

TERRORISM

In the wake of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing in New York and the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, terrorism has become a serious concern for emergency management, emergency responders, and the public at large. The September 11, 2001 attacks on the New York City's World Trade Center and the Pentagon has now elevated our concern about terrorism to a level we never imagined, and requires preparation to respond to situations that go beyond the terrorist incident scenarios that we are familiar with. In particular, terrorism may involve Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, or Explosive (CBRNE) weapons.

Terrorism includes the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives. Terrorism affects us through fear, physical injuries, economic losses, psychological trauma, and erosion of faith in government. Terrorism is not an ideology; it is a strategy used by individuals or groups to achieve their political goals.

Terrorists espouse a wide range of causes. They can be for or against almost any issue, religious belief, political position, or group of people of one national origin or another. Due to the tremendous variety of causes supported by terrorists and the wide variety of potential targets, there is no place that is truly safe from terrorism. Throughout California there are nearly a limitless number of potential targets, depending on the perspective of the terrorist. Some of these targets include: abortion clinics, religious facilities, government offices, public places (such as shopping centers and entertainment venues), schools, power plants, refineries, utility infrastructures, water storage facilities, dams, private homes, prominent individuals, financial institutions, and other businesses.

Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) are: any destructive device as defined in section 921 of Title 18 U.S.C., an explosive, incendiary, or poison gas, bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one quarter ounce, mine or device similar to the above; poison gas; any weapon involving a disaster organism; or any weapon that is designed to release radiation or radioactivity at a level dangerous to human life. WMDs are generally categorized as: Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, or Explosive (CBRNE).

- There are a multitude of chemicals that terrorists can obtain that would incapacitate and/or kill segments of the population. Chlorine gas or ammonia could cause respiratory difficulties and possible death; nerve agents such as Sarin will cause large number of casualties and death over a small area.
- Most any infectious biological agent has the potential for being used as a terrorist weapon. Smallpox and anthrax are examples of biological agents that could cause significant health and clean up problems. Anthrax was released in the mail in Florida and Washington, D.C. in 2001.
- Radiological events are those in which radiation is spread contaminating a fixed area, for example, a "dirty bomb." Dirty bombs are explosive devices (non-nuclear) that

spread radioactive materials as a result of the explosion of conventional explosives such as dynamite, nitro glycerin, or plastic explosives. The type of radiation released from such a device would depend on the radioactive materials used. The results of such an event would be a large number of casualties within a specific area with significant costs for clean up.

- The nuclear in CBNRE refers to actual nuclear explosions resulting from a nuclear reaction. An example of such an event would be the detonation of a nuclear device that terrorists had obtained or developed. The results would be widespread casualties (depending on the explosive size of the device) with considerable radioactive contamination for an extended period of time.
- The final weapons to be considered are conventional explosives. These could be either standard explosive materials such as dynamite or plastic explosives, or it could be manufactured materials with a chemical reaction causing an explosion (e.g., mixing fertilizer and kerosene). Such weapons can be used in a number of applications from suicide bombers, to car bombs, to devices hidden around and in specific facilities.

In response to this tremendous challenge, EMB and the Orange County Terrorism Working Group have developed the Orange County WMD Annex to the County and OA Emergency Plans approved by the OA Executive Board and the County Board of Supervisors.

There is a potential for a WMD incident in Orange County, and the potential is escalating. Experience with recent incidents demonstrates that there are no longer physical targets or victim groups 'off limits' to terrorists. There is no limit to the number of potential targets. A broad approach should be taken against terrorism rather than developing specific plans for each potential target. The OA response in other emergencies can be used as a backbone for preparing to coordinate, communicate, and cooperate between jurisdictions and share resources.