

# Communities Against Terrorism

## Potential Indicators of Terrorist Activities Related to Home Improvement and Large Retail Stores

### What Should I Consider Suspicious?

- Shoplifting or purchasing
  - Large quantity of ammunition or model aircraft fuel.
  - Firearms and ammunition out of season.
  - Large quantity of watches, electronic timers, or kitchen timers.
  - A combination of unusual items (e.g., sponges, candles, matches, bolt cutters).
  - Unusual quantity of compressed fuels (e.g., propane).
  - Night-vision equipment and camouflage apparel.
  - Unusually large quantity of fertilizer type 34-0-0 or 32-2-0.
  - Pipe (particularly in short lengths), end caps, and pipe nipples in the same transaction, particularly when vague about their use.
- Making suspicious inquiries about equipment (tank size, spray range).
- Using a rental vehicle or a vehicle with an out-of-state or temporary license plate to transport combustible chemicals, fertilizers containing ammonium nitrate (particularly 34-0-0), or other materials.
- Asking about a particular fertilizer without a stated purpose or displaying no interest in alternative fertilizers.
- Refusing to complete appropriate paperwork for firearms purchases.
- Using cash for large transactions.
- Using a credit card in someone else's name.

**Columbus, Ohio Division of Police  
Homeland Security Section  
Terrorism Early Warning Unit  
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### What Should I Do?

#### **Know your customers.**

- Talk to customers, ask questions, and listen to and observe their responses.
- Watch for people and actions that are out of place.
- Make note of suspicious statements, people, and/or vehicles.

**If something seems wrong, notify law enforcement authorities.**

**Do not jeopardize your safety or the safety of others.**



Terrorism may be national or international in scope, but terrorist incidents occur locally and are preceded by a number of pre-incident activities. Individuals in the community are key to identifying these pre-incident activities. By learning what to look for, **you** can aid law enforcement officials in protecting the homeland.

Your knowledge can be an invaluable resource to the law enforcement community. In your business arena, **you** are best informed about what constitutes suspicious activity.

By being aware of what to look for and knowing how to report suspicious behavior, **you** can make a positive contribution in the fight against terrorism. The **partnership between the community and law enforcement** is essential to the success of anti-terrorism efforts.

It is important to remember that just because someone's speech, actions, beliefs, appearance, or way of life is different, it does not mean that he or she is suspicious. Instead, focus on behavior and activities that are unusual or out of place for the situation and that appear to be suspicious.

The activities outlined on this handout are by no means all-inclusive but have been compiled from a review of terrorist events over several years. Some of the activities, taken individually, could be innocent and must be examined by law enforcement professionals in a larger context to determine whether there is a basis to investigate.

This project was supported by Grant Number 2007-MU-BX-K002, awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

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