

Protecting Fire Department Infrastructure

The threat of terrorism and ongoing terrorist attacks remind us that it is not a matter of if, but when, something like that will happen here in Tennessee. This document contains some information on suspicious activity reporting and protective measures for fire departments to take to help secure the fire department's personnel and assets.

Some Things to Do at the Department Level

- Make sure all fire department personnel know your department's suspicious activity reporting policy. The IAFC's Terrorism and Homeland Security Committee recommends that all fire departments have suspicious activity reporting policies.
- Tell personnel to look for or notice suspicious activity and report it to local law enforcement and possibly others (i.e. TBI Fusion Center) per your suspicious activity reporting policy.
- Maintain situational awareness at the incident scene to ensure firefighter safety, as there could be a secondary attack.
- Make sure all fire department personnel have current fire department identification and remind them to carry their fire department identification while on duty. In the event of an actual event, the identity of first responders may need to be verified.

Some Indicators of Possible Suspicious Activity

Certain activities can be indicators of a future or imminent threat and should be reported promptly:

- False or diversionary emergency calls
- Stolen explosives, fireworks, chemicals, uniforms, access cards, or keys
- Someone dressed in clothing not appropriate to the weather
- Unattended packages, bags, backpack, briefcase, or boxes
- Extended or repeated surveillance of an area or building, including taking pictures or video of facilities, buildings, or infrastructure of infrequently used access points, personnel performing security functions (patrols, badge/vehicle checking), security-related equipment (perimeter fencing, security cameras), etc.
- Deliberate interactions with, or challenges to, installations, personnel, or systems that reveal physical, personnel, or cyber security capabilities
- Someone asking questions about security, shift changes, or operations
- Cars or trucks left in No Parking zones in front of important buildings
- Unauthorized personnel in secure areas or areas off-limits to the public
- Loitering, vandalism, or unusual activities around buildings
- Chemical smells or unusual odors

Reporting Suspicious Activity

- If there is an emergency, call 9-1-1 immediately.
- At the local level, report suspicious activity to local law enforcement by dialing 9-1-1.
- Report suspicious activity to the TBI by phone: 1-877-250-2333.
- Report suspicious activity to the TBI by email: TipsToTBI@tn.gov
- Report suspicious activity to the TBI via a web browser at this link: https://www.tn.gov/safety/topic/report_susp_act

Training

Online suspicious activity reporting (SAR) training for the fire service (and other city departments/government sectors) is available at this link:

https://nsi.ncirc.gov/training_online.aspx

Link to information on the Tennessee Fusion Center:

<https://www.tn.gov/tbi/topic/tennessee-fusion-center>

Protective Measures

Many fire stations are kept in a wide-open, easily accessible condition, such as with the bay doors open and all exterior doors unlocked. When an alarm comes in, it is not unusual for the firefighters to respond and leave the station unsecured. We invite the public into the station for station tours, so kids can see the apparatus, for safety talks, for meetings, etc. A fire station is part of a community's critical infrastructure, but we sometimes make our stations soft targets because we think "that won't happen here," but it can.

- Impress on all fire department personnel that the fire department and its equipment is part of the community's critical infrastructure and is therefore a potential target for terrorism
- Lock the exterior doors to the fire station
- Provide one point-of-entry for the public and keep that door secured unless fire department personnel are present near the door
- Keep the bay doors closed unless fire department personnel are working in the bay
- Install cameras and security/alarm systems to monitor ingress and egress, especially if the fire station is not staffed 24/7
- Escort all visitors to the fire station at all times: never let someone wander around inside your fire station
- Establish public and restricted areas of the station. Locker rooms, the bedhall, storage areas, etc. should be restricted areas
- When not being worn, keep uniforms secured in lockers in a part of the station restricted from public access

- Keep unused turnouts secured, and have an identification/inventory system on all turnout gear so it can be identified if lost/stolen and recovered
- Report promptly to law enforcement the theft/loss of fire department uniforms, turnouts, badges, ID cards, radios, etc.
- Report suspicious activity, such as someone asking about the fire department's capabilities, photographing the fire station, apparatus, etc. that go beyond typical curiosity about the fire department. For example, someone may ask "what frequency are you on?", but if they ask "where's your repeater located," that goes beyond curiosity.

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