ProtectUK

Attack methodology: Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs)

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1.IED attacks

Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) are effective weapons and can be delivered to their chosen locations in a number of ways, including by suicide bombers. Suicide bombers may use vehicles or carry their IED concealed on their person, this is called a Person Borne IED (PBIED).

Terrorists generally select their targets to cause mass causalities, infrastructure damage, attract widespread media coverage and/or cause economic and psychological damage to the population.



2. What is an Improvised Explosive Device?

An IED is a bomb which can be made from Homemade Explosives (HME). Although IEDs may be ‘home made’, they can still be as powerful as commercial or military explosives, be sophisticated in their design and be very effective.

IEDs may be delivered using the following methods:

(This list is not exhaustive)

1. Person Borne IED (PBIED)
2. Postal or mail device – often a Victim Operated IED (VOIED)
3. Remote Controlled IED (RCIED)
4. Vehicle Borne IED (VBIED) and Under Vehicle IED (UVIED)

2.1 Person Borne IED (PBIED)

A PBIED or suicide bomber potentially enables an agile and penetrative delivery of a smaller explosive device to a target.

Although there is no definitive physical profile for a suicide bomber, there are various signs that may indicate an individual is carrying a device or conducting reconnaissance.

Examples of such signs may include bulky clothing (suspicious in warm weather conditions), acting nervously (constantly looking around, sweating), and/or loitering in a specific area for extended periods of time.

Report anyone acting suspiciously to the police immediately.

2.2 Postal or mail device – often a Victim Operated IED (VOIED)

Most businesses will receive a large amount of mail and other deliveries and this offers a potentially attractive route into premises for terrorists.

IEDs delivered via the post are discussed specifically within the Mail Handling section of this guidance.

Read more about Mail handling and Mail Screening

2.3 Remote Controlled IED (RCIED)

An RCIED is a remote controlled improvised explosive device which can be initiated wirelessly using a transmitter and receiver this includes radio, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, personal mobile radios, mobile phones, cordless phones etc.

2.4 Vehicle Borne IED (VBIED) and Under Vehicle IED (UVIED)

In comparison to a Person Borne IED, a VBIED may be capable of delivering a large quantity of explosives to a target, causing significant damage.

Read more about Vehicle Bombs

This list is not exhaustive and there are many other ways IEDs may be used.

3. The effects of IEDs

The effects of a detonated IED can be highly destructive. In addition to the initial blast which can be lethal, debris such as broken glass and metal in the form of secondary fragmentation, can cause further injury at a considerable distance away from the centre of the explosion. The longer-term disruption as a result of the blast can last for many weeks, leading to business continuity, economic damage and infrastructure challenges.

If you think your site could be at risk from an IED, there are physical and procedural mitigation measures that can be utilised to help reduce the risk.

For site specific advice, contact your local CTSA.

4. Protective security measures to consider

The variety of protective security measures which may be utilised to strengthen a site against an IED attack are featured throughout this guidance.

The following points and principles may serve as points for further discussion and inform your protective security posture:

- attacks may be preceded by reconnaissance or trial runs. Ensure that any suspicious behaviour is reported to the police
- effectively monitored CCTV systems may deter a terrorist attack or identify planning activity
- ensure no one visits your protected areas without you being sure of their identity, or without proper authority
- use physical barriers to prevent a hostile vehicle from driving into your premises through pedestrian entrances, goods/service yards or underground areas
- deny access to any vehicle that arrives at your goods/service entrances without prior notice and hold vehicles at access control points until you can satisfy yourself that they are genuine

- wherever possible, establish your vehicle access control point at a distance from the protected site, setting up regular patrols and briefing staff to look out for anyone behaving suspiciously

Read more about Physical Security

Read more about Personnel and People Security

Read more about Personal Security

KEYWORDS
ATTACK
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TERRORIST THREAT
PALS GUIDANCE
PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE PLACES
PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE LOCATIONS
SAFETY