

## FURTHER GUIDANCE

NPSA provides a range of guidance products to help sites protect and mitigate against a variety of threats.

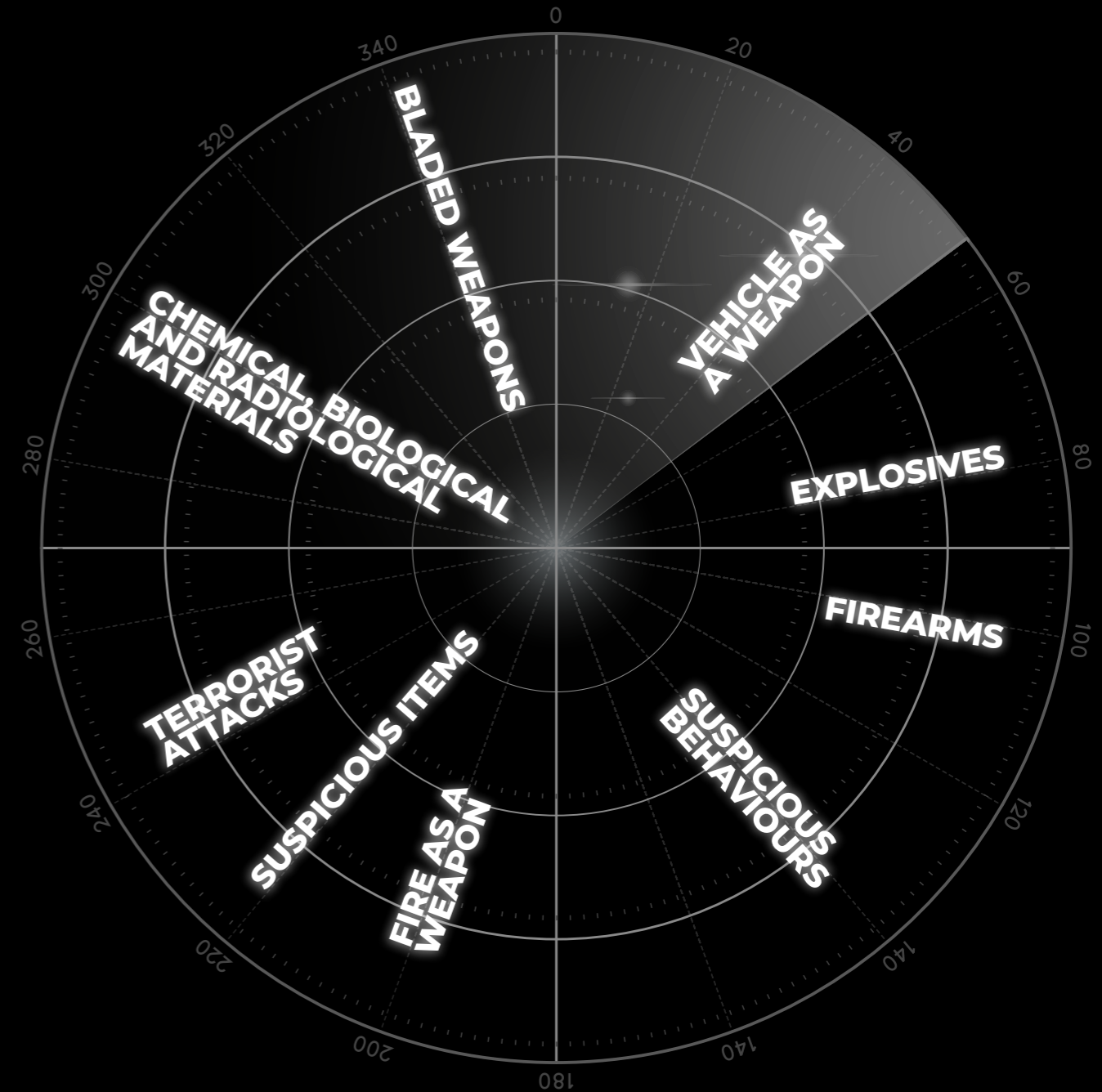
For further information visit the NPSA or NaCTSO websites.

[www.npsa.gov.uk](http://www.npsa.gov.uk)

[www.gov.uk/nactso](http://www.gov.uk/nactso)

If you require further information please contact your NPSA adviser or your local Counter Terrorism Security Adviser.

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# RECOGNISING TERRORIST THREATS

For the security professional

The UK faces a serious and challenging threat from terrorism. Acts of terrorism vary in scale and purpose. They are often violent and indiscriminate with far-reaching consequences.

This guide contains helpful information for security professionals to improve their ability to recognise threats, their key components and other attack indicators and to respond appropriately.

**Your security manager will be able to provide you with more details on the measures in place to protect your site. Additional guidance is available on the NPSA and NaCTSO website.**

[www.npsa.gov.uk](http://www.npsa.gov.uk)

[www.gov.uk/nactso](http://www.gov.uk/nactso)

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**Do you understand the current risks associated with your site?**

# THREATS

When assessing the threat, it is important to consider both where you are working and who or what you are trying to protect. You can be sure that your attackers are doing the same.


It is possible that any of the threats covered in this booklet could occur and the specific threats that you face could change rapidly. Therefore, it is essential that you understand the current risks associated with your site and any vulnerabilities.

Different attackers will use different tools and methods depending on their competence, experience and what they have available to them. Physical attacks can have different levels of sophistication and could be made up of a combination of one or more different methodologies.

It is important to keep a wider situational awareness, even when dealing with incidents and ensure that all issues are reported, as attackers may take advantage of external events.

Whilst there are a significant number of possible attack methodologies, there are some methods that appear frequently, both in attacks and terrorist instructional media.

These include the use of:

-  bladed weapons
-  firearms
-  vehicle as a weapon
-  fire as a weapon
-  explosives
-  chemical, biological or radiological materials

The above methods are not all equally likely and will be influenced by a number of factors including the availability of materials, instructional media, publicity and overall difficulty, both actual and perceived.

 **What threats are you protecting your site from?**



Whilst on duty or during your everyday life it is important to maintain good situational awareness, looking for items, people or events that are out of the ordinary.

The combination of these indicators may provide you with a greater understanding of the situation. It could be your vigilance that provides the warning necessary to prevent a terrorist attack.

# SUSPICIOUS ITEMS



Is it **hidden** from view, not in clear sight?



Is it **obviously** suspicious because of its appearance or the circumstances of its discovery?



Is it **typical** of what you would expect to find in this location?



Pre-attack indicators, both obvious and subtle could include:

- Presence of a firearm or bladed weapon
- Frequent sighting of the same vehicle either parked or moving
- Unusual, dangerous or erratic driving
- Vehicles parked or driven in an unusual location
- Bulky or non-typical clothing
- Bags, cases or other items that are out of place
- Unusual items or combinations of items
- Items that show signs of tampering
- Unusual odours.

This list is not exhaustive. Suspicious items and other indicators should be considered in context on an individual basis using the H-O-T protocol.

A pre-attack warning may be given, in this case you should follow your local response plan.



**What would you consider suspicious at your site?**

**Understanding suspicious behaviour can provide an early indication of a threat.**



# SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOURS

The behaviour of individuals or groups prior to an attack may give an indication of their intentions and provide opportunities for disrupting their plans.



- W** **What** - are they doing?
- H** **How** - are they behaving?
- A** **Alone** - or acting with others?
- T** **Threat** - what type do they pose?

By understanding when suspicious behaviour, such as hostile reconnaissance, can occur and how individuals undertaking it may feel, you have an early indication of potential attack planning and the opportunity to disrupt attacks.

Prior to an attack, it may be necessary for individuals to undertake final preparations such as readying a weapon or priming a device. This behaviour may appear suspicious or out of the ordinary for your location. The W·H·A·T protocol should be considered when evaluating suspicious behaviour.



- ?** **Do you actively look for individuals or groups undertaking suspicious activity at your site?**
- What would suspicious behaviour at your site look like?**
- Have you identified locations on your site where suspicious activity is likely to go unobserved?**

# PROHIBITED ITEMS

It is an offence to carry certain items in public without relevant licences. This includes some sharp or bladed weapons, improvised weapons, firearms and certain hazardous chemicals.

If you see anyone carrying one of these you should report it to the police immediately.

Sites should have policies defining the items that should be prevented from entering the site. As well as explosives and weapons these prohibited items may include aerosols, fireworks, flares, protest items or electronic equipment including phones and cameras. Categorising items as essential to detect or desirable to detect may help you prioritise your detection requirements.

The security procedures to identify and prevent access of these items will differ between sites, but may include search and screening procedures. Implementation of search and screening procedures, relevant to the site requirements, will help prevent carriage of prohibited items onto site.



**What items are essential to detect on your site?**

**Do your search procedures allow you to identify prohibited items?**







**What is the procedure for dealing with prohibited items?**



# TERRORIST ATTACKS

Terrorist attacks can be fast-moving, violent incidents where assailants may move through a location aiming to find and kill or injure as many people as possible. Most deaths occur within a few minutes from the start of the attack.

The different methodologies that could be used during an attack, either individually or in combination, are:

-  bladed weapons
-  firearms
-  vehicle as a weapon
-  fire as a weapon
-  explosives
-  chemical, biological or radiological materials

An attack could unfold in many different ways and there is not a set order that terrorists always follow. The situation is fluid and weapons and targets can be opportunistic. There could be a combination of methodologies, such as an initial vehicle as a weapon phase or explosive attack, with the terrorist taking advantage of

the subsequent confusion to conduct further attacks. Therefore, it is important to maintain an awareness for potential secondary attacks, especially during the aftermath of a major incident. Critical decisions will need to be made under severe time pressure.

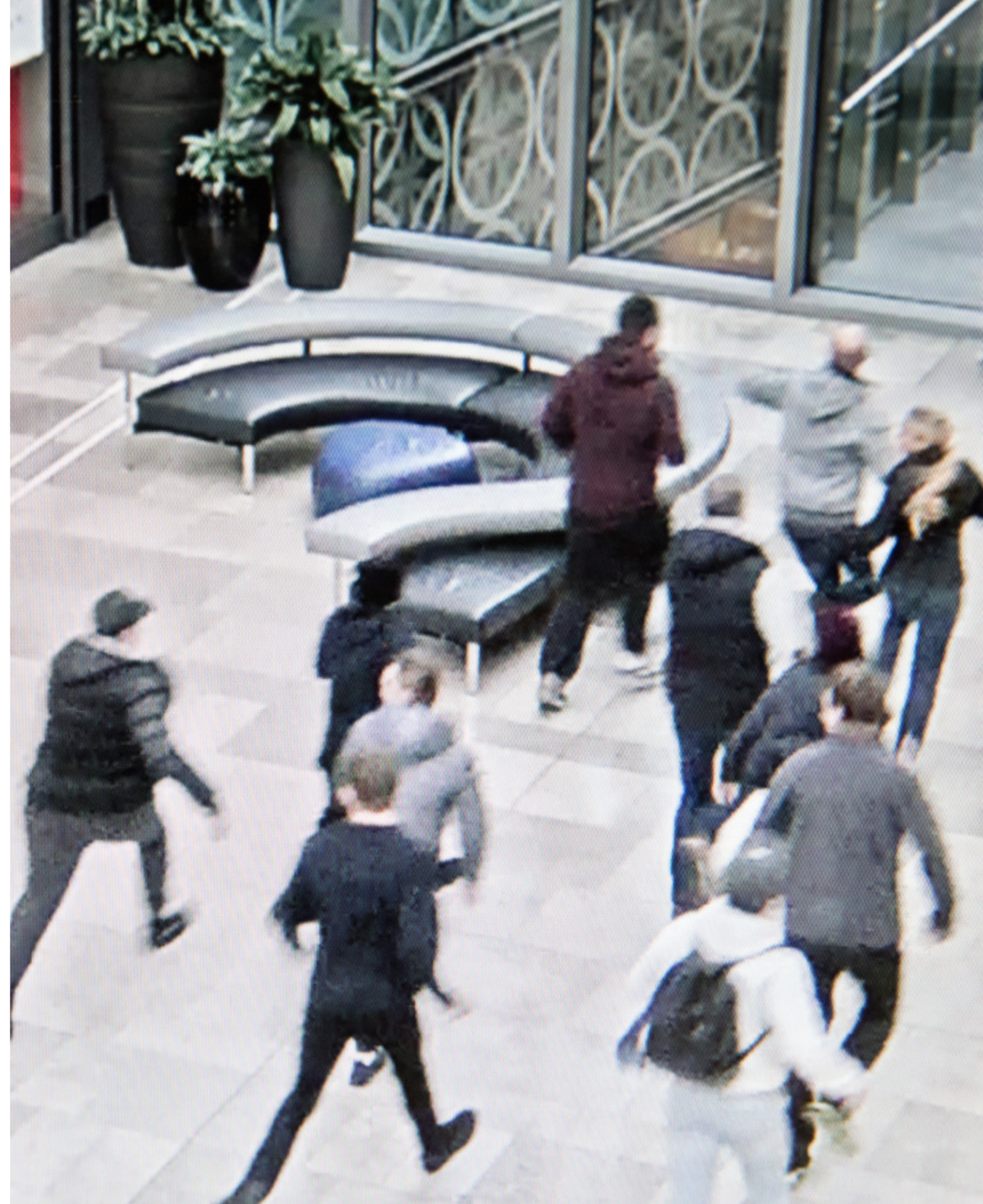
An attack could take place in the public realm, a privately owned/operated space or crowded place. Bear in mind the attack may not be stationary and could move between these areas.



**How would you spot an attack starting?**

**Could you prevent an attacker gaining entry to your location?**

**Have you determined what areas could be vulnerable to an attack?**



# ATTACK INDICATORS

There are a number of indicators that an attack has started. These include sights, sounds and smells.

## Visual

- Individuals running into or out of a building or crowded space
- People moving together in the same direction, forming a crowd
- Dead or dying animals, birds or plants
- Unexplained smoke and/or fire
- Structural damage e.g. windows blown out
- Unusual presence of chemicals, such as liquids, powders or vapours.

## Sounds

- Alarms, including fire alarms, panic alarms and attack detection systems
- Gun shots
- Screaming
- Vehicles revving their engines or accelerating quickly
- Tyres screeching
- Unexpected sounds of objects being crashed into
- An explosion.

## Casualties

- Casualties can be an indicator of an attack, consider in conjunction with other indicators
- Multiple casualties in close proximity for no obvious reason (e.g. without any other indicators) – consider whether to proceed – this could be an indicator of a CBRN incident.

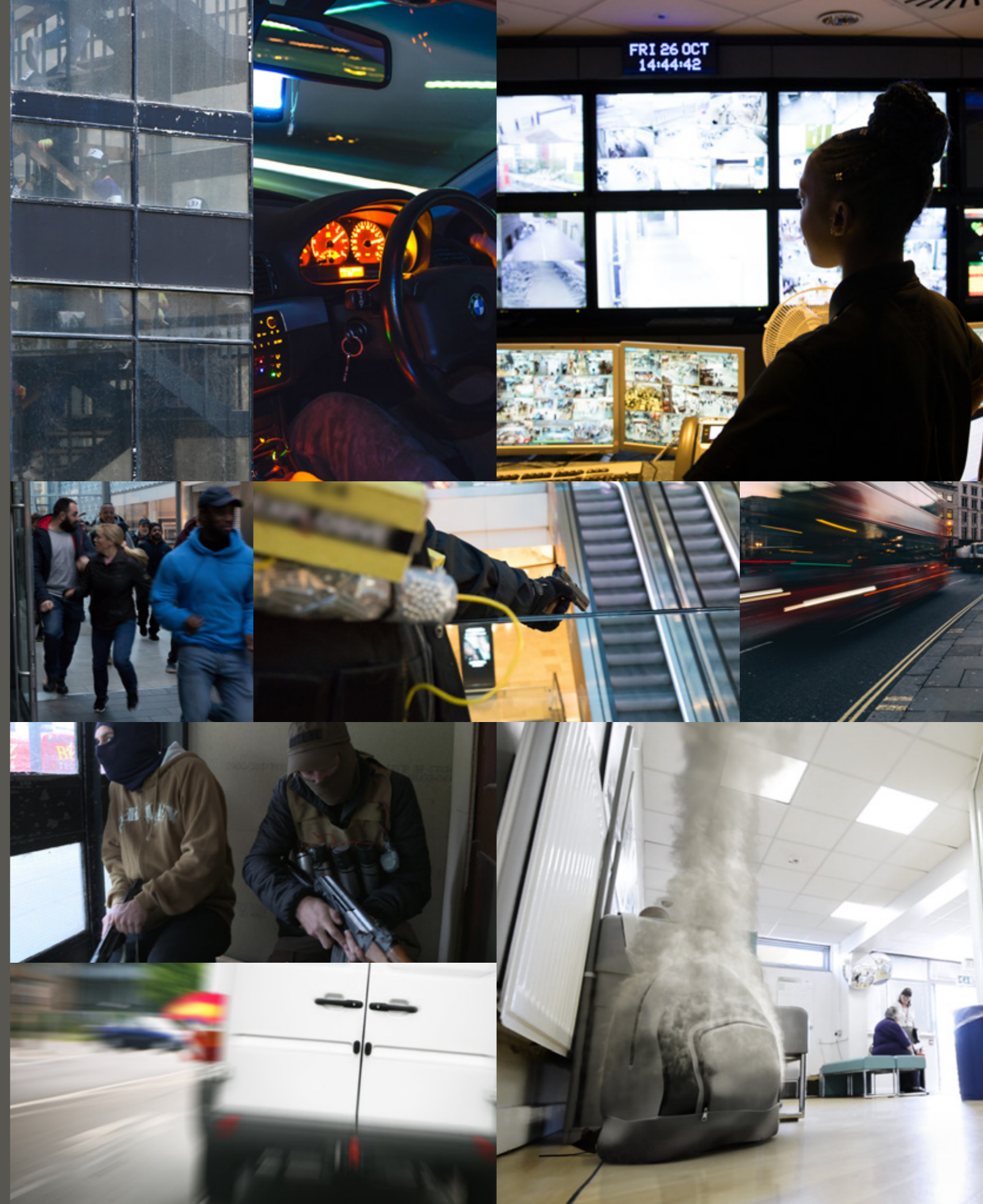
## Context

- Each scenario will require your own experience and organisation-specific context to determine its nature e.g. suspicious indicator combinations or number of unexplained casualties.

**?**

**Would you recognise the indicators of an attack?**

**Have you considered your response to a terrorist attack?**







# BLADED WEAPONS

There are restrictions on the purchase and carriage of bladed weapons in the UK. However, they are available legally on the high street or via the internet throughout the country.

Most bladed weapons are metallic, but other materials, such as ceramic blades, are becoming more common. Depending on their size, bladed weapons may be concealed on a person or in a bag or other carried item.

Everyday items, such as tools, also have the potential to be used as offensive weapons so it is important to consider the context in which any such items are being carried.

?

**How likely is the item to be used to cause harm or disruption?**

**What potential threat items are readily available at your location? e.g. for sale to the public.**

# FIREARMS

Firearms are not widely available to the UK public, but they can cause serious harm and disruption in the wrong hands.

Firearms can be classified according to a number of different features, however, their general function remains consistent. Broad categories of firearms include handguns, shotguns and rifles. Some common features that aid identification include:

- barrel
- trigger
- magazine
- ammunition
- firing pin.

The firearm may be a fully functioning weapon, deactivated (so not a threat to life but will still cause fear and panic in a terrorist incident) or it may be broken down into component parts. The components can be made using different materials, including different metals and plastics, and may be disguised to look like other objects.

Should a firearm attack occur it is likely to be well planned and may feature multiple attackers. Therefore, it is important to maintain a high level of vigilance, even when you believe you have identified all threats. The police response to a firearm attack will involve armed officers. They will want to know how many attackers are present and if the weapons they are armed with have a long barrel (e.g. rifles) or short barrel (e.g. handguns). You do not need to provide specific makes and models.

## PARTS OF A FIREARM



**?**  
**What procedures do you have in place if you find a firearm, ammunition or firearm components?**





# VEHICLE AS A WEAPON (VAW)

Vehicles (such as cars, vans and lorries) are widely available and easy to use. Consequently, driving a vehicle into crowds of people is a common attack method compared to more complex alternatives.

Vehicles may be purchased, rented, stolen or hijacked by terrorists. Whilst it is possible to prevent vehicles entering specific areas, it is often not practical or proportionate to protect everywhere from a VAW attack.

In general, VAW attacks have been the first part of a layered attack. The attacks frequently begin on public roads with little or no warning and are often followed by a wider firearms or bladed weapon attack.

During a VAW attack, the terrorist is unlikely to comply with the rules of the road. Terrorists may park illegally just before the attack then speed, ignore traffic signals, drive on the wrong side of the road, mount footways and enter pedestrianised zones.

However, as attackers intend to harm as many people as possible during a VAW attack, they are unlikely to drive in a manner that risks ending the attack prematurely, rendering the vehicle unusable or seriously injuring themselves. Consequently, the terrorist may tend to avoid obstacles, including relatively insubstantial ones.

The end of a VAW attack may look similar to a road traffic incident: the vehicle losing control and crashing into barriers, buildings, street furniture or other vehicles. Individuals may approach the vehicle to help the occupants, inadvertently becoming targets for a follow-on bladed weapon or firearms attacks.

**?**

- Does your site have areas where people congregate and can a vehicle drive at speed into them?**
- What vehicles do you expect at your site and where? Which ones would stand out?**
- What does 'normal' driving behaviour look like at your site?**
- Are there times of the day when you need to be more aware of vehicle movements?**



# FIRE AS A WEAPON (FAW)

FAW is the deliberate use of fire with the intent to cause harm. This may include death or injury to people, premeditated damage to property, or a combination of both.

A FAW attack may not require extensive planning. However, due to fire legislation and emergency service cover in the UK, should a fire start, it is unlikely that the fire will spread uncontrollably. Fires are normally quickly reported and result in rapid responses from the emergency services.

FAW can be employed as a distraction tactic, as a means to augment another methodology, or as a disruption or deterrence to the standard emergency services response. Devices used in FAW may contain petrol, flammable gas cylinders and other flammable materials within their device. Attackers may not have received extensive training or undertaken significant planning.



**Have you considered the impact of a fire on your ability to respond to an ongoing attack?**

**Would your overall response to a terrorist attack change if the building was on fire?**

# EXPLOSIVES

Explosives have been used by terrorists for a variety of different goals, including to cause mass casualties or fatalities, destruction of property and infrastructure, assassination of specific individuals, armour penetration and for incendiary purposes.

There are various sources of explosives including military, commercial or improvised explosives. Within the UK, military and commercial explosives are not widely available to the public and there is regulation controlling access to the chemicals required to make improvised explosives.

However, attempts to use explosives as a method of attack continue to be seen.

An explosive will typically be deployed as part of an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) and will cause damage through blast, fragmentation and thermal effects.

Explosives have a wide range of different appearances and colours, including crystalline powders, liquids, gels or putty-like materials.

Explosives are hazardous, both chemically and explosively. Any packaging or container may display hazard or warning symbols or contents descriptors; however, these may not be accurate or could have been removed.

**?**

**What are your local procedures if explosives are found?**

**Do you have plans for evacuation away from suspected explosives?**





# CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL OR RADIOLOGICAL (CBR) MATERIALS

CBR encompasses a vast range of potential attack methodologies that could cause both harm to people and, potentially, damage to infrastructure.

CBR materials are typically not available to the public, and due to their inherent hazards, specialist handling equipment may be necessary.

Attacks can involve the use of corrosive or flammable chemicals, toxic materials or radioactive sources. The damage and injury caused by a CBR attack depends on the material and the manner in which it is used, for example as a device or by introducing the material into the environment.

Their appearance can vary widely from a solid to a liquid or gas and they may be colourless, odourless, and require specialist equipment for detection. Solid forms can include gels, putties or crystalline powders. The small quantities of CBR materials

present is not a good indicator of the potential harm; small quantities of certain chemicals can result in large numbers of casualties.

If using a commercial or industrial material, the packaging may display hazard labels or contents descriptors. However, these may have been removed.

**?**

**Are you aware of indicators for a CBR attack?**

**Have you got procedures in place for responding to a CBR attack?**

# IMPROVISED DEVICES

Explosives and some CBR materials may need incorporating into a device to function successfully.

In addition to the chemical, biological, radiological or explosive materials, a device is likely to contain certain key components:

- packaging
- switch or timer and power source
- initiator
- dispersion method.

There are a number of methods for the deployment and firing of improvised devices, these can be combined to produce many different types of devices. Different devices could be hidden or abandoned at strategic locations, attached under vehicles or transported to targets by suicide operators. Common firing methods include switches, timers, remote control, mechanical and victim operated (which could include anti-handling measures).

The size of the device will depend on the goals of the terrorist, their knowledge and the materials

available. Terrorists will have to balance the challenges in acquiring the materials necessary to undertake an attack with their desired outcomes.

Remember, not all of the components may be visible (they may be hidden inside the packaging) or may not be present. Context is key. Consider what is normal for the location/situation.



**Do you actively look for suspicious devices?**

**Is the presence of the device suspicious/ unexpected?**

**Does the device contain other indicators such as unusual packaging, wiring or dissemination methods?**





# PACKAGING

When constructing a device the terrorist will use the packaging to hold everything together allowing the components to be easily and safely transported. There may also be an element of concealment or camouflage in the packaging selected.

The packaging is usually the first thing that you see and could be an everyday item. In these cases, whilst there may be some clues that a device is a threat it may not be immediately obvious. Remember to apply the H-O-T Protocol, Hidden, Obvious, Typical.

There are few limits on the different packages available to be used. Some generic examples include large letters and parcels, metal pipes, rucksacks, cars or trucks. If an item can be modified to include an internal compartment there is a possibility it can be used as packaging.







# SWITCHES, TIMERS AND POWER SOURCES

Terrorists may want to have control over when a device functions to cause maximum damage or to provide time to escape.

To do this a terrorist could include a trigger system comprised of electronic, mechanical or chemical components. The switch or timer could be as simple as joining two wires together.

The power for the trigger signal will typically come from a battery. This can vary in size and may either be stand-alone or incorporated with other electrical components. Although the most common, the

signal does not have to be electrical and both mechanical or chemical systems can be used as improvised power sources.

More complicated devices may include multiple timers and power sources. The inclusion of additional components should not affect the functioning of the device.

# INITIATOR

An initiator, which takes the trigger signal from a switch or timer, provides the output needed for an explosive to explode and is an essential component. The output can either be heat (from an ignitor) or explosive shock (from a detonator).

Initiators are essential in the safe, legitimate use of explosives and therefore many different types are available. However, due to their nature, they are prohibited from being sold to the general public.

Initiators are typically small and may incorporate a small quantity (around a gram) of sensitive explosives. They are used by the military and in commercial

applications such as demolition, quarrying and fireworks. They can be improvised using sensitive explosives and may include items that get hot, such as light bulbs.

Due to the hazardous nature of initiators they should not be handled. If you suspect you have identified an initiator you should follow your local procedures and call the police for assistance.



# CBR EXPOSURE METHODS

CBR materials need to be introduced into the environment in order to have an effect.

Potential dispersion and exposure methods include:

## **Spraying (liquids or powders)**

- May feature components such as nozzles, hoppers, reservoirs or more simple victim-operated 'spring-loaded' devices

## **Gas release (this may be highly energetic)**

- May feature compressed gas cylinders or perforated containers

## **Contamination (e.g. food/drink/surfaces)**

- May not be obvious other than possible discoloration

## **Material left in-situ**

- Pooled liquids or radiological sources.

Other exposure routes include via an explosion and will include the key components of an explosive device.

If you suspect someone has been exposed to a hazardous material the instructions in Remove, Remove, Remove may be followed.





# IN THE RARE EVENT OF a firearms or weapons attack

 **RUN**  
 **HIDE**  
 **TELL**

**RUN** - to a place of safety. This is a far better option than to surrender or negotiate. If there's nowhere to go, then...

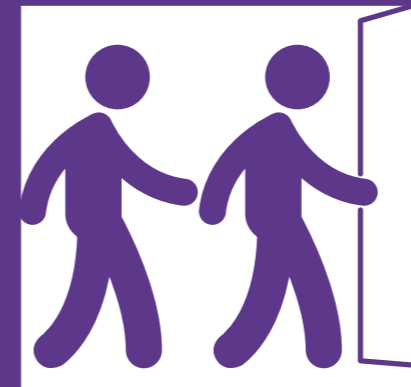
**HIDE** - Remember to turn your phone to silent and turn off vibrate. Barricade yourself in if you can.

**TELL** - the police by calling 999 when it is safe to do so.

# If you think someone has been exposed to a **HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCE**

Use caution and keep a safe distance to avoid exposure to yourself.

## TELL THOSE AFFECTED TO:



### REMOVE THEMSELVES...

...from the immediate area to avoid further exposure to the substance. Fresh air is important.

**If the skin is itchy or painful, find a water source.**



### REMOVE OUTER CLOTHING...

...if affected by the substance. Try to avoid pulling clothing over the head if possible.

Do not smoke, eat or drink.

**Do not pull off clothing stuck to skin.**



### REMOVE THE SUBSTANCE...

...from skin using a dry absorbent material to either soak it up or brush it off.

**RINSE continually with water if the skin is itchy or painful.**

## ACT QUICKLY. These actions can **SAVE LIVES.**