

The Seven Signs of Terrorism

Fearing future terrorist attacks does not mean that people have to live in fear every day. There are several steps people may take to help prepare and protect their families. One such action is to become familiar with the **Seven Signs of Terrorism**, developed by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority of New York, that have been adopted by State Police across the country as an educational tool.



1. **Surveillance:** Be on the lookout for someone recording or monitoring activities. The type of recording does not have to be as obvious as a camera or a video camera; the person may be taking notes, drawing diagrams, annotating maps, or using binoculars, etc.
2. **Elicitation:** Be wary of people or groups who attempt to learn information about military operations, capabilities, or people. The attempts do not have to be face-to-face. They may be made by mail, telephone, etc.
3. **Tests of Security:** If someone is attempting to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of security measures, or if he is attempting to record and analyze reaction times to security breaches, contact your local authorities.
4. **Acquiring Supplies:** Be vigilant about people who purchase or steal explosives, weapons, ammunition, etc. Other supplies that may be needed for a terrorist attack are military uniforms, flight manuals, badges or

the equipment to make them, and any other controlled items. And, as we learned in the Boston bombing, materials such as pressure cookers and fireworks also may be supplies that terrorists purchase in large quantities.

5. **Suspicious persons out of place:** Of course, we are wary of people who don't seem to belong in our neighborhoods. But, people also may arouse suspicion at work, businesses, or anywhere, for that matter. Also be alert for people who suspiciously cross the border, stow away on board a ship, or jump ship in port if you are traveling.
6. **Dry run/Trial run:** Terrorists may practice their attack prior to carrying it out, so watch for people who move around but don't seem to have a true purpose. A terrorist also may map out routes or time traffic lights, so be on the lookout for these types of activities.
7. **Deploying Assets:** Terrorists have to get people and supplies positioned prior to committing the terrorist act. If you suspect these activities are occurring, immediately contact the authorities because this may be the last chance you have to do so before the terrorist act takes place.

Figure 4. Terrorist Attacks in the United States, 1970-2011

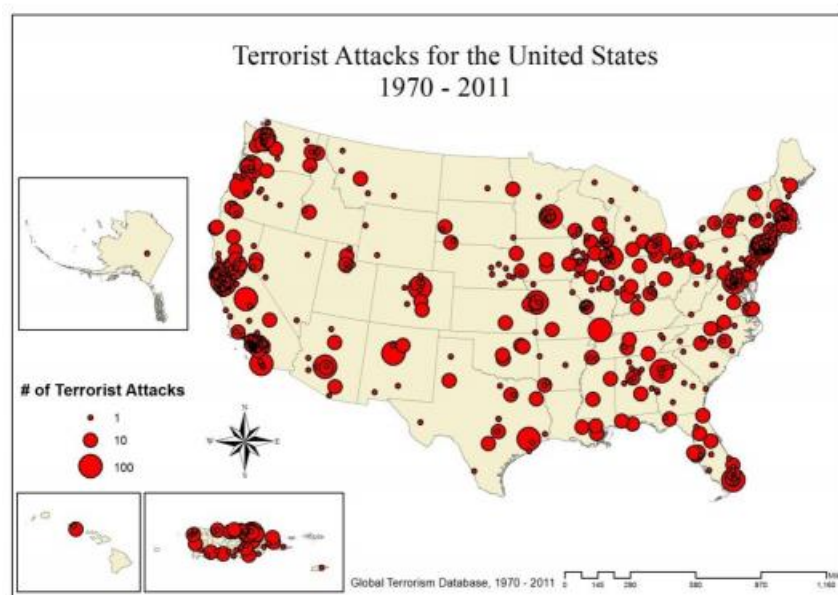


Image via *National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism*

Virtually all state and federal agencies encourage families to take the time to prepare for terrorist attacks. There are **three steps** to help you get started on protecting your loved ones from acts of terrorism:

1. Know your work, school, and community disaster plans. If you do not know the plans, contact your supervisor, school administrators, or local fire department for information.
2. Identify an alternative hospital. Hospitals closest to the event always are the busiest.
3. Use online resources to create disaster plans and review steps for protecting yourself and your loved ones. FEMA provides a **downloadable Family Emergency Plan**.