



# Commonwealth Fusion Center



Infrastructure Protection - Information Bulletin

## Lodging Awareness

As Al-Qa'ida and other terrorist groups continue to seek innovative ways to conduct attacks and circumvent security procedures, there is concern that the holiday season provides attractive opportunities for terrorists to target the Homeland.<sup>1</sup> This bulletin focuses on lodging facilities that serve large numbers of business and leisure travelers and provide venues for a variety of holiday events.

As the height of the holiday season approaches, the Commonwealth Critical Infrastructure Program and the Commonwealth Fusion Center reminds our lodging and public safety partners to remain vigilant for suspicious activity and indicators of attack planning and immediately report any suspicious Activity to law enforcement.

### Vulnerabilities

Hotels struggle to balance safety and security with providing an enjoyable experience for customers. This delicate balance creates common vulnerabilities including the following:

- Buildings that are not conducive to efficient security.
- Vehicles routinely deliver products and passengers to entrances.
- Unrestricted access to public and nonpublic areas including parking garages and service areas.
- Limited employee background investigations.
- High employee turnover.
- Incorporation of other attractions such as casinos and restaurants that bring their own specific vulnerabilities.
- Resistance to a secure atmosphere that may appear uninviting to guests.<sup>2</sup>



The Marriott Hotel in Islamabad burst into flames after a VBIED detonated at the entrance. Picture from [www.travel-culture.com](http://www.travel-culture.com)



Picture from [www.dilos.com](http://www.dilos.com)

### Detecting Suspicious Behavior

Operatives preparing for an attack may behave in a manner that could alert an observant bystander. Many of these behaviors are not suspicious by themselves but multiple indicators could foreshadow an attack. Some general indicators that should be considered suspicious at hotels include:

- Actions associated with conducting surveillance such as taking pictures/video, sketching, pace counting, or entering and abruptly leaving a building.
- Not providing personal information at check-in.
- Using cash for large transactions or credit cards in someone else's name.
- Extending departure dates one day at a time for a prolonged period.
- Avoiding security, main entrances, and hotel staff.
- Requesting a specific room or view in the hotel.
- Not leaving the room.
- Refusal of housekeeping service for extended periods.
- Unusual odors emanating from the room.
- Entry or attempted entry into restricted areas.
- Unusual interest in hotel operating procedures including security measures and incident response.
- Possession of fertilizer, chemicals, weapons, fuel, nails, or explosive material.
- Discarded luggage or packages.
- Abandoned or unattended vehicles in close proximity to the hotel.<sup>3</sup>

SOURCES: 1. (U//FOUO) U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Federal Bureau of Investigation, Joint Intelligence Bulletin, "Security Awareness for the 2010 Holiday Season" 15 December 2010.

2. (U//FOUO) U.S. Department of Homeland Security, American Hotel and Lodging Association, "Protective Measures Guide for the U.S. Lodging Industry" 2010.

3. Overseas Security Advisory Council, "Surveillance Recognition".



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### Recent Attacks

Terrorist groups have conducted several successful attacks on hotels overseas. Recent attacks have been carried out by individuals and small groups using a combination of IEDs, VBIEDs, small arms, disguises, and distractions.

- *Mogadishu, Somalia (2010)*—Al-Shabaab operatives used disguises, small arms, and explosives during their attack on the Muna Hotel that left more than 30 people dead.
- *Baghdad, Iraq (2010)*—Gunmen combined small arms and IEDs to attack three hotels killing 36 people.
- *Jakarta, Indonesia (2009)*—Suicide bombers attacked the Jakarta JW Marriott and the Ritz Carlton. They used an employee to assist in bringing the explosives into the hotel. Nine people, including the attackers, were killed.
- *Peshawar, Pakistan (2009)*—Gunmen in a lead vehicle fired on security guards to allow a VBIED access to the Pearl Continental Hotel where it was detonated. Eighteen died.
- *Kabul, Afghanistan (2008)*—Four men attacked the Kabul Serena Hotel with small arms and explosives leaving six dead and six more injured.
- *Mumbai, India (2008)*—Teams of attackers used small arms and IEDs to take hostages at two hotels. Approximately 170 people were killed and over 300 injured in this multi-day attack.
- *Islamabad, Pakistan (2008)*—A dump truck filled with explosives detonated at the Marriott's front gate. The subsequent shockwave caused severe structural damage and a fire, killing 57 people and wounding many more.<sup>4</sup>



A vehicle borne improvised explosive device (VBIED). Picture from [www.improvisedsystems.com](http://www.improvisedsystems.com)

### Protective Measures

Protecting hotels from the prevailing terrorist threat requires a vigilant staff with a complete understanding of the protective measures in place. The following suggestions should be considered to protect a facility against threats and to mitigate the effects of a successful attack:

- Constantly update and improve protective measures and policies.
- Work closely with first responders to develop and practice an emergency response plan.
- Periodically alter delivery entrances and schedules to avoid establishing a discernable pattern.
- Do not allow unscheduled deliveries.
- Provide training for employees, especially security personnel, on how to recognize and respond to suspicious activity.
- Avoid disseminating security information or material that could be useful to attackers. (schedules, floor plans, pictures, maps)
- Install and monitor a 24/7 security system. (CCTV)
- Conduct background investigations on employees.
- Be aware of activities around the hotel such as construction, protests, and political gatherings.
- Restrict access to non-public areas.
- Monitor access to public areas including adjacent buildings such as parking garages.
- Implement barriers to restrict vehicles and protect bystanders.
- Ensure adequate utility services for normal and emergency situations such as water, fuel, electricity, and telecommunications.
- Identify and monitor emergency exit routes for guests and staff.
- Maintain an assertive security posture.<sup>5</sup>

If you would like additional information on this topic please visit the following link

[http://www.dhs.gov/files/programs/gc\\_1259859901230.shtm#2](http://www.dhs.gov/files/programs/gc_1259859901230.shtm#2)

This link provides two excellent resources regarding suspicious activity within the Lodging Subsector.

**Any suspicious activity should be reported to local law enforcement immediately.**

**For more information, contact:**

**Commonwealth Critical Infrastructure Program  
CCIP@state.ma.us**

**Terrorism Tip Line**

**1-888-USA-5458**

**Fusion@pol.state.ma.us**

SOURCES: 4. (U/FOUO) U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Intelligence and Analysis, "Threat Assessment: Hotels" 13 September 2010.

5. (U/FOUO) U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Intelligence and Analysis, "International Terrorists Remain Focused on Targeting Luxury Hotels" 21 September 2009.



Homeland Security

## Hotel & Lodging Advisory



Are You Aware of

# Suspicious Activity?

Hotels and lodging facilities can be venues for criminal or terrorist activities. Be alert to any persons who behave suspiciously or engage in unusual actions; these may be indications of criminal or terrorist activity.

### Suspicious Behavior:

- 🔍 Nervous or evasive guest or visitor attitudes, overly concerned with privacy.
- 🔍 Denial of access to room or refusal of room cleaning for extended stay.
- 🔍 Insistence on cash payment.
- 🔍 Attempts to gain access to restricted areas.
- 🔍 Individuals taking notes, pictures, or videos of hotel.



### Suspicious Items:

- 🔍 Large amounts of unusual substances (acetone, peroxide, drain cleaner)
- 🔍 Luggage emanating fumes/odors
- 🔍 Disassembled electrical components (wires, circuit boards, batteries)
- 🔍 Plans, drawings, schematics, maps

### What Can You Do?



- Understand how criminals or terrorists could use your facility for their own purposes.
- Promptly alert your management and appropriate authorities when you see suspicious behavior or items, or unusual activity.
- Report something if it looks or feels wrong – security is everyone's responsibility.

**Concerned?** Report your concerns to your supervisor, Security Manager, or Hotel General Manager.