WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

TO PREPARE FOR AND RESPOND TO CHEMICAL, RADIOLOGICAL, NUCLEAR, AND BIOLOGICAL TERRORIST ATTACKS

This Reference Card summarizes the essential features of a strategy for what individuals should do to prepare for and respond to terrorist attacks involving chemical, radiological, nuclear, and biological weapons. This strategy emerged from a study that RAND conducted, under the sponsorship of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, and is fully reported in Individual Preparedness and Response to Chemical, Radiological, Nuclear, and Biological Terrorist Attacks, RM-1731-SE, RAND, Santa Monica, Calif., 2003. As the terrorist threat evolves and new opportunities for individual preparedness and response emerge, individuals should look for updates to this strategy in the future.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND SECURITY

When preparing for and responding to terrorist attacks involving chemical, radiological, nuclear, and biological weapons, one should consider the following:

1. Can understandings of which will be required to accomplish.
2. Recognize attack circumstances; understand the exposure.
3. Engage in advanced education that trains personnel.
4. Ensure protection against potential threats.
5. Discover building evacuation plans and escape routes.
6. Engage in advanced education that trains personnel.
7. Determine potential threats.
8. Ensure protection against potential threats.
9. Discover building evacuation plans and escape routes.
10. Recognize attack circumstances; understand the exposure.

If you need assistance, please contact your local emergency management officials to determine which threats are most likely to occur in your area.

Nuclear Attack

Leave or avoid buildings damaged or threatened by the explosion.

Radiological Attack

Emergency officials will direct you if you are nearby.

Chemical Attack

An emergency escape hood is a preferable respirator if in contact with smoke or heat.

Biological Attack

Note that the use of protective clothing and equipment is recommended for persons working in areas where exposure to biological agents may occur.

Available on the web at:
http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1731

For more information and updates on RAND’s ongoing research on terrorism, please visit:
http://www.rand.org/terrorism_area/

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PREPARATORY ACTIONS

In the event of a terrorist attack involving chemical, radiological, nuclear, or biological weapons, one should take the following actions:

1. Wear a mask with a N95-rated particulate filter or cover your nose and mouth with a cloth. In a chemical attack, wear protective gloves.
2. This Reference Card should be used as a guide. For more information, please visit the website above.

NOTES

1. Should take these actions ahead of time.
2. Supports in the event of an attack. You can begin emergency planning by following these guidelines.

To be able to make the appropriate response, it is important to understand the potential threats and to develop a plan for action.

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CHEMICAL ATTACK

OVERARCHING GOAL
Find clean air very quickly.

RESPONSE ACTIONS
1. If attack is outdoors, you and your family are outdoors, take shelter quickly in the closest building, clear all windows, doors, and shut off the flow of air. If inside, stay inside. Then, to the extent possible, move upstairs, find an interior room, and seal the room. Remain inside until told it is safe to leave, and then ventilate and vacate the shelter immediately.
2. If attack is indoors, follow chemical attack plans specific to your building. If these are not available, open windows and breathe fresh air. If open windows are not accessible, evacuate to the nearest public shelter immediately. Do not remain in the area.
3. Once protected from chemical agent exposure, decontaminate by removing clothes and washing.
4. When conditions are safe to move about freely, seek medical treatment.

RADIOLOGICAL ATTACK

OVERARCHING GOAL
Avoid inhaling dust that could be radioactive.

RESPONSE ACTIONS
1. If an explosion occurs outdoors or you are informed of an outside release of radiation and you are outside, cover nose and mouth and seek indoor shelter. If you are inside an undamaged building, stay there. Close windows and doors and shut down ventilation systems. Exit shelter when told it is safe.
2. If an explosion occurs inside your building or you are informed of a release of radiation, cover nose and mouth and go outside immediately.
3. Decontaminate by removing clothing and showering.
4. Relocate outside the contaminated zone, only if instructed to do so by public officials.

BIOLOGICAL ATTACK

OVERARCHING GOAL
Minimize further exposure to agents.

RESPONSE ACTIONS
1. Call medical assistance immediately. If possible, evacuate the biological attack zone quickly or as soon as possible.
2. If you are not exposed to a biological agent, stay in the area.
3. Avoid contact with infected persons and biological agents.
4. Follow directions of public health officials or medical personnel.

NUCLEAR ATTACK

OVERARCHING GOAL
Minimize the risk of radiation exposure and damage to public health.

RESPONSE ACTIONS
1. Move out of the path of the radioactive fallout cloud as quickly as possible.
2. Move away from the affected area. Do not enter the area.
3. Stay indoors or seek shelter in a building.
4. Avoid contact with radioactive materials.

What you will experience
You will know that you are in a chemical attack because you will see many people who are nauseated, have blurred vision, and have difficulty breathing or because you see many sick or dead animals.

What you will experience
You will know that an explosion has occurred by the blast and damage to buildings, but you will not know immediately whether it involves radioactive contamination.