

# **TERRORISM AND SCHOOL VIOLENCE**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

How well are schools prepared for potential acts of terrorism and school violence? School administrators are responsible for the safety of their students and staff in any disaster, whether it be a fire, an earthquake, an act of terrorism, or a school violence incident. Emergency managers should help schools take prudent measures to prepare for all possible disasters. Schools should develop emergency plans, train staff in emergency response procedures, and conduct exercises to practice using their plan. In any disaster, local police, fire, and emergency medical units rescue the injured, put out fires, and do whatever is necessary to save lives and protect property. In the event of an act of terrorism or a school violence incident, these local authorities are initially in charge of rescuing the injured and performing their usual life and property-saving functions, but when Federal Bureau of Investigation agents arrive on scene, the FBI takes over management of crime scene aspects. Information on various types of school violence and possible acts of terrorism should be of value to first responders and to schools in strengthening their disaster planning, disaster preparedness, and increasing security and response measures.

## **WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION**

The FBI considers terrorists to be criminals, and defines terrorism as "the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a Government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives."

The FBI is the lead Federal Agency in the crisis response involving a Weapon of Mass Destruction. The definition of Weapon of Mass Destruction is "any weapon designed or intended to:

1. Cause death or serious bodily injury through the release, dissemination, or impact of toxic/poisonous chemicals or their precursors.
2. Release radiation or radioactivity at a level dangerous to human life.
3. Involve a disease organism.
4. Use an explosive (greater than 4 ounces), incendiary, poison gas, bomb, grenade, or rocket.

## **STATISTICS <sup>2</sup>**

### **Bomb Incidents**

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms of the Treasury Department compiles national statistics on criminal use of explosives. The record show that in 1966, for example, there were 1457 bombings, 504 attempted bombings, 427 incendiary bombings, and 185 attempted incendiary bombings for a total of 2,573 bomb incidents. Data for the years 1992 through 1996 shows that, during that 5-year period, there was a grand total of 14282 bombings, with 322 people killed and 3060 injured. About 5 % (661) of the total bombings for the 5-year period targeted educational facilities.

Motives which determined for 8348 of the bombings. Of these, vandalism was the most frequent motive, occurring in 5461 bomb incidents. Revenge was the next most frequent motive with 2325 bombings.

Juveniles carried out 4631 of the bombing incidents. Eighteen people were killed and 446 injured by juvenile bombings.

Data for 1997 for the various states shows that California had more bombings than any other state with a total of 771 explosive incidents in that year. Illinois had 304 and Florida had 301 explosive incidents.<sup>3</sup>

During the year of 1997, there was a national total of 2217 bombing incidents. Of these, 5% (107) were carried out against educational facilities, including 12 colleges or universities and 95 schools. Statistics on that year show no fatalities but one injury in college bombings and 17 injured in school bombings. Data on motives indicates that vandalism was the principal motive for incidents using explosives, with revenge again next.

### **Arson**

The Arson Statistics Report published by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms shows that the ATF conducted arson investigations for 3,336 fires in the 5-year period from 1993-1997. There were 383 people killed in these fires and 921 injured.

### **Church Arson**

A special report on church arson, the third report of the federal government's National Church Arson Task Force, stated that there have been 827 investigations of arson, bombing, or attempted bombing that have occurred at houses of worship between January 1995 and October 1999. Investigations resulted in the arrest of 364 suspects in connection with 294 of the investigations - an arrest rate of 35% - more than double the arrest rate of 16 % of arson in general. Trials have been held in 206 of the 294 investigations and 287 arsonists have been convicted by federal, state, and local courts.

### **Abortion Clinic Violence**

Since 1982, there have been 169 arson and bombing incidents involving abortion clinics. Seventy-seven of these incidents have been solved, resulting either in arrests,

convictions, indictments, or incarceration in prisons or State mental institutions. Until the passage of the *Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act of 1994*, these types of crimes were not under the jurisdiction of Federal agencies. Now, the Attorney General has designated a task force comprised of the ATF, FBI, US Marshalls Service, and the Department of Justice to target any person or group who would jeopardize the lives and property of others or violate Federal arson and explosives laws.

### **Increasing Activity in Biological Terrorism**

Some extremists discovered that biological agents were the poor man's weapon of choice. There have been a number of incidents using these agents such as:

1984 - The Rajneesh used salmonella to poison people in a restaurant in rural Oregon in an effort to make some voters sick so that the Rajneesh could win a local election.

1991 - The Minnesota Patriots Council were making ricin, a potent toxin, for use against rural law enforcement officers.

1995 - An extremist named Thomas Lavy was arrested in rural Arkansas for brewing up a significant amount of ricin.

1996 - Thomas Leahy in Janesville, Wisconsin produced ricin and was attempting to produce botulinum.

April, 1997 - A petri dish marked "anthracis" was delivered to a B'nai B'rith office in Washington, DC. The dish was actually a harmless bacteria closely related to anthrax. The response involved closing off two blocks of the downtown area and decontamination of dozens of people.

July 1998 - Three men were arrested in rural Texas for conspiring to use several biological agents in a bizarre scheme against IRS and law enforcement personnel.

February, 1998 - Larry Wayne Harris, a former member of the Aryan Nation, a white supremacist organization, was arrested in Las Vegas, Nevada with several bags of a substance marked "anthrax". He was released when the substance was determined to be a harmless form of anthrax.

June, 1998 - Three men were arrested in Olmito, Texas for threatening to kill federal agents and state officials with biological agents. They claimed to represent the Republic of Texas, a militant organization which claims sovereignty over Texas.

August, 1998 - A white powder was spread through several floors of the Finney State Office Building in Wichita, Kansas. A letter at the scene falsely claimed the powder was anthrax. A letter sent to a local television station by a white supremacist group calling itself the Brothers of Freedom of Americans claimed

responsibility.

1999 - Numerous letters containing a white powder labeled "anthrax" were sent to abortion clinics and various other organizations. Initially, the response included securing the building and decontaminating all people who had come in contact with the letter while the powder was sent by air courier to the FBI Terrorism Lab in Quantico, Virginia. After analysis, these were all determined to be hoaxes.

### **School Violence**

Californians probably remember the bizarre kidnaping of a group of school children on July 15, 1976. A school bus was taking 26 children home from the Dairyland Union School in Chowchilla, California when three men wearing masks and waving guns made the driver stop the bus. The driver and children were herded into two vans while the gunmen hid the bus in a thicket in a dry gulch. The gunmen then drove for eleven hours to an abandoned quarry where they forced the children and the bus driver into an old moving van buried six feet underground. The bus driver with help from the seven oldest boys managed to get the children out to safety after sixteen hours of effort. The three young gunmen had drafted a ransom note demanding \$5 million for return of the children.

More recently, the nation was stunned when two students killed a teacher and 12 students and wounded 23 other students at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado on April 20, 1999. Two boys, one 18 and the other 17 years old had apparently plotted for a year to kill at least 500 students and blow up the high school. They killed themselves at the scene. There have been 15 other school shooting incidents which received publicity between 1996 and 2000. Some of these were:

February 2, 1996, Moses Lake, Washington - Two students and one teacher killed, one other wounded when 14 year old Barry Loukaitis opened fire on his algebra class.

February 19, 1997, Bethel, Alaska - Principal and one student killed, two others wounded by Evan Ramsey, 16, at his high school.

October 1, 1997, Pearl, Mississippi - Two students killed and seven wounded by a 16 year old who was also accused of killing his mother.

December 1, 1997, West Paducah, Kentucky - Three students killed, five wounded by a 14 year old boy as they participated in a prayer circle at Heath High School.

March 24, 1998, Jonesboro, Arkansas - Four students and one teacher killed, ten others wounded outside as Westside Middle School emptied during a false fire alarm. Mitchell Johnson, 13, and Andrew Golden, 11, shot at their classmates and teachers from the woods.

April 28, 1999, Taber, Alberta, Canada - One student was killed and one student

was wounded at W R Myers High School in the first fatal high school shooting in Canada in 20 years.

December 6, 1999, Fort Gibson, Oklahoma - Four students wounded and one severely bruised in the chaos as a 13 year old boy opened fire with a 9mm semiautomatic handgun at Fort Gibson Middle School.

February 29, 2000, Mount Morris Township, Michigan. A six year old girl was shot and killed at Buell Elementary School. The assailant was identified as a six year old boy with a .32 caliber handgun.

### **Terrorist Bombing Incidents at Universities**

There were seven terrorist bombing attacks at universities in the United States between 1978 and 1993 in the 17 year bombing spree of the "Unabomber". He had other targets as well and his explosive devices killed a total of three people and injured 23. University attacks occurred at Northwestern University, University of Utah, Vanderbilt, University of California (Berkeley), and Yale.

### **Arson Incidents at Universities**

There have been many arson incidents at universities. The US Department of Justice's report *Crime in the United States 1996* had a tabulation of UCR Part 1 Crimes which included arson. A comparative examination of these statistics by the University of Colorado's Police Department indicated that some universities had as many as eight or 13 arson cases in 1996.

### **Domestic Terrorism**

The bombing of the Alfred P Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995 was a shock to most people living in the United States. Earlier attacks such as the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York City on February 26, 1993 had led many to believe that terrorists were from other lands. Oklahoma City changed all that. We began to realize that there were many different types of "home-grown" domestic terrorists and extremists. We found that there were anti-abortion groups, animal rights groups, militia groups, white supremacist groups, neo-nazi groups, tax protesters, arsonists, patriots, environmental groups, anti-world trade groups, the Klu Klux Klan, etc.

### **COUNTER-TERRORISM**

Since there is always the possibility of acts of terrorism against schools and universities as indicated by these statistics, what should be done to prepare for these incidents? The Federal Government is taking a number of actions in various agencies to prepare these agencies to assist state and local governments. Congress approved a National Domestic Preparedness Office in November 1999. The Defense Department has been conducting training programs in 120 metropolitan areas to prepare the local police, fire, and emergency medical agencies to operate in incidents involving terrorist use of Weapons of Mass Destruction. There are national programs to establish Metropolitan Medical Assistance Systems which can help local hospitals and ambulance units cope with

decontaminating large numbers of casualties. Some local police, fire departments, and hazardous materials organizations are obtaining special equipment and training to prepare for Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Schools should decide what prudent and cost-effective actions they might take to prepare for terrorism as they now prepare for other disasters which are likely to occur in their geographic location such as hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, or ice storms.

### **Disaster Preparedness**

The Katz Act of the California Education Code, reference (19) requires that schools plan for earthquakes and other emergencies. The law requires schools to do the following:

1. Develop a disaster plan which includes emergency roles, responsibilities, and procedures for students and staff (both certificated and classified).
2. Conduct periodic drills, evacuation exercises, and other emergency response activities.
3. Provide appropriate training for staff and students.
4. Prepare to have school buildings used as Red Cross shelters by the local community after disasters.
5. Take mitigation measures now to ensure the safety of students and staff in future disasters.

The State of Georgia passed *Senate Bill 74* effective July 1999, which required all schools to prepare school safety plans. The major features of this bill were:

(a) Every public school shall prepare a school safety plan to help curb the growing incidence of violence in schools, to respond effectively to such incidents, and to provide a safe learning environment for Georgia's children, teachers, and other school personnel. Such plan shall also address preparedness for natural disasters, hazardous materials or radiological accidents, acts of violence, and acts of terrorism. School safety plans of public schools shall be prepared with input from students enrolled in that school, parents or legal guardians of such students, teachers in that school, community leaders, other school employees and school district employees, and local law enforcement, fire service, public safety, and emergency management agencies. Such plans shall be reviewed, and if necessary updated annually. Such plans of public schools shall be submitted to the local emergency management agency.

(b) A public school may request funding assistance from the state for the installation of safety equipment including, but not limited to video surveillance cameras, metal detectors, and other similar security devices. Funding may be provided to a public school in accordance with a school safety plan prepared by the

school and approved by the local board of education, the Department of Education, and the Georgia Emergency Management Agency.

(c) School safety plans prepared by public schools shall address security issues in school safety zones as defined in paragraph (1) of subsection (a) of Code Section 16-11-127.1. School safety plans should also address security issues involving the transportation of pupils to and from school and school functions when such transportation is furnished by the school or school system and school functions are held during non-instructional hours.

(d) The Georgia Emergency Management Agency shall provide training and technical assistance to public school systems, and may provide this same training and technical assistance to private school systems, and independent private schools throughout this state in the area of emergency management and safe school operations. This training and technical assistance shall include, but not be limited to, crisis response team development, site surveys and safety audits, crisis management planning, exercise design, safe school planning, emergency operations planning, search and seizure, bomb threat management, and model school safety plans.<sup>4</sup>

### **Emergency Response of Schools in California**

The Petris Bill of the *California Government Code* requires that all school districts responding to emergencies use the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS). This means that all plans must now incorporate SEMS procedures, all school personnel must be trained in how SEMS works, and exercises must be conducted to ensure that everyone knows how to use SEMS. This standardized emergency management system was developed after a disastrous fire in Oakland and Berkeley in 1991 when more than 3000 homes burned. The new system was introduced in 1996 after all state employees were trained. The standardized training means that all law enforcement personnel, including California Highway Patrol officers, county deputy sheriffs, State fish and game wardens, and city police receive the same training as firefighters and public works personnel.

SEMS requires that each organization understands and uses the following:

1. The Incident Command System - a method of organizing emergency response effort into five functions: command, operations, planning/intelligence, logistics, and finance/administration.
2. An Emergency Operations Center (or Incident Command Post in the field) with staff organized according to the same five Incident Command System functions.
3. Coordination of the school district's Emergency Operations Center with other Emergency Operations Centers of the operational area (county), city, and county's Office of Education, as appropriate.

4. Incorporation of the Standardized Emergency Management System into all school plans, training, exercises, and response during actual disasters.
5. Documentation of the use of SEMS in planning, training, exercising, and during actual disasters.

## CONCLUSIONS

Schools and universities should include terrorist attacks in their emergency planning so that all of the personnel who have emergency responsibilities in a disaster are aware of their roles in this type of event. All administrators should review their disaster planning to insure that they have a plan which is appropriate both for their location and local conditions and also includes terrorist incidents.

While the local natural hazards may include hurricanes, floods, or earthquakes, weapons of mass destruction, cyber-terrorism, arson, and bombs should also be considered. Cost-effective actions should be taken now to reduce potential damage in the future from both natural hazards and terrorism. Planning for terrorism incidents should also address other complicating issues such as protection for responders. School and university security administrators should talk to the local fire, police, emergency management agency, and, if necessary, the FBI about their requirements and suggestions. They should have them inspect their facilities to ensure a common approach against this new threat.

## REFERENCES

California Governor's Office of Emergency Services. *School Emergency Response: Using SEMS at Districts and Sites*. Sacramento, California: June 3, 1998

Carus, W Seth. *Bioterrorism and Biocrimes*. National Defense University, Center for Counterproliferation Research, working paper, 1998. Also see <<http://www.bens.org/pubs/srbioterr.html>>

*The Katz Act of the California Education Code* (Sections 35295-35297)

National Defense Preparedness Office < <http://www.ndpo.gov>>

*The Petris Bill of the California Government Code* (Section 8607)

*Time*, "Escape from an Earthen Cell" 26 July 1976

US Federal Bureau of Investigation. *FBI Policy and Guidelines* <<http://www.fbi.gov/contact/fof/jackson/cntrterr.htm>>



## NOTES

1. Russell C Coile, PhD, CEM has been the Disaster Coordinator at the Pacific Grove Fire Department since January 1990 and is responsible for disaster preparedness for the City of Pacific Grove. He received SB, SM, and EE degrees in electrical engineering from MIT and a PhD in information science from The City University, London, England. He is an Adjunct Professor in the Institute for Joint Warfare Analysis at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California. Russell Coile was an invited evaluator for a simulated terrorist attack incident in an exercise conducted at the NASA Ames Research Center, Moffett Field, California on December 4, 1998. The scenario included a simulated nerve gas attack and a bomb to injure first responders. He has also been an evaluator or observer in WMD exercises with biological or chemical scenarios in San Francisco, San Jose, Oakland, and Alameda. He operates amateur radio station K6FVH.

The Pacific Grove Fire Department has received national recognition from FEMA for its program, "Pacific Grove - A Model for Small City Disaster Preparedness". It was selected for inclusion in FEMA's *Partnerships in Preparedness Volume II: A Compendium of Exemplary Practices in Emergency Management, 1997* and for "Partnership for Preparedness Against Terrorism" in *Partnerships in Preparedness Volume III, 1998*. The Department has provided assistance to research projects by the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey into models of response by local authorities to terrorism incidents.

2. Sources for statistics used in this paper are:

AFT Type of Incident	< <a href="http://www.aft.treas.gov/pib/fire-explo_pub/eir/type.htm">http://www.aft.treas.gov/pib/fire-explo_pub/eir/type.htm</a> >
ATF Targets	< <a href="http://www.atf.treas.gov/pub/fire-explo_pub/eir/targets.htm">http://www.atf.treas.gov/pub/fire-explo_pub/eir/targets.htm</a> >
ATF Motives	< <a href="http://www.atf.treas.gov/pub/fire-explo_pub/eir/motive.htm">http://www.atf.treas.gov/pub/fire-explo_pub/eir/motive.htm</a> >
ATF Juvenile Bombing Incidents 1992-96	< <a href="http://www.atf.treas.gov/pub/fire-explo_pub/eir/juvenile.htm">http://www.atf.treas.gov/pub/fire-explo_pub/eir/juvenile.htm</a> >
ATF Explosive Incidents by State 1997	< <a href="http://www.atf.treas.gov/aaxis2/qbystate.html">http://www.atf.treas.gov/aaxis2/qbystate.html</a> >
AFT Bombing Incidents by Target 1997	< <a href="http://www.atf.treas.gov/aaxis2/qbytarget1.html">http://www.atf.treas.gov/aaxis2/qbytarget1.html</a> >
ATF Bombing Fatalities by Target 1997	< <a href="http://www.atf.treas.gov/aaxis2/qbyfatals1.html">http://www.atf.treas.gov/aaxis2/qbyfatals1.html</a> >
ATF Bombing Incidents by Motive 1997	< <a href="http://www.atf.treas.gov/aaxis2/qbynotive.html">http://www.atf.treas.gov/aaxis2/qbynotive.html</a> >
ATF Bombing Incidents by Motive 1997	< <a href="http://www.atf.treas.gov/aaxis2/qbynotive.html">http://www.atf.treas.gov/aaxis2/qbynotive.html</a> >
AFT Investigated Fires 1993 to 1997	< <a href="http://www.atf.treas.gov/aaxis2/qbyarson.html">http://www.atf.treas.gov/aaxis2/qbyarson.html</a> >
Church Arson	< <a href="http://www.atf.treas.gov/press/fy00press/021000ncatf3rd.htm">http://www.atf.treas.gov/press/fy00press/021000ncatf3rd.htm</a> >
Abortion Clinics	< <a href="http://www.atf.treas.gov/explarson/abort_clinc.htm">http://www.atf.treas.gov/explarson/abort_clinc.htm</a> >
School Shootings	< <a href="http://www.abcnews.go.com/sections/us/DailyNews/schoolshootings990420.html">http://www.abcnews.go.com/sections/us/DailyNews/schoolshootings990420.html</a> >
Terrorism Incidents at Universities	< <a href="http://www.unabombertrial.com/timeline/index.html">http://www.unabombertrial.com/timeline/index.html</a> >
Arson Incidents at Universities	< <a href="http://pongo.colorado.edu/police/compare.html">http://pongo.colorado.edu/police/compare.html</a> >

3. This data is derived from current National Repository data provided by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms' AEXIS 2000 and the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Bomb Data Center systems.

4. Article 27 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 as amended by Code Section 20-2-1185, Official Code of Georgia. See also <[http://www2.state.ga.us/Legis/1999\\_00/leg/fulltext/sb74.htm](http://www2.state.ga.us/Legis/1999_00/leg/fulltext/sb74.htm)>