

# Security Spotlight

*An informational Guide for Securitas Canada Clients and Employees*



Securitas Canada, June 2017

## Terrorism Awareness, Part II



Terrorists use violence and threats of violence to instill fear in the population for the purpose of forcing change. They aim to advance their position by killing as many people as possible and by achieving strong emotional responses from the population affected by their attacks.

### *Categories for Terrorist Precursor Conduct*

Categories for terrorist precursor conduct are: *Surveillance; Deploying Assets; Suspicious Persons; Suspicious Questioning; Tests of Security; Acquiring Supplies; and Dry Runs.* We reviewed the precursor conduct of *Surveillance* in the previous *May Spotlight*. Let's take a closer look at each of the remaining suspicious behaviours and activities.

### *Precursor Conduct: Deploying Assets*

Terrorist precursor conduct often includes deploying assets and getting resources into position to carry out the attack. This might involve abandoning vehicles or objects near or at the target site; stockpiling suspicious materials; or positioning people near a key facility.

### *Precursor Conduct: Suspicious Persons*

As a security guard, you should always be alert for suspicious people and behaviours. What constitutes a suspicious person? Simply put, it is anyone who does not seem to fit in at the site or, through common sense, arouses suspicion. This is especially true if you work at a post where you are likely to know everyone, like in a highly-restricted area or small-sized campus dormitory. More generally, a suspicious person is anyone who does not appear to belong in a workplace, neighbourhood, business establishment or near a key facility, or anyone whose behaviour or appearance seems out of place.

A good way to detect suspicious people and their behaviours is to know the environment. When you are on patrol or walking around the facility, remain alert and become familiar with the normal patterns of movement, typical attire, common activities, and the kinds of individuals who are regularly on site. By closely observing the people who come and go over time, you can become more skilled at spotting those who may not belong. Remember: a person is suspicious based on specific behaviour not factors such as ethnicity, race or religion.

## Precursor Conduct: Suspicious Questioning

Terrorist precursor conduct often involves information gathering. Be alert for anyone attempting to gain detailed information regarding a site or its personnel—especially at a key facility. Terrorists may try to gain information about site logistics or ask questions about security and other business operations. They may also attempt to place “key” people in sensitive work locations. Someone asking probing questions about the facility or about sensitive information that falls outside his or her area of responsibility could be a warning sign.

## Precursor Conduct: Tests of Security

Terrorist planning may also involve attempts to penetrate or test physical security or security procedures at the target site. A suspect may attempt to enter the site without proper access control authorization in order to see if it is possible to successfully do so; to determine how far he or she can get before being detected or turned away; or to observe first-hand the actual procedures that take place at various access control points across the site. Tests of security might also involve attempts to enter the site through alternate or secondary access points in order to find a weakness in site security. Be on the lookout for individuals who appear from unexpected directions.

Tests of security can give terrorists information about existing weaknesses in security at a site. Even if an attempt is unsuccessful, terrorists may learn useful information about security response procedures, like how many security guards responded to the incident (and where they came from), or how long it took for authorities to arrive and what route they took.

## Precursor Conduct: Dry Runs

Another terrorist indicator to watch for is a “practice run” or a “dry run” aimed at your facility. Often, before the execution of the final operation, a terrorist cell will run one or more practice sessions to work out flaws and unanticipated problems in the attack plan.

Behaviours that may indicate preparation for terrorist activity includes mapping out routes, playing out scenarios with other people, monitoring key facilities, or determining the timing of traffic lights and traffic flow. Dry runs may very well be at the heart of the planning phase of a terrorist act. The best chance to intercept and stop a terrorist attack is during this stage.

It is helpful to know the signs of precursor conduct and to be watchful for them while on post and on patrol.

### Terrorism Threat Awareness

The first step in guarding against and mitigating terrorist threats is to be prepared. This involves knowing about terrorism threat alert systems and how they may affect security procedures at your site; understanding procedures outlined in the client’s facility security plan; and following your post orders.

### Reporting Precursor Conduct

The first step in guarding against a terrorism threat is knowledge—knowing what to look for. The second, equally crucial, step is reporting.

Report anyone that you think may be engaged in behaviours or activities that may indicate terrorist planning immediately. Follow the procedures in your post orders for responding to and reporting precursor conduct. This may involve alerting the client contact, your supervisor, local law enforcement, etc. If there is an emergency or an immediate threat, call 911.

### Reporting Precursor Conduct (continued)

Recognizing and reporting intelligence gathering activities and other precursor conduct may interrupt potential terrorist events, crimes, and other threats before they occur.

It is important to remember that terrorist planning can span an extended period of time. Weeks, or even months may pass between instances of precursor conduct. Additionally, planning actions may occur months, or quite possibly years, before the terrorist act itself. Thus, it is extremely important to accurately document your observations. Your documentation of suspicious activities and behaviours could potentially provide information that helps authorities to “connect the dots” and disrupt a possible terrorist attack.