

COLUMBIA COUNTY

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

"Be Prepared, Keep Informed, Get Involved"

Counter-Terrorism Information

Terrorism is the use of fear, intimidation or violence by a person or a group, to further their agenda which is often political, social or religious in nature.

The principle area of concern by counter-terrorism emergency planners is the use of a weapon of mass destruction (WMD). A WMD could be made by using chemical, biological, radiological or explosive materials.

International terrorist groups receive a lot of national news coverage however they are not our only concern. There are numerous homegrown hate groups as well as political, environmental and religious extremists who could be considering using a WMD (i.e. Oklahoma City bombing). Many of these groups are located or have ties to Pennsylvania.

Apathy is a dangerous attitude when it comes to disaster planning. People who think that it will never happen here or to them are setting themselves to be "victims".

Panic occurs when a person lets fear overwhelm them to the point of becoming mentally paralyzed. When this happens a person usually becomes part of the problem, not the solution.

Citizens, should remain vigilant and always aware of their surroundings. If something occurs that raises suspicion report it to the proper authority to be investigated.

When an act of terrorism does occur it immediately becomes a local problem requiring a local response. If the event exceeds the capability of local people to handle, assistance from the county can be requested. However if state assistance is also required it may take four hours for resources to begin to arrive and federal resources will take at least eight hours.

Preparation for a WMD incident share many of the same characteristics as preparation for any natural and technological disaster such as the need for:

- Families to have an emergency plan in place with all members familiar with its content.
- Consider taking a Red Cross first aid and CPR class.
- Consider taking a Citizens Emergency Response Training (CERT) course offered by your County EMA. This course gives a basic understanding of emergency scene size-up, triage, first aid, basic firefighting a rescue techniques and stress management. These skills may be necessary for individuals if a large scale event were to occur and emergency services were overwhelmed and their response was delayed.
- Prepare an emergency survival kit for your home.
- Prepare an emergency kit for you vehicle.
- Prepare an evacuation kit.
- Understand the protective action concepts of "shelter" & "evacuation".
- Know that the Emergency Alert System (EAS) is the way officials will pass on important information to the public via radio or tv.