



Effective training and heightened awareness are key elements of any personal protection program or counter-terrorism effort. Terrorist acts are often preceded by active surveillance; and early detection may deflect an adversary's interest, and allow time to enhance defensive measures.

The threat of terrorism is dynamic. It changes as knowledge of the target is gained, as the operational environment becomes more familiar. As lessons learned are communicated and incorporated into all phases of operation, the methods used to conduct surveillance continue to improve. Being aware of your surroundings and taking appropriate action when you suspect the presence of active surveillance is critical. The most difficult task is to not let awareness become paranoia and lose the sense of proportion and reality.

Most important, cultural, religious and ethnic indicators are not relevant or accurate indicators of suspicious activity. Belief systems and types of worship are not the issue. Behavior, and intent, is the barometer we utilize to gauge a threat.

Surveillance has its own signature marks and indicators. High level of awareness and understanding of such indicators (in any environment) may enhance one's chances of survival. Also critical is the need to report all suspicious activity to the authorities. This must be done responsibly.

While no single indicator listed below can truly identify surveillance, appropriate training to help one identify a combination of surveillance indicators may be a very strong tool for thwarting a terrorist attack.

Example:

A person is observed in front of a courthouse; the individual is alone and appears nervous. This is not uncommon behavior near a courthouse. But if additional suspicious indicators are observed (i.e., loose or bulky clothing not consistent with current weather conditions, and/or rigid midsection), such information should be immediately reported to law enforcement.

The list of suspicious indicators, provided below, can help you identify persons (male or female – young or old) engaged in ongoing observation in advance of an attack.



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You may observe suspicious behavior near your home, while commuting to work or school, traveling by car or public conveyance, walking your dog, etc. You may interact with the public in a service industry (hotel staff, vehicle rental agents, maintenance engineers, mall employee and chemical supply house); your observations can be invaluable to law enforcement.

To gather enough information at or near a facility, train station and/or chemical plant one has to spend numerous hours watching and recording critical information (e.g., when people arrive, depart and return for lunch, quitting time, highest visitor occupancy, mass transit peak hours, security protocols, peak shipment, physical access barriers and structural vulnerabilities). These timeframes and points of focus provide a framework to detect surveillance.

Some information gatherers are highly trained individuals. One should never presume that it would be easy to identify those who may be conducting surveillance. Two factors, which may help guide the counter-surveillance efforts are:

- ❖ Frequent presence in a given area.
- ❖ No clear or logical reason for them to be in the vicinity.

Always exercise extreme caution as individuals conducting surveillance may not only be involved in gathering information for terrorist acts but may also be involved in criminal activity. Always have available all of the telephone numbers needed to report your findings (terrorism tip lines for your area).

- Alone, nervous, agitated.
- Secretive, furtive behavior.
- Unusual behavior, such as staring at and quickly looking away from personnel observing them.
- Individuals waiting at a bus stop or train platform, but not boarding.
- People standing in public or customer service areas, but not requesting service.
- A person leaving a package or knapsack behind as they exit public transportation or crowded area.
- Unusual interest in security measures, equipment and/or pedestrian traffic flow.
- An individual asking questions that pertain to facility infrastructure and security measures.



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- Unexpected deliveries or services.
- Activity not consistent with location or task being conducted.
- Loose or bulky clothing not suited to current weather conditions.
- Unattended packages, briefcases, and other items.
- Unusual accessories not fitting in with the area or the individual (e.g., baby strollers, shopping carts, backpacks, delivery bicycles with storage compartments, ice cream carts).
- Equipment not consistent with commonly seen items within the area (e.g., Global Positioning Satellite devices, movie and still cameras, voice recording, sketching tools).
- Rigid, stiff midsection (indicative of concealed explosives or weapons).
- Exposed wires or switches.
- Hands not visible or tightly held.
- The deliberate, cautious actions of a person handling packages, backpacks or baggage.
- Persons overly concerned with views of critical infrastructure views (e.g., government buildings, known targets, airports, bridges, tunnel entrances, rail yards, train tracks, chemical facilities or storage areas) from a hotel room, office or coffee shop.
- Individuals not fitting into the surrounding environment (e.g., individual wearing a winter coat in summer, a backpack, a large duffle bag, suitcase).
- Individuals observing reaction drills, procedures, response times, and security equipment.
- Illegally parked vehicles in and around your facility.
- Individuals working in pairs or groups who appear near same location on multiple occasions.
- An individual may create a scene to distract security personnel while the accomplice attempts to enter the facility.
- Individuals conveniently getting lost or disoriented while visiting your facility.
- Unannounced and/or unauthorized maintenance work.
- Persons or vehicles seen in the same location on multiple occasions; an individual sitting in a parked vehicle (taxi) for an extended period of time.
- Individuals disguised as panhandlers, shoe shiners, newspaper, and food or flower vendors, not acting consistent with their tasks.
- Individuals who do not work, have business, or belong in their current area, attempting to befriend someone to obtain sensitive information or attempting to blend in.
- An unknown individual hands you a parcel or letter for deliver to a building or for the mail.



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- Persons observing (testing) your emergency response to abandon packages, suspicious activity, criminal activity and/or motor vehicle accidents.
- Persons observing your emergency evacuation drills and or assembly area's.
- Individuals who appear to be conducting surveillance (e.g., explicit or discreet use of picture taking, video cameras, cell-phone cameras, binoculars, note taking, and/or sketching) of your facility.
- First responder vehicles or trucks being stored in unusual locations.
- First responders who do not appear to fit in or know what to do.
- Unusual smells chemical in nature originating from the vehicle or a home.
- The observation of explosive materials being desolated (tested) in remote areas
- The purchasing of hazardous chemicals by persons with unusual intentions

It is important to remember that surveillance is often conducted by teams of individuals. Therefore, when one notices a likely surveillance, it is important to broaden your scope.

If you suspect malicious surveillance, you should carefully and covertly monitor it and report this information immediately to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Try to remember as much as possible about the individual conducting the surveillance, his or her clothing, personal identifying characteristics, their points of interest, vehicle information, and possible accomplices.

It is recommended that once you have completed your observation, you retreat to a location several blocks away from the targeted location to meet with authorities. Avoid causing undue attention; never arouse interest in yourself from a possible adversary.

This information should not be considered all-inclusive. John Jay College of Criminal Justice provides in-depth training on this subject matter for persons and/or organizations.

Paul DeMatteis, CPP, CFE
Senior Adviser on Corporate Security Programs &
Director, Counterterrorism Assessment Program
Office of Continuing and Professional Studies
John Jay College of Criminal Justice
CUNY Research Foundation
pdematteis@jjay.cuny.edu
201-303-7384