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Transit Infrastructure Security Working Group

Random Counterterrorism Measures on Transit Systems

Abstract: This recommended practice describes the flexible and scalable application of security measures, including patrol and visibility tactics, to deter potential terrorists from committing attacks on transit systems.

Keywords: counterterrorism, antiterrorism, patrols, security, transit

Summary: Random counterterrorism measures (RCM) are a tactic that transit agencies can deploy to deter attacks on their systems by creating uncertainty in the planning process used by potential terrorists. These types of security measures are flexible and scalable in nature and can be conducted alongside other security tactics, as well as implemented as part of an agency's response to a heightened security posture. As applicable, transit agencies, law enforcement and/or other security personnel should collaborate and implement appropriate RCM.

Scope and purpose: This document offers information on the use of RCM in transit environments. It is applicable to all transit agencies, regardless of size or mode. It is not intended to substitute for regulatory or national homeland security–related requirements. This document offers information to assist transit agencies in their implementation of RCM within a larger set of security measures.

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Introduction

This introduction is not part of APTA SS-SRM-RP-006-11, Rev. 1, "Random Counterterrorism Measures on Transit Systems.

APTA recommends the use of this document by:

- individuals or organizations that operate rail transit systems;
- individuals or organizations that contract with others for the operation of rail transit systems; and
- individuals or organizations that influence how rail transit systems are operated (including but not limited to consultants, designers and contractors).

Random Counterterrorism Measures on Transit Systems

1. Background

Random counterterrorism measures (RCM) describe the random use of different protection measures to secure people, materials, structures and systems.

In the national defense environment, forces may implement RCM to protect installations against a specific threat, increase general threat awareness among personnel, or exercise different facility protection conditions. For example, a military installation may conduct random vehicle inspections one day, deploy a perimeter fence line the next day and restrict access to a series of gates the following week. These random measures serve as a deterrent against terrorist attack, as their unpredictable nature makes pre-planning difficult.

Random counterterrorism measures are also a long-standing law enforcement tactic. Law enforcement and security personnel often use random, or seemingly random, patrol patterns to impose a similar deterrent effect on criminal behavior and terrorist behavior. Depending on various factors, patrols may involve the use of different strategies and target specific types of criminality or social disorder. These tactics are designed to inhibit attempts by potential adversaries from discerning patterns that can be used to evade detection.

2. RCM application in a transit environment

Transit agencies and their law enforcement/public safety partners can use RCM to protect transit infrastructure and critical systems. To maximize its effect and deterrence value, RCM should be implemented without a discernable pattern, either in terms of selected time, place or other variables. While a sense of randomness is meant to be projected to the public and potential adversaries, such measures are actually assigned in a strategic and/or directed manner to target areas of concern or risk.

While transit agencies may deploy RCM as part of their day-to-day activities, these measures may also be used to increase security visibility in response to National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS) alerts, security threats and/or trends, or in conjunction with planned and unplanned special events. To supplement RCM, transit agencies should continue to use or consider using additional physical protective measures. Transit agencies should also be cognizant of insider threats when deploying resources.

As a component of deploying transit system security activities in a nondiscernable manner, transit agencies may consider employing seemingly random overlapping of multiple activities at transit locations. This can provide a force multiplier effect to other security efforts and generate the appearance of an extensive official presence at transit facilities. Overlapping coverage can also incorporate activities at facilities and areas adjacent to the transit facility to project a comprehensive display of security.

3. RCM activities by role

RCM tactics, including the personnel and equipment involved, can vary significantly. They can involve law enforcement, transit agency security and other transit agency personnel, both independently of one another

and in a coordinated manner. This variance helps heighten the desired sense of randomness and unpredictability.

3.1 Law enforcement

Law enforcement RCM tactics may include:

- Deploying uniformed law enforcement officers (LEOs) in fixed posts at transit facilities, including:
  - entry points of transit facilities;
  - train facilities (e.g., stations, platforms, mezzanines, waiting areas, vending areas);
  - tunnel portal locations, especially underwater tunnel portals;
  - bus stops;
  - critical facility locations;
  - important non-public areas of transit infrastructure (e.g., train yards, bus depots, bus storage yards, power sub-stations);
  - passenger congregation points (e.g., park-and-rides, transit centers and waiting areas);
  - revenue sale locations and ticket offices; and
  - customer, employee and transit vehicle parking areas.
- Deploying uniformed LEOs boarding and riding transit vehicles, including:
  - boarding and riding trains and buses on either solo patrol or in teams of multiple officers (e.g., one LEO in each train car of a single train); and
  - boarding and exiting a succession of vehicles (e.g., riding to the next stop and getting off to sweep that location while waiting for the next train or bus) to create a sense of police omnipresence among riders.
- Deploying surge teams composed of uniformed officers blanketing an area, including:
  - fixing officers throughout a major hub;
  - conducting multiple train order maintenance sweep (TOMS) inspections;
  - conducting multiple station sweep inspections; and
  - leveraging specialized patrol personnel, such as canine units and bombs squads.
- Conducting directed patrols of transit facilities by additional law enforcement personnel, including:
  - law enforcement specialized units, such as canine units, aviation patrol, bomb squads, and special weapons and tactics (SWAT) teams, in and around transit facilities;
  - law enforcement crime prevention personnel;
  - law enforcement recruitment personnel;
  - plainclothes law enforcement placed back from uniformed personnel to scan for pre-operative surveillance activity or other suspicious activity in response to the uniformed presence; and
  - uniformed auxiliary staff.
- Conducting bus inspection patrols.
- Using diverse modes of deployment (e.g., aviation, bicycle, foot, patrol car, en masse via buses).
- Implementing checkpoint screening of passenger carry-on items.
- Establishing command posts and using command post vehicles.
- Parking police vehicles at transit facilities.

3.2 Transit security personnel

Some transit agencies have in-house and/or contracted uniformed security. Depending on the services they are legally permitted or contractually obligated to provide, these individuals may supplement law enforcement RCM tactics or provide the following support:

- Conducting inspections of official, employee or third-party vehicles entering the property (e.g., opening trunks, using mirrors to view undercarriages).

- Conducting inspections of revenue and nonrevenue vehicles leaving transit facilities to enter service (e.g., yards, depots).
- Conducting inspections of baggage and containers carried into the property (e.g., backpacks, purses, duffel bags).
- Assigning additional fixed posts.
- Conducting highly visible patrols of property areas and perimeters (e.g., patrolling in a marked car with flashing overhead lights).
- Testing property alarm systems to ensure that warning devices activate and/or alert.
- Strictly requiring that employees present identification and keep it visible while on property.
- Strictly requiring that employees display agency-issued parking permits when using employee parking areas.

3.3 Transit system employees

RCM activities need not be limited to staff directly involved in security work; regular transit system employees may also participate. By instituting random and changing variations to their everyday work routines, transit system employees can help disrupt pre-operative surveillance. Some examples may include:

- Conducting normal inspections of critical infrastructure systems, such as track areas, right-of-way and power systems, in a manner that prevents identification of set routines or patterns.
- Assigning additional uniformed employees to transit facilities, such as stations and terminals.
- Having employees increase their visibility to the public by wearing orange reflective safety vests.
- Having employees hand out safety and security materials to passengers (e.g., public awareness campaigns or evacuation instructions).
- Increasing the use of public communications in transit facilities (e.g., public address systems, digital sign messaging).
- Manually stopping or limiting access to conveyances (e.g., escalators, elevators).
- Deploying employees not normally working in public view (e.g., administrative managers) to be visible in public areas of transit facilities.

3.4 Transit passengers

Transit passenger awareness is a key component of any security plan. RCM may include strategies to increase passenger involvement in identifying and reporting unsafe or suspicious circumstances. Successful programs such as the national “If You See Something, Say Something®” campaign can be leveraged with additional messaging and outreach to passengers to encourage vigilance. Agencies can also use social media channels or dedicated transit security smartphone applications to increase awareness during times of heightened security in support of RCMs.

3.5 Federal, state, local and private sector partners

To further enhance RCM deployment, transit agencies and their law enforcement providers can consider leveraging other federal, state, local and private sector partners to deploy and/or implement RCM. This is particularly important for smaller organizations with less staffing and resources, as well as those transit agencies with a scope of operations spanning multiple jurisdictions. Generally, pre-identifying partners, developing relationships, and forming mutual aid agreements facilitates these efforts. Partners can include the following:

- state National Guards
- local, state and federal law enforcement (e.g., Transportation Security Administration teams, including Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response teams, canine teams, screening personnel)
- state and local emergency management (e.g., for grant funding)

- local transit providers
- local emergency response personnel
- local code enforcement personnel (e.g., uniformed parking enforcement agents inspecting parking areas adjacent to transit facility entrances or transit commuter parking lots)
- regional transit security working groups
- security personnel of adjacent/co-located properties
- other local, state and federal safety and security personnel

4. Contingency planning

Transit agencies may conduct RCM for contingency planning purposes or to practice responding to threats or NTAS alerts. RCM preparedness and planning activities may include the following:

- Instructing employees conducting RCM on security- and emergency response-related information for the locations where they are deploying.
- Using existing agency NTAS response plans as a guideline for potential RCM activity.
- Using RCM involving multiple agencies as an opportunity to practice National Incident Management System/Incident Command System activities.
- Practicing mobilization response on an intra- and interagency basis and using the assembled personnel to conduct extensive or targeted RCM activities.
- Using RCM to exercise and evaluate emergency response activities.

Related APTA standards

APTA SS-SRM-RP-012-09, "Conducting Revenue Vehicle Security Inspections"
APTA SS-SRM-WP-002-10, "White Paper on Random Inspections of Carry-On Items in Transit Systems"

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Definitions

aviation patrol: The use of helicopters and/or fixed-wing airplanes by law enforcement to patrol an area.

bus inspection patrol: A law enforcement and/or security officer assigned to patrol bus routes and buses through boarding and riding buses, inspecting arriving buses, or patrolling a bus hub.

canine detection screening: Utilization of canine teams to conduct checkpoint screening and inspecting for explosives.

canine patrol: Utilization of canine teams to conduct visible patrols on rail and bus facilities and vehicles.

checkpoint screening: Screening of people or carry-on items selected using a systematic and non-arbitrary methodology (such as every person with an item, every second person with an item, every fourth person with an item, etc.), which allows for no selection discretion on the part of screeners.

critical facility: A location of a transit system where important system infrastructure is present, such as power substations, radio equipment, control centers, gas storage tanks, etc.

directed patrols: A law enforcement and/or security officer assignment to patrol specific transit locations, including fully inspecting all areas of locations, interacting with employees, and giving special attention to critical facilities present at such locations.

fixed post: A law enforcement and/or security officer assignment to a narrowly specified location for a period of time. This can be a foot post (e.g., an entry point to a bus terminal, at a passenger waiting room area or on a train station platform) or a marked or unmarked vehicle parked at a specific location (e.g., blocking a driveway or parked in front of a critical facility).

random counterterrorism measures (RCM): Variation of security routines, which can include the seemingly random application of higher level security methods, particularly those that may be actually utilized during heightened awareness periods or in response to incidents. While a sense of randomness is meant to be projected to the public and potential adversaries, such measures are frequently assigned in a strategic and/or directed manner to target areas of concern.

surge teams: The use of multiple law enforcement and/or security officers to blanket a location with a sudden influx, or surge, of uniformed personnel. This can include the deployment of personnel via marked vehicles (with flashing turret lights) to a series of locations over a short period of time or by utilizing team patrols on buses and trains to various transit facilities.

special weapons and tactics (SWAT) teams: Generic term for law enforcement teams trained to utilize special equipment, skills and tactics, such as wearing tactical armor and carrying rifles.

train order maintenance sweep (TOMS): A tactic involving placing a team of uniformed law enforcement and/or security officers along a train platform, where they are spread out and can simultaneously step into each car of a train to conduct a visual inspection; during such activity, train crews are directed to make a public address announcement that the train will be momentarily delayed for a security inspection (which further enhances the awareness of riders of the TOMS team presence). A TOMS team can remain fixed at one station inspecting all arriving trains (especially effective at a hub location) or rove from station to station.

underwater tunnel portal: A location of a transit system, primarily rail, where access can be gained into underwater tunnel infrastructure. This is typically the end of a platform at a station prior to the underwater tunnel, as well as underwater tunnel emergency exit locations.

Abbreviations and acronyms

LEO law enforcement officer
NATSA North American Transportation Services Association
NTAS National Terrorism Advisory System
RCM random counterterrorism measures
SWAT special weapons and tactics
TOMS train order maintenance sweeps

Document history

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