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Pipe Bombs and other Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) pose a serious threat to federal, state, and local government facilities considering how easily and inexpensively they can be put together. Schools, shopping malls, stadiums and other public places are also potential targets for terrorist attacks considering how freely people can walk around and through these types of facilities.

To protect people and facilities from terrorist attacks involving explosive devices starts with a basic understanding of a bomb. People must recognize that a bomb is usually made to look like everyday widgets and that stereotypical bombs are virtually nonexistent. The only common denominator that exists with all explosive devices is that they are intended to explode. For this reason, it is important to suspect anything that looks unusual and to let a trained bomb technician determine what is or is not an actual bomb.

Hard targets such as airports, government facilities, and military bases have implemented technologies such as X-ray screening systems, explosive trace detectors, and metal detectors, to name a few, to increase security at their facilities. Additionally, perimeters and security checkpoints are usually established to reduce their vulnerability to attacks using explosives devices. Unfortunately, soft targets such as hospitals, schools, shopping malls and other public places often do not have the same resources to set up perimeters or security checkpoints, therefore, increasing their vulnerability to this type of terrorist attack. However, one measure both hard and soft targets can take is to implement both a physical security plan and a bomb incident plan.

Physical security plans are generally designed to prevent or control access into a facility for the purpose of protecting personnel, property, and the building from unauthorized entry, sabotage, or other illegal or criminal acts. It is understood that a facility with no established perimeters or security checkpoints must implement a broader security plan to minimize their vulnerability and mitigate the effects of a terrorist attack. Contact your police department, fire department, and local government agencies to determine if one or all of them can assist you with the development of a physical security plan for your facility.

Bomb incident plans are developed to provide detailed procedures to be implemented during an actual bombing or when a facility has received a bomb threat. The most important element of a bomb incident plan is to create a chain of command or line of authority for the purpose of instilling confidence and avoiding panic. After outlining the responsibilities of each member in the chain of command, a primary command center should be designated along with a secondary command center in the event the primary post is destroyed during the attack. This information needs to be documented, circulated, posted and readily available in adequate quantities. Due to the sensitive nature of a bomb

incident plan you should contact your local ATF office, police department, and fire department for assistance in developing an effective plan. For additional information on responding to and managing bomb threats or bomb incident planning, visit www.BombDetection.com, and click on the "Bomb Threats & Security Planning" link.

Establishing physical security and bomb incident plans are important, however, testing the plans with periodic scheduled and unscheduled drills can help to determine their range of effectiveness during an actual attack. Drills expose weaknesses within the plans, thus providing the established chain of command an opportunity to make the necessary changes in a calm and controlled environment. Once the appropriate changes have been implemented, test them again, and so forth.

Aside from ongoing drills, awareness training programs should also be scheduled periodically to reinforce the basics. Simple things could make a difference, like noticing individuals wearing clothes unsuitable for that time of year, observing a person trying to blend into a group that they clearly don't belong to, or noticing an object protruding from a person's clothing. Other things to look for are persons acting very nervous or profusely sweating, someone repeatedly steering clear of security personnel, an individual walking slowly while constantly glancing over both shoulders, or someone who is running in a suspicious manner.

Without awareness training programs these warning signs will most likely go undetected or unreported. Posting clearly visible signs that disclose where and how to report suspicious activity will enable security personnel to gather pertinent intelligence to possibly thwart an attack, and act as a deterrent. These signs should be placed at entrances, exits, and throughout the facility.

Even the best physical security plans, bomb incident plans, and awareness training programs cannot protect a facility from an extremist or terrorist planting an explosive device inside a public mailbox or trash receptacle. For this reason, public mailboxes are either being removed completely or being strategically placed at safe distances away from areas where large groups of people pass or gather. Trash receptacles, though, cannot be as easily removed or strategically located because of their waste management function, which is why they are recognized as one of the easiest places for a terrorist to conceal a bomb in a public or private facility.

Trash receptacles can easily hide explosive devices and actually become part of the attack by spraying shrapnel and fragmentation at great distances. It must also be understood that a terrorist attack utilizing ordinary trash receptacles and remote activated or time delayed explosive devices can be easily coordinated to strike multiple places simultaneously or in stages, without exposing the terrorist.

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To reduce the threat to public safety and facility security created by ordinary trash receptacles, bomb resistant garbage cans are being deployed throughout our nation. Designed to look and function like the ordinary trash cans found at malls, airports, and stadiums, these garbage cans were designed to eliminate all horizontal fragmentation resulting from the detonation of an explosive device from within.

The Department of Homeland Security has not yet created a formal testing standard for this new anti terrorism technology, therefore, agencies and corporations that are considering bomb resistant trash receptacles for their facilities must exercise good judgment when purchasing this technology. In order to regain and maintain an edge over the terrorist, purchasing entities should not publicize in a solicitation or Request for Quote the amount of explosives their bomb receptacles are required to withstand during an explosion (explosive containment rating). Doing so will enable the terrorist to possibly defeat the technology by simply placing a larger size bomb inside of the receptacle. The future deployment locations of this anti terrorism technology should not be publicized either, and doing so could result in the terrorist planting their bomb inside of something without any force protection or possibly even planning a more significant attack, such as a car bomb.

It is equally important for all customers to know what they are purchasing. Understanding how a bomb receptacle was tested to ensure its reliability during an actual terrorist attack is vital for public safety and facility security. Since it cannot be controlled where within a trash receptacle an explosive device will be placed, bottom center, side wall weld seam, side wall opposite weld seam, and midpoint center detonation tests should all be conducted to determine the actual amount of explosives a particular bomb receptacle can withstand from an explosion. This amount of explosives is referred to as the explosive containment rating.

During testing, it is essential to anchor all bomb receptacles to a steel and concrete slab in order to create a real life deployment scenario. Tests conducted on a dirt surface are misleading because the majority of the blast energy will be absorbed by the ground instead of the receptacle. Testing bomb receptacles under parameters equivalent to how they will actually be deployed will increase their reliability during an actual attack. It is important to also understand that during an actual terrorist attack a bomb receptacle could tip, roll, and gain a tremendous amount of momentum, endangering anybody in its path. That is why it is crucial to anchor bomb receptacles both during testing and upon actual deployment.

Before purchasing bomb resistant waste receptacles, it is important to obtain an official test report that confirms how the product was tested and ensures an accurate explosives containment rating was obtained. The report should originate from a recognized US testing facility and should include the type of explosives used, how the explosives were packed, what the explosives were packed inside of, and must confirm that an equal explosives charge was used for every test. Be certain the test report incorporates close up post detonation photos and is accompanied by the actual video footage taken from the testing. For detailed information about bomb resistant trash receptacles, or to watch pre-recorded product testing videos taken from the Energetic Materials Research and Testing Center visit www.BombReceptacles.com.

If there is one point that can never be overemphasized, it is the value of being prepared. During an actual terrorist attack involving an explosive device it is essential to leave the crime scene immediately, moving to an open space or protected area. Do not form or join a crowd because there may be additional explosive charges around. Avoid to the best of your ability tall buildings, glass windows, vehicles, and additional garbage cans. Once you have reached a secured area, call 911 if police forces have not yet arrived. If there are already police forces at the scene, follow their instructions so they can secure the area and do their job effectively.

After a terror incident involving an improvised explosive device it is important to remain clear of the crime scene. Don't be fooled if there hasn't been a secondary explosion for a short period of time and the area is occupied by police, fire, and rescue workers, because there could still be additional bombs a short distance away. If possible, move vehicles out of the area to make way for fire and rescue vehicles. Remain aware of your surroundings and be certain to report any suspicious activities, objects, individuals, or vehicles you remember or notice before, during, or after the incident. Even the most trivial piece of information may result in the apprehension of a suspect or prevention of an additional attack, so never prejudge information, and always report it.

About Author: Grant Haber is the President of American Innovations, Inc. Mr. Haber collaborates with the Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, and members of the United States Congress. He has acquired his extensive knowledge of the security industry from, but not limited to, anti-terrorism experts, explosive ordnance disposal technicians, chemists, professional engineers, vulnerability assessment specialists, and risk assessment teams. 