM's, cash registers, Internet
  - Remember your emergency supplies kits and home emergency plan
- Listen to radio and television for emergency broadcasts that will instruct you on what to do during an emergency
  - Stay at home, unless there is a risk of contamination to you and family from a terrorist act
  - If you feel ill, seek medical attention

## Chemical Attacks

Chemical attacks differ from biological attacks in that a toxic gas or liquid is used to contaminate people or the environment. The prevalent symptoms you would experience from a chemical attack are tightness in the chest, difficulty breathing, blurred vision, stinging of the eyes, or loss of coordination.

It is worth noting that the public routinely accepts the risks posed by accidental release of chemicals. The response to an emergency event involving chemicals, however, is the same regardless of whether the emergency is a result of intentional or unintentional actions.

- If you are outside during a chemical attack:
  - Move away immediately in an upwind direction
  - Find shelter as soon as possible
  
- If you are instructed to remain in your home or office due to an outside attack you should:
  - Close doors and windows
  - Turn off all ventilation including furnaces, air conditioners, vents, and fans
  - Seek shelter in an internal room and take your disaster supplies kit
  - Listen to radio or television for further official instructions
  
- If you are inside and an attack occurs within your building, try to leave as soon as possible. If that is not possible, move to a safe location in the building and shelter in place.
  
- If you are contaminated or assisting a contaminated person:
  - Use extreme caution when dealing with chemical agents as you can become contaminated or contaminate others
  - Remove all clothing or other items that contact body, place in an area away from others or better yet, in a plastic bag and seal.
  - Do not remove shirts by pulling them over your head as this could contaminate your eyes, nose, and mouth
  - Wash using any available soap and water.
  - Flush eyes with water
  
- Call for medical assistance

## Biological Attacks

A biological attack is the deliberate release of germs or related substances. To affect individuals adversely, these substances must usually be inhaled, be ingested, or enter through cuts in the skin. Some biological agents such as smallpox can be spread from person to person while others like anthrax do not cause contagious diseases.

Different than a conventional explosive or chemical attack, biological attacks may not be immediately evident. Some of the normal indicators of this type of attack would be an increase in the number of illnesses reported by local health care workers or a large number of dead or sick animals throughout your area. These attacks are normally discovered by emergency response personnel in reaction to the indicators listed above.

- If you become aware of an incident:
  - Move away quickly
  - Cover your nose and mouth with a tee shirt, handkerchief or towel to help prevent inhaling any particles.
  - Wash as much skin as possible with soap and water
  - Contact police or security agencies
  
- If you are indoors and the attack takes place outside, remain inside unless told otherwise by authorities.
  
- If you are exposed to a biological agent:
  - Remove and bag your clothes and personal items
  - Follow official instructions for disposal of contaminated items
  - Wash yourself with soap and water
  - Seek medical attention
  - Pay close attention to all official warnings and instructions on how to proceed. Medical services may be handled differently than a routine visit to your physician
  
- Remain Calm
  
- Precautionary Practices (a healthy body may be able to fight off any potential illness should you become ill)
  - Practice good personal hygiene
  - Maintain good health by eating a well balanced diet
  - Follow the health advice of your physician

# Radiological Attacks

## Nuclear Blast

A nuclear blast consists of tremendous thermal (heat), light, and blast energy. The blast can spread radioactive waste capable of contaminating the air and surrounding landscape. While this type of attack is less likely than a biological or chemical attack, the remote possibility of its occurrence means you should be prepared.

### What Should You Do?

- If a nuclear explosion occurs:
  - Immediately drop and stay down until any blast wave passes over you and it is safe to get up. Debris can often cause injuries from a nuclear explosion so it is often safer to remain down until debris stops falling. Do not look at the blast.
- When it is safe to do so, seek shelter inside a building or basement. Since dirt or earth is one of the best forms of protection from radiation, put as much shelter between you and the potential contamination as possible.
- If it is safe to leave without going in the direction from which the blast came, you should decide whether to leave the area to minimize the amount of time you spend exposed to radiological contamination. You should always try to place as much shielding and distance between yourself and the contamination as possible and limit the amount of your exposure by leaving laterally or upwind from the area when it is safe to do so.

## Dirty Bombs

Dirty bombs are regular explosives that have been combined with either radiation causing material or chemical weapons. While most news reports talk about radiological dirty bombs, chemical agents may be used as well. Blasts from these types of weapons normally look more like a regular explosion, and the contamination spread is not often immediately noticeable. While this type of attack normally spreads contamination over a more localized area, you should be prepared to follow many of the same procedures as listed above.

- If a dirty bomb is exploded in or near your presence, assume that you have been contaminated
  - Breathe through your shirt or coat to protect your lungs and to limit your exposure
  - Get away from the scene immediately and seek shelter
  - Once in shelter, remove your clothing and bag it if possible
  - Shower thoroughly with soap and water
  - Seek medical attention after emergency officials allow travel
- If at home, shelter in place
  - Close doors and windows
  - Turn off all ventilation including furnaces, air conditioners, vents, and fans
  - Seal the room with duct tape and plastic sheeting only if instructed to do so by the authorities
- Listen to your radio or television for further official instructions
- DO NOT return to the site of a radiological blast incident for any reason