What is Suspicious Activity?

- Any behaviors, actions, or incidents that may indicate a threat to the public, but do not necessarily constitute a clear criminal violation.

These activities can include; but are not limited to, suspected terrorism (international or domestic), bombings, mass shootings, mass stabbings, and vehicle rammings. So in order to properly assess a potential threat, one must look at ALL aspects of the individual’s actions and their situation.

When evaluating suspicious activity, no single factor alone can definitively explain a person’s intentions. Some of these activities could be innocent—it’s important to consider the context of the situation. It’s then up to law enforcement to determine whether the behavior warrants investigation.

*Remember that factors such as race, ethnicity, and/or religious affiliation do not make a person suspicious.

What to Report?

Whenever reporting information to law enforcement, be sure to provide as much detail as possible. Articulation of not only what you see, but why you believe it was concerning, is important to an investigation.

**Who:** Physical descriptors of the person(s), vehicle(s)

**What:** Specific act(s) observed that cause concern

**When:** Accurate date and time (if approximated, note that in the narrative of your report)

**Where:** Specific location, not just the address but the actual physical location of the incident

**Why:** What about the action or behavior causes concern?
Types of Activities and Behaviors

Potential Types of Suspicious Activity
- Breach/Attempted Intrusion
- Misrepresentation
- Theft/Loss/Diversion
- Sabotage/Tampering/Vandalism
- Cyberattack
- Expressed or Implied Threat
- Aviation Activity
- Eliciting Information
- Testing or Probing of Security
- Recruiting/Financing
- Photography
- Observation/Surveillance
- Materials Acquisition/Storage
- Acquisition of Expertise
- Weapons Collection/Discovery

Pre-attack Indicators of Pre-meditated Violent Acts
- Significant personal loss, humiliation, or setback that is either real or perceived.
- Inability to perceive or lack of interest in pursuing non-violent resolutions to a grievance.
- Deliberate or inadvertent disclosure of violent plans or of impending ominous events; verbal/written expressions of intent to commit highly dramatic acts (against self or others) in the near future.
- Pervasive, persistent fantasies where the offender victimizes others through dominant violence.
- Increasingly problematic or concerning interpersonal interactions with others. Others are concerned that the individual may become violent.
- Significantly diminished resiliency or compromised ability to cope with stressors or setbacks.
- Increased isolation, depression, and withdrawal from normally pleasurable activities. Decreased performance at school (may appear to be in a “downward spiral”).
- Contextually inappropriate or dramatically escalated interest in past attacks or attackers.
- Contextually inappropriate or dramatically escalated interest in obtaining firearms and/or explosives.
- Contextually inappropriate accumulation of or escalated interest in tactical gear, clothing or paraphernalia.
- Evaporating buffers and fading obstacles to violence (e.g. diminishing fear of death/incarceration; loss of stabilizing family member).
- Increasing sense of recklessness (e.g. financial, sexual) suggesting a disregard for future consequences.
- Pre-attack research and planning (e.g. site surveillance).
- Contextually inappropriate or dramatic change in appearance (e.g. hair, tattoos).
- Abrupt and unexplained cessation in the use of alcohol, drugs, and/or medications (“cleansing/purifying”).
- Creation of a “legacy token” (e.g. manifesto, video) designed to claim credit for an act of violence and to articulate motives behind an attack. Staging of the legacy token for distribution or discovery.
- Boundary probing/testing or circumnavigation of security measures to penetrate into a restricted area.
- Procuring the means for an attack (e.g. stockpiling of weapons/ammunition, IEDs).
- Pre-attack staging or “cocooning” in a secluded location to physically and mentally prepare for the attack.