

Thoughts on Terrorism

Terrorists try to create fear in people. With accurate information and basic emergency preparedness, you can be informed and remain calm. Keep in mind that accidents can sometimes appear to be terrorist events and vice versa. Your response should be similar in either case.

Know The Facts and Be Responsible:

- Know the facts of a situation and think critically. Confirm reports using a variety of reliable sources of information, such as the government or media.
- Do not spread rumors.
- Do not accept packages from strangers and do not leave luggage or bags unattended in public areas such as the subway.

Biological Attacks:

- A biological attack occurs when a terrorist intentionally causes a disease epidemic.

Chemical Attacks:

- The intentional release of hazardous chemicals constitutes an act of terrorism, however accidents involving hazardous chemicals may also occur. Your course of action would be the same in either case.

Radiological Attacks:

Radiological attacks occur when radioactive material is intentionally released.

- **Radiological Dispersion Device (RDD):** An RDD is designed to scatter amounts of radioactive material over a wide area. The further the material disperses, the less harmful it is. In most cases, the amount of material is unlikely to be lethal.
- **"Dirty Bomb":** a Dirty Bomb is a kind of RDD that combines conventional explosives and radioactive material. The explosive is intended to scatter the radioactive material. More damage and casualties may result from the explosion than from the radiation itself.

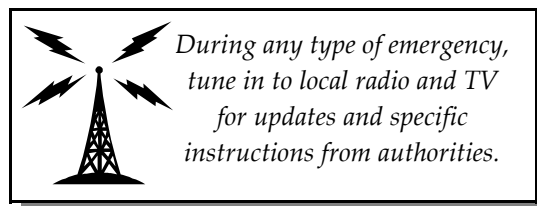
Suspicious Parcels or Envelopes

A parcel or letter may be considered suspicious when it has more than one of the following characteristics:

- Handwritten or poorly typed address, incorrect titles or titles with no name, or misspellings of common words.
- Addressed to someone no longer with your organization or not addressed to a specific person.
- Strange return address or no return address.
- Marked with restrictions, such as "Personal", "Confidential" or "Do not X-ray".
- Excessive postage.
- Powdery substance on the outside.
- Unusual weight given its size, lopsided, or oddly shaped.
- Unusual amount of tape on it.
- Odors, discolorations or oily stains.

If you receive a suspicious package or envelope:

- PUT IT DOWN – preferably on a stable surface.
- Cover it with an airtight container like a trash can or plastic bag.
- Call 911 and alert your building's security officials.
- Alert others to the presence of the package and evacuate the immediate area. Do not allow anyone other than qualified emergency personnel to enter.
- Wash your hands with soap and water if you have handled the package.
- Make a list of the people who were in the room or area where the suspicious package was recognized, and give it to authorities.



If You Receive A Bomb Threat:

- Ask the caller as many of the following questions as possible:
 1. When is the bomb going to explode?
 2. Where is the bomb right now?
 3. What does the bomb look like?
 4. What kind of bomb is it?
 5. Where are you calling from?
 6. Why did you place the bomb?
- Keep the caller on the line for as long as possible and try to write down or record the conversation.
- Write down the exact time and length of call.
- Listen carefully to the caller's voice and background noise.
- After you hang up, call 911 IMMEDIATELY.

Disease Outbreaks & Biological Events

There are treatments for many diseases and biological agents. Onondaga County has established plans for responding to potential situations involving disease outbreaks and biological events in cooperation with State and Federal agencies.

- The Onondaga County Health Department has a system for monitoring disease patterns to provide an early warning signal of a possible outbreak. This involves routinely tracking emergency department diagnosis and reportable and non-reportable infectious diseases in the community.
- The County may distribute medicine or vaccine to those who are at risk. This course of action will be decided based on the specific health hazard. To distribute treatment or vaccines, the County may open Points of Dispensing (POD) locations where treatment will be provided. In the event of an emergency, POD locations and hours of operation will be publicized through the local media.

Radiation Exposure

Small amounts of radiation are considered safe. In the unlikely event that Onondaga County became exposed to unsafe levels of radiation, there are steps you can take to reduce your exposure:

- If you are outside, get inside. Remove all clothing and wash thoroughly.
- If there is an event indoors, try to get out of the building without passing through the contaminated area. If you cannot escape, it may be better to move as far away from the event as possible and shelter in place. (Please read [Onondaga County "Be Prepared" Fact Sheet: Emergency Preparedness Advice for You and Your Family](#))
- In the unlikely event of radiation exposure, the County may distribute Potassium Iodide (known as KI). This is a kind of salt that can prevent damage to your thyroid gland only if you are exposed to radioactive iodine. It will not help you in other radioactive environments. KI is generally only recommended for children, adolescents, pregnant women and others with growing thyroids. Only one dosage should be taken every 24 hours.

Building Collapse or Explosion

Building collapses or explosions can be the result of structural damage or sabotage. Either way, the set of rules below apply.

If you are in a building collapse or explosion:

- Get out as quickly and calmly as possible.
- If you can't get out of the building, get under a sturdy table or desk.

If you are trapped by debris:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a cloth or clothing.
- Move around as little as possible to avoid kicking up dust, which is harmful to inhale.
- If possible, use a flashlight so that you can see your surroundings.
- 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 as shouting can cause you to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.

Hazardous Materials or Chemical Spills

We use hazardous materials in our homes and businesses every day. Small spills occasionally occur, but these incidents generally cause the public little difficulty other than traffic delays. In the event of a major spill authorities will instruct you on the best course of action, however you should heed the precautions listed below.

General Guidelines:

- For incidents in your home you can consult the Poison Control Center hotline at 1-800-252-5655 or 476-4766.
- Stay upwind of the material if possible.
- Seek medical attention as soon as possible if needed.
- If there's an event indoors, try to get out of the building without passing through the contaminated area. Otherwise, it may be better to move as far away from the event as possible and shelter in place. Please read [Onondaga County "Be Prepared" Fact Sheet: Emergency Preparedness Advice for You and Your Family](#) for Shelter in Place guidelines.
- If exposed, remove outer layer of clothes, separate yourself from them, and wash yourself.

In some circumstances, after being exposed to hazardous materials, it may be necessary to be "decontaminated". Specially trained emergency personnel will perform decontamination procedures, which may include the removal of personal items and cleansing of exposed areas of the body. They will provide for medical attention if necessary.

JOANNE M. MAHONEY
County Executive



CYNTHIA B. MORROW, MD, MPH
Commissioner of Health
WWW.ONGOV.NET

These materials are adapted from the New York City Office of Emergency Management (NYCOEM) "Ready New York" brochure. Onondaga County greatly appreciates NYCOEM's permission to adapt their format for the benefit of our citizens.

**For more information, call Onondaga County
Department of Emergency Management at
435-2525**



Peter P. Alberti, Commissioner
Department of
Emergency Management