

VEHICLE RENTAL/LEASING INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS: A FORCE MULTIPLIER

The protection of life and property against terrorism in the Homeland often rests on strong and sustainable partnerships, including those with the private sector and the general public. With thousands of vehicle rental companies across the US, a security-conscious employee can act as a public safety force multiplier. Their familiarity with rental processes and vehicles and their routine interaction with the general public enables them to identify suspicious activities and behaviors potentially related to terrorism prior to an attack, and to provide authorities information that may aid post-attack investigations.

During 2016-17, there were 19 high-profile vehicle-ramming attacks worldwide. Seven of these involved rented vehicles. Many of the attacks resulted in mass casualties and were endorsed by terrorist groups through their social media and English-language publications, encouraging further attacks.

- In October 2017 in New York City, an ISIS-inspired individual used a commercial-grade rental vehicle to attack pedestrians on a busy bicycle path in lower Manhattan, killing eight people and injuring 12.
- In August 2017 in Barcelona, Spain, an attacker drove a rented vehicle through the Las Ramblas pedestrian area, killing 13 people and injuring 50.
- In March 2017 in London, UK, the driver of a rental vehicle targeted pedestrians on Westminster Bridge, killing five and injuring 50.

Ramming is a readily available tactic, but terrorists may use rental vehicles in a variety of ways, including to deliver explosives, which was the case for both the

SCOPE: This product is a reminder of the important role the vehicle rental/lease industry plays in the prevention of terrorism and highlights the wealth of available government and industry resources.



Safeguarding America's Transportation System

Security Guide

Truck Rental Company Employees



Transportation Security Administration

content.govdelivery.com/attachments/USDHSFACIR/2017/11/02/file_attachments/906925/TSA-Rental-Truck-Brochure-Final.pdf



NOTICE: This product was developed by the Joint Counterterrorism Assessment Team (JCAT), which is a collaboration by NCTC, DHS, the FBI, and state, local, tribal, and territorial government personnel to improve information sharing and enhance public safety. The product is intended to promote coordination among intergovernmental authorities and the private sector in identifying, preventing, and responding to foreign terrorist activities in the US. The product should be considered within the context of existing laws, authorities, agreements, policies or procedures. For additional information contact us at JCAT@NCTC.GOV.

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1993 World Trade Center and 1995 Oklahoma City bombings. Rental vehicles may also be used in attempts to circumvent security, blend into an environment to conduct surveillance, and prevent recognition and reporting of suspicious activity.



Terrorist publications espousing the use of vehicles to conduct attacks.

CONSIDERATIONS: In accordance with federal, state, and local requirements and company-established rules, policies, and procedures, rental companies may consider the following:

- An overt and enthusiastic expression of safety and security by employees during interactions with customers may serve to inspire confidence in legitimate customers and discourage those seeking to use the vehicles for illicit purposes.
- Formal information sharing with law enforcement may give police greater understanding of the challenges associated with renting vehicles and enable companies to heighten awareness and improve their processes.
- Coordination among vehicle rental companies, including sharing data within company guidelines, may reveal suspicious activities and patterns.
- Recurring security awareness training on policies and procedures, and how to report suspicious behaviors and activities:

NOTE: Information sharing among vehicle rental companies and public safety authorities may be challenging as information systems and databases are sometimes proprietary and incompatible. The challenges are further compounded by valid data protection concerns.



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- Identification of fraudulent, stolen, or incomplete licenses, other forms of identification, and related official documents;
 - Requirements for a Commercial Driver's License, class endorsements, or other documentation for vehicle rentals;
 - Procedures for notifying law enforcement authorities;
 - Taking note of suspicious statements, people, vehicles, or transactional anomalies and reporting them to relevant authorities;
 - Reporting missing equipment, accessories, vehicles, or license plates to law enforcement;
 - Denial of service to suspicious individuals;
 - Verification method for international identification, driver's licenses, and class endorsements.
- An external communications plan (company security, law enforcement, and first responders) in the event of a security situation.
 - An internal communications plan to notify employees during a heightened security situation.
 - An emergency response plan directing employees to take actions beneficial to law enforcement agencies in their investigations, such as preserving documentation and CCTV data, or identifying employees who observed suspicious activity or interacted with clients suspected of having illicit intent. This may include information about how the customer arrived or departed: on foot, in vehicle (year, make, model, tag), or by public transportation.
 - Employee follow-up questions in a nonalerting manner regarding unusual, intended vehicle use and/or destinations.
 - Background checks and periodic reviews, particularly for employees with direct access to vehicles.

CHALLENGES: The Director of Communications at the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association stated: "Rental agencies are still limited as to how well they can screen customers. People don't come into rental branches wearing camo gear and stab vests and with that sort of glint in their eyes. Quite often, these people just present themselves like any normal person." He further added: "Vehicle rental agencies have been concerned with people doing bad things with rental cars since the inception of the industry. Obviously, if there were a way to discern that a customer was planning to do something prohibited with a rental vehicle, we'd love to know that."



SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIORS AND ACTIVITIES: The following observable indicators may create some degree of suspicion of criminal activity. Any determination of possible illicit intent should be supported by additional facts that justify reasonable suspicion. While one activity may be insignificant on its own, the indicators should be looked at under the totality of the circumstance. Any indicators creating a strong suspicion may constitute a basis for reporting:

- Intended use of vehicle inconsistent with purpose.
- Undetermined date of return.
- Unusual interest in size, weight, speed, capacity, clearance, and accessories, which may or may not be standard, including wooden floors, and raised or reinforced bumpers.
- Unusual interest in special purpose vehicles, including tractor-trailers, tankers, buses, especially when the customer does not have the proper operating authority.
- Inability, reluctance, or refusal to produce required documentation, such as a valid driver's license or appropriate endorsement for the class of vehicle sought.
- Reluctance to provide complete personal information when completing rental paperwork.
- Providing multiple or inconsistent names, addresses, phone numbers, or other personal information on rental paperwork.
- Inability to recall key information used to rent a vehicle.
- Using cash for large transactions or a personal credit card in someone else's name.
- Observed difficulty in explaining the planned use of a vehicle or unusual exhibited nervousness.
- Observed difficulty in operating a vehicle, indicating a lack of familiarity, prior use, or experience.
- Unusual questions regarding mass gatherings, government, military, law enforcement, and critical infrastructure and key resources.

“IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING®” The DHS campaign raises public awareness of the indicators of terrorism and terrorism-related crime, as well as the importance of reporting suspicious activity to state and local law enforcement. The campaign encourages people to follow their intuition and report suspicious activity but leaves decision to law enforcement to decide whether an observed activity or behavior merits investigation. In other words, if you see something you know should not be there or observe behavior that does not seem quite right, say something. To report suspicious activity contact local law enforcement or call 911 and describe in as much detail as possible what you saw, including:

- Who or what you saw;
- When you saw it;
- Where it occurred;
- Why it is suspicious.



FIRST RESPONDER'S TOOLBOX

- Loitering or abandonment of rental vehicles, particularly near sports or entertainment venues, government or military facilities, shopping malls, churches, schools, or other critical infrastructure and key resources.
- Efforts to quickly collect deposits for vehicles reported as stolen.

INVESTIGATIONS: Vehicle rental companies may have information key to solving an investigation of an attack using a rented vehicle, including security surveillance, contact information, pick-up/drop-off locations, destinations, stated purpose, and payment transaction information. Companies should maintain records and contracts for as long as possible consistent with applicable record-retention laws and policies. Considerations include:

- Are company vehicles equipped with vehicle location technologies, such as GPS?
- Do vehicle onboard computers synchronize through WiFi and operator's phone?
- Can the company remotely disable their vehicles?
- Are company vehicles easily visually detected and identified from a distance or from above?
- Are company vehicles inspected for modifications or changes in appearance after being returned or during the term of the rental agreement?
 - Staining, discoloration, or unusual chemical odors in passenger, trunk, or storage compartments;
 - Receipts for hazardous items;
 - Maps, blueprints, brochures, photographs, videos of landmarks, sensitive or critical locations;
 - Components of the vehicle tampered with or altered (panels misaligned, screws or fasteners missing, seats missing or ill-fitting).
- Does the company have a policy or procedure for regularly accounting (visual inspections or inventory) for vehicles and keys?

RESOURCES: This topic is covered in numerous government and industry resources and publications, which should be reviewed and incorporated. The following resources are a good starting point:

- **DHS TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION (TSA):** TSA's mission is to protect the nation's transportation systems to ensure freedom of movement for people and commerce. Resources and materials are available at www.tsa.gov.
- **STATE AND MAJOR URBAN AREA FUSION CENTERS:** Fusion centers operate as focal points for the receipt, analysis, collection, and sharing of threat-related information between federal, state, local, tribal, territorial, and private sector partners. (www.dhs.gov/state-and-major-urban-area-fusion-centers)



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- **NATIONWIDE SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY REPORTING INITIATIVE (NSI):** NSI is a collaborative effort by DHS, FBI, and state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement partners. This initiative provides law enforcement with another tool to help prevent terrorism and other related criminal activity by establishing a national capacity for collecting, documenting, processing, analyzing, and sharing suspicious activity reporting. (nsi.ncirc.gov/)
- **TERRORISM ONLINE TIPS:** Members of the public can report suspected terrorist threats or criminal activity using the online Tips and Public Leads form at tips.fbi.gov/.
- **FBI JOINT TERRORISM TASK FORCE (JTTF):** JTTFs are small cells of highly trained and locally based investigators, analysts, linguists, special weapons and tactics experts, and other specialists from US law enforcement and intelligence agencies. (www.fbi.gov/contact-us/field-offices)
- **FBI NATIONAL TRIPWIRE PROGRAM:** The National Tripwire Program has produced Tripwire cards on Potential Indicators of Terrorist/Criminal Activity related to rental vehicles and vehicle ramming. To learn more about the National Tripwire Program or to obtain a Tripwire card, please contact your local FBI JTTF or the National Tripwire Program (FBITripwire@fbi.gov) for assistance.
- **PARTNERS IN PREVENTION: VEHICLE RENTALS AND VEHICLE RAMMING VIDEO:** FBI, in partnership with DHS and TSA, produced a video on vehicle rentals and vehicle ramming for the Truck Renting and Leasing Association (TRALA) and the American Car Rental Association (ACRA). To access this video, please contact your local FBI JTTF or the FBI National Tripwire Program (FBITripwire@fbi.gov) for assistance.
 - **TRALA** is a voluntary, nonprofit national trade association founded in 1978 to serve as a unified and focused voice for the truck rental and lease industry. (www.trala.org)
 - **ACRA** is an association of the rental car industry for supporting and promoting legislation to benefit the industry. (www.arcaorg.com)
- **TRUCK RENTING AND LEASING SECURITY AWARENESS AND SELF-ASSESSMENT GUIDE:** This guide was prepared by TRALA in coordination with the federal government and can be found at www.trala.org/content.asp?contentid=46.



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PRODUCT FEEDBACK FORM

(U) JCAT MISSION: To improve information sharing and enhance public safety. In coordination with the FBI and DHS, collaborate with other members of the IC to research, produce, and disseminate counterterrorism (CT) intelligence products for federal, state, local, tribal and territorial government agencies and the private sector. Advocate for the CT intelligence requirements and needs of these partners throughout the IC.

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ADDITIONAL COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS, OR QUESTIONS. HOW DOES JCAT MAKE PRODUCTS BETTER?

WHAT TOPICS DO YOU RECOMMEND?
