

The threat of terrorism has been brought home to America in a shockingly personal manner. However, it is not a new threat and you can do something about it. For years, San Franciscans have waged war on crime and have prepared for a variety of potential disasters. These techniques can help.

## 1. GET THE FACTS

While terrorist attacks with chemical, biological or nuclear agents are *possible*, the likelihood of their use is not high.

- **Chemical agents** are poisonous gases, liquids or solids. They are difficult to manufacture and to deliver in quantity. For example, the Pentagon estimates that a **ton** of the nerve agent sarin would be necessary to produce 10,000 casualties.
- **Biological agents** are organisms or toxins that have illness-producing effects. Again, they are difficult to manufacture and to deliver. Aum Shinrikyo, a Japanese terrorist group with millions in funding and sophisticated staff, was unable to produce a biological weapon after five years of trying.
- **Nuclear agents** are substances that generate harmful radiation. These substances can be made into a bomb or scattered by conventional explosives to contaminate an area. Nuclear devices and materials are closely monitored and difficult to obtain.

The preferred terrorist weapon of choice continues to be conventional explosives. They can be easily manufactured and transported, as we saw in the Oklahoma City bombing. Fortunately, good physical security practices and public awareness can help prevent this type of attack.

## 2. ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY

An aware and informed public is our best defense against terrorism. We must all do our part to keep our community safe. Terrorism is a crime and crime prevention strategies work very well. These include:

- Be aware of your surroundings. Notice where emergency exits are located. Think ahead about how to evacuate a building, subway or congested public area in a hurry.
- Report suspicious objects, packages, vehicles or persons to the appropriate authorities.
- Cooperate with security procedures at your place of work and in public places.
- Take precautions when traveling. Be aware of conspicuous or unusual behavior. Do not accept packages from strangers. Do not leave luggage unattended.
- Don't spread rumors – confirm questionable information with a credible source.

## 3. PREPARE FOR ALL EMERGENCIES

San Francisco is prone to many disasters, not just terrorist attack. The same preparedness measures work well for many different types of emergencies. Some key things you can do:

- Make copies of important personal/business documents and store them in a safe place.
- Identify an out of state contact person so family and friends can communicate with you during an emergency.
- Learn how and when to shut-off power, water, and gas.
- Stockpile emergency supplies for 3-7 days, including prescription medicines and a first aid kit.
- Know your community resources

- Develop an individual/family/business emergency plan.
  - *Plan for a meeting place if you cannot meet at home*
  - *Discuss what children should do if at school*
  - *Coordinate with neighbors for pick-up if children attend the same school*
  - *Designate a surrogate parent for your children if you are not able to tend to them*
  - *Provide this information to your child's school*

## 4. VOLUNTEER TO HELP

A successful response to an emergency requires a great deal of help. Several volunteer groups have been pre-trained and are part of City emergency plans. Joining one of these organizations **NOW** increases your personal preparedness and your value to the City in emergencies. Some key organizations are:

- **Neighborhood Emergency Response Team (NERT)** –citizens trained in light search and rescue.  
San Francisco Fire Department  
558-3456 ([www.nertnews.com](http://www.nertnews.com))
- **Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS)**– HAM radio operators providing vital communications links when normal communications systems are inoperative or overloaded.  
Mayor's Office of Emergency Services  
558-2700 ([www.sfacs.org](http://www.sfacs.org))
- **American Red Cross** –provides victim services including on call Disaster Action Teams (DAT) and emergency shelter teams.  
427-8000 ([www.bayarea-redcross.org](http://www.bayarea-redcross.org))
- **Volunteer Center of San Francisco** - Acts as a "clearinghouse" for volunteers.  
415-982-8999.

## IF A TERRORIST ATTACK OCCURS:

- Remain calm and follow the instructions of emergency personnel.
- Be alert to secondary hazards such as falling debris or additional devices.
- If you are trapped in debris.
  - *Stay in your area so that you don't kick up dust. Cover your mouth with a handkerchief or clothing.*
  - *Tap on a pipe or wall so rescuers can hear where you are. Use a whistle if one is available. Shout only as a last resort-- shouting can cause you to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.*
- If told to **shelter in place**, go inside immediately. Shut all windows and doors, close the fire place damper, and turn off air conditioning and ventilation systems.
- Monitor the media for emergency information and bulletins. The emergency stations are KCBS 740 AM, KGO 810 AM, and KNBR 680 AM.
- Do not rush to the scene to volunteer – City emergency services will establish volunteer reception sites and will announce these sites through the media.

## IF YOU RECEIVE SUSPICIOUS MAIL:

- **Call 911.**
- Do not handle, shake, or empty the letter or package. Place it in plastic such as a Ziploc bag or plastic sheet protector.
- Wash your hands with soap and warm water for 30 to 60 seconds then wash your face. Blow and wipe your nose.
- Close the doors and windows of the room where the package or letter is located and turn off air conditioning, heating, and fans.
- Collect the names of all persons who have had contact with the letter or package.
- If you develop flu-like symptoms, see your health care provider immediately.

## HOW TO REPORT AN EMERGENCY

- **Call 911**
- Give your exact location
- Give the telephone number you are calling from.
- Describe the emergency
  - *What happened?*
  - *Where did it happen?*
  - *Who is involved?*
  - *Any injuries or weapons involved?*
- Stay on the phone if it is safe to do so.

## REPORTING A BOMB THREAT

- Time and date the threat was reported?
- How was the threat reported?
- Exact words of the caller?
- Ask the caller
  - *WHEN is the bomb going to explode?*
  - *WHERE is the bomb right now?*
  - *WHAT KIND of bomb is it?*
  - *WHAT does it look like?*
  - *WHY did you place the bomb?*
  - *WHERE are you calling from?*
- Describe the caller's voice
- Describe background noise
- Time the caller hung up?

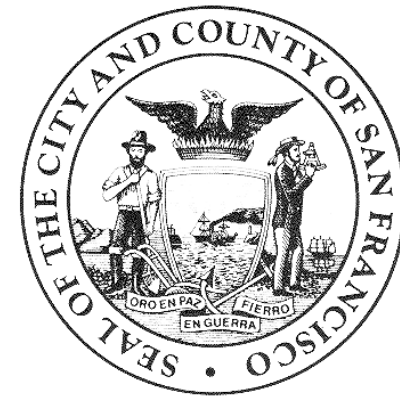
## EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

### Police, Fire, Ambulance 911

FBI	415-553-7400
Poison Control	800-876-4766
PG&E	800-PGE-5000

If you need to talk to someone in a time of crisis, call the Department of Public Health's Crisis Line at 781-0500

For more information on preparing for emergencies, contact the San Francisco Mayor's Office of Emergency Services at 558-2700 or visit our website at [www.sfgov.org/oes](http://www.sfgov.org/oes).



# TIPS ON PREPARING FOR TERRORISM

MAYOR'S OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES  
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