



SPECIAL ADVISORY: Impact of Boston Bombings on Faith-Based Organizations

**April 15, 2013
14:30 PDT**

As readers certainly know, it appears that at least two improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were detonated in Boston today. These IEDs were placed near the finish line of the Boston Marathon and this event certainly fits the profile of a symbolic terrorist event.

It is very early in this situation and more information will shed additional light on these events. However, there are some immediate take-aways for those responsible for safety and security at faith-based organizations, especially large organizations within the United States.

It is unlikely that the perpetrator(s) responsible for the Boston event will subsequently attack a faith-based organization. However, these events typically motivate and inspire self-radicalized individuals and/or terrorist cells already in place. Thus, today's events in Boston may increase the risk to faith-based organizations within the United States and it is appropriate to assess that risk and recommend precautions.

There is insufficient information available as this Advisory is prepared to identify those most likely responsible; and correspondingly a frustrating deficit of evidence to assess future risk. Therefore, it is appropriate to take precautionary measures commensurate with our understanding of how these types of events are known to motivate and inspire others.

Faith-based organizations may be potential targets for the types of self-radicalized individuals ("copy-cats") and undetected terrorist cells within the U.S. Speaking very generally, the larger the organization and the higher an organization's profile, the greater the potential for targeting. Denominational facilities, para-church facilities and megachurch complexes are the types of targets these types of adversaries may be attracted to. Additional risk factors include public access (tours, etc.), prior threats, any prior evidence of surveillance, or any information provided by law enforcement concerning any possible targeting.

Those responsible for safety and security at the types of facilities identified in this Advisory need to know what actions, if any, they should take. CCI recommends that the more that a particular facility or organization “fits” the descriptors listed in this Advisory, the higher priority that the following potential courses of action should receive:

1. Contact your law enforcement agency and the nearest counter-terrorism fusion center to raise their awareness of your facility and ask for any information or “chatter” regarding your organization to be reported to you immediately.
2. Conduct an inspection of your facility, concentrating on identifying any items (packages, backpacks, parcels, etc.) that “do not belong” and on identifying any signs of disturbance or disruption to trash facilities, utility fixtures, service access points, etc.
3. Brief all staff to be especially vigilant in looking for items that “don’t belong” or “just don’t look right” and reporting those things to facility security staff immediately.
4. Brief all staff to be especially vigilant for persons entering, loitering at or otherwise being around your facility and who fit any part of this profile:
 - a. Dressed inappropriately for the environment (over-dressed, bulky clothing inconsistent with the weather, etc.)
 - b. Appear to have no legitimate business, are “hanging around”, appear to be observing access to the facility, are taking unexplained photos of the facility
 - c. Appear unusually nervous, profuse swearing, or any other suspicious behavior
5. Depending on the profile of your organization and the existence of any additional risk factors, consider suspending public tours and unscheduled, unscripted public visits to facilities.
6. Increase visible security patrols, even if conducted by volunteers, around your facility. Any visible increase in security can create uncertainty in the mind of an adversary and potentially prevent an attack.
7. If your CEO has an especially high profile, is the subject of controversy or public criticism, or otherwise has been in the public eye more than normal recently; consider adding security precautions for this CEO. If this is something appropriate for your organization and you need more advice or counsel, please contact CCI directly.

This Advisory focuses intentionally on threats to faith-based organizations within the United States. In the absence of evidence of a planned attack by an international terrorist organization, CCI assess any increased risk (such as from self-radicalized “copy-cats” or pre-existing terrorist cells) to be within the U.S.

We will continue to monitor this situation and provide additional information as appropriate. Agencies or security personnel with questions are encouraged to contact CCI directly.

CCI stands ready to support Christian agencies in the response to this increased threat, to conduct site-specific assessments, to provide training and to assist agencies in the implementation of these recommendations and additional actions; and to discuss specific issues and situations. We remain the only Christian agency in the world that provides real-time on-site support and assistance in crises and emergencies without charging fees. Contact us:

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