Random Counterterrorism Measures on Transit Systems

Abstract: This *Recommended Practice* describes a modular, scalable security measure through random patrol and visibility tactics to create uncertainty in the planning process used by potential terrorists and for deterring possible attacks on bus and rail transit systems.

Keywords: counterterrorism, patrols, security, transit

Summary: Random counterterrorism measures (RCM) should be considered a tactic in the toolbox of security measures that can be utilized to create uncertainty in the planning process used by potential terrorists and for deterring possible attacks. It falls within the area of providing visible and unpredictable security measures, as recommended by the TSA and other organizations. These types of security measures are modular and scalable in nature and can be conducted alongside other security tactics, as well as implemented as part of an agency's response to heightened security levels. These types of measures can be conducted by transit agencies, as well as by law enforcement agencies.

Scope and purpose: This document offers information for the use of random counterterrorism measures (RCM) in transit applications. 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.

Contents

1. Random counterterrorism measures

As commonly described in military doctrine and planning, random counterterrorism measures, or RCM, are defined as the random use of different force protection measures at a specific installation. A random measure might be to conduct random vehicle inspections at a gate over a period of several hours. Emergency response units or a rapid-reaction force may rehearse deployment to a perimeter fence line, or a gate might be temporarily closed. Random counterterrorism measures are used to exercise and execute protective measures for different facility protection conditions. Additionally, alternating the security measures randomly increases the threat awareness of troops and personnel and confuses terrorists who might be watching the installation. These random measures serve as a deterrent against terrorist attack, since the terrorist has a harder time predicting unit routines and vulnerabilities. Similarly, RCM are conducted at transit agencies to increase security and decrease vulnerabilities from terrorist threats.

The use of RCM is similar in theme to the long-standing use of random, or seemingly random, patrol patterns by police and security personnel. This is commonly practiced by law enforcement agencies to impose a similar deterrent effect on criminal behavior and can involve the use of different patrol strategies and the targeting of specific types of criminality or social disorder. Both police and security utilize this tactic to inhibit attempts by potential criminals from discerning patrol patterns that they can learn in order to evade detection during the commission of crimes.

This tactical concept can be utilized by transit agencies and their law enforcement providers to protect transit infrastructure and critical systems. To maximize the effectiveness and deterrence value, RCM should be implemented without a discernable pattern, either in terms of the measures selected, time, place or other variables. RCM, at a minimum, should consist of the random implementation of higher security measures in consideration of potential terrorist capabilities. While a sense of randomness is meant to be projected to the public and potential adversaries, such measures are primarily assigned in a strategic and/or directed manner to target areas of concern. Use of other physical security measures should be considered to supplement RCM. Finally, these measures may be used to increase security visibility in response to HSAS changes or in conjunction with special events (which may have security implications).

As a component of deploying transit system security activities in a non-discernable manner, consideration should be made for employing the seemingly random overlapping of multiple official 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 overall area display of authority.

> **NOTE:** In some risk assessments, nearby off-system facilities and areas can raise the risk for the adjacent transit facilities.

2. RCM on transit systems

RCM tactics can involve the deployment of various types of personnel and equipment in a variety of manners. This can involve the use of law enforcement personnel, transit agency security personnel and other transit agency personnel. These tactics can involve the use of such personnel independently of one another or in a coordinated manner. Varying the appearance of personnel deployments helps to heighten the desired sense of randomness and unpredictability observed by anyone watching law enforcement or transit agency employee behavior and who may be considering terrorist activity at such locations.

2.1 Law enforcement

Law enforcement deployments can involve such tactics as the following:

1. Uniformed law enforcement officers (LEOs) at fixed posts at transit facilities. Some examples for deployment could include placing LEOs at:
    a. entry points of transit facilities;
    b. train facilities (e.g., stations, platforms, mezzanines, waiting areas, vending areas);
    c. tunnel portal locations, especially underwater tunnel portals (which have been identified by FTA and TSA as a high-priority security issue);
    d. bus stops;
    e. critical facility locations;
    f. important non-public areas of the transit infrastructure (e.g., train yards, bus depots, bus storage yards, power sub-stations);
    g. passenger congregation points, park-and-rides, transit centers and waiting areas;
    h. revenue sale locations and ticket offices; and
    i. customer, employee and bus parking areas.
2. Parking of police vehicles at transit facilities with overhead lights flashing.
3. Directed patrols of transit facilities.
4. Uniformed LEOs boarding and riding transit vehicles, including:
    a. 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
    b. 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.
5. Bus inspection patrols.
6. Train order maintenance sweeps (TOMS).
7. SWAT teams in and around transit facilities.
8. Surge teams (in which a team of uniformed officers blanket an area).
9. Checkpoint screening of passenger carry-on items at fare collection points.
10. Law enforcement specialized units, such as canine and aviation patrol, bomb squad, etc.
11. Establishing command posts and using command post vehicles (which can also be utilized to practice NIMS procedures during larger RCM deployments or those involving multiple agencies).
12. Law enforcement crime prevention personnel.
13. Law enforcement recruitment personnel.
14. Plainclothes law enforcement personnel placed back from uniformed personnel to observe if anyone is exhibiting evidence of preoperative surveillance activity or other suspicious activity in response to the uniformed presence.
15. Diverse modes of deployment (e.g., aviation, bicycle, foot, patrol car, en masse via buses).
16. Uniformed auxiliary police personnel.

2.2 RCM examples

Some examples of programs and initiatives conducted by police agencies on mass transit systems include the following:

1. **Carry-on screening.** The use of transit carry-on screening has increased throughout the nation and has been conducted on rail, bus and ferry facilities. Amtrak, Boston (MBTA), New York City (all transit facilities), NY-NJ Port Authority (PATH), Indianapolis (IndyGo) and Los Angeles (Metro) are some of the jurisdictions which have utilized this tactic. Other systems, such as in Washington, D.C. (WMATA), have instituted a policy framework for conducting transit carry-on screening, without

having conducted it in practice yet. Some jurisdictions have been able to leverage the use of TSA personnel to work in conjunction with local law enforcement for this purpose.

2. **Surge teams.** This is a general tactic involving mobile teams of uniformed officers who will flood an area. This is a tactic that is easily scalable to fit deployment strategies and personnel resources. In transit, this can include fixing officers throughout a major hub, conducting multiple TOMS inspections, sweeping through a station en masse inspecting every area of it rapidly, boarding multiple trains and buses, etc. Surges can also be varied to include specialized patrol personnel, such as canine units, bombs squads, etc. In the New York City subway, police surge teams frequently range in deployment from a single team of one sergeant and eight officers to four such teams overseen by a lieutenant.

3. **Police train patrol initiatives.** During several heightened alert periods, the governors of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut signed executive orders to provide for the assignment of state police to ride and patrol commuter trains between the three states. These orders also provided for an inter-state extension of police jurisdiction for those officers.

4. **TSA VIPR (Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response).** VIPR teams are comprised of federal air marshals, surface transportation security inspectors, transportation security officers, behavior detection officers and explosives detection canine teams. They work in conjunction with local law enforcement in the transportation sector to help introduce the element of unpredictability into security activities. They have been used throughout the nation on multiple transit modes, including rail, bus and ferry facilities.

5. **Operation ALERTS (Allied Law Enforcement for Rail and Transit Security).** This is a security surge operation coordinated by Amtrak PD and TSA involving multiple coordinated security activities such as heightened station patrols, increased security presence onboard trains, explosives detection canine sweeps, and random passenger bag inspections at unannounced locations. Operation ALERTS has been scaled up to levels involving 13 states and more than 100 participating agencies.

6. **Mobile security teams.** These teams are utilized by Amtrak PD to patrol stations and trains on an undisclosed, unpredictable basis. Mobile security teams also conduct random screening of passengers and inspection of their carry-on items and patrol trains. These teams consist of specially trained uniformed Amtrak Police, special counterterrorism agents and K-9 units.

7. **Multi-Agency Super Surge (MASS).** Conducted in the New York City area, MASS drills are a multiagency effort to provide a massive uniformed security presence and range of security activities throughout the regional transit agencies. MASS drills usually involve Amtrak PD, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey PD, the NYPD, MTA PD, the NJ Transit PD, TSA, and the Army National Guard. In addition to visibility, MASS drills are used as training and coordination exercises for the participating agencies.

8. **Operation Torch and Operation Hercules.** Conducted in New York City by NYPD Emergency Services Unit officers (in SWAT mode) with heavy weapons, teamed with canine units, special vehicles, etc., Operation Torch is specifically dedicated to transit use, while Operation Hercules targets high-profile and iconic facilities, including adjacent transit facilities at such locations.

9. **CRV (critical response vehicle) surge.** Conducted in New York City by NYPD, CRV surges normally include the assignment of a large (up to 76 cars with two officers each and overhead field management), highly visible, mobile surge of personnel and patrol cars targeting critical infrastructure, as well as high-profile and iconic facilities, including adjacent transit locations at such locations.

10. **Blue TIDE (Terrorism Identification and Deterrence Effort).** This effort is conducted in the Washington, D.C., area by WMATA's Metro Transit Police Department as a high-visibility show of force used to deter terrorism. Blue Tide operations can involve officers from a number of MTPD units, including their anti-terrorism, special response and K-9 explosives detection teams, Metrobus enforcement and criminal investigations divisions, bomb technicians, emergency management, mobile and foot patrols, auto theft unit, bicycle squad, crime prevention, and police communications.

11. Operation ZEUS (Zone Enforced Unified Sweeps). Conducted in Maryland by the Maryland Transit Authority Police Force, Operation ZEUS exercises involve a large show of force conducting security sweeps and emergency drills to target-harden the transit system and help guard against terrorism and criminal activity. Operation ZEUS exercises are commonly done in conjunction with other agencies, such as TSA, Amtrak PD and local police.

2.3 Transit system security personnel

Some transit agencies utilize uniformed security personnel in the public areas of their systems. In such cases, transit agencies may be able to use security personnel to conduct some of the aforementioned law enforcement tactics. These tactics can also be applied to functional areas more commonly staffed by security personnel, which primarily involve access control and patrols of non-public areas of transit agency properties, such as office facilities, train yards, bus depots, etc. Additional tactics that could be considered include the following:

1. Conducting inspections of vehicles entering the property (e.g., opening trunks, using mirrors to view undercarriages); this can be applied to official, employee and third-party vehicles.
2. Conducting inspections of revenue and nonrevenue vehicles leaving transit facility to enter service (e.g., yards, depots).
3. Conducting inspections of baggage and containers carried into the property (e.g., backpacks, purses, duffel bags).
4. Assigning additional fixed posts.
5. Conducting highly visible patrols property areas and perimeters (e.g., patrolling in a marked car with flashing overhead lights).
6. Testing property alarm systems to ensure that warning devices activate and/or central station monitoring is alerted.
7. Strictly requiring property employees to present identification and to keep it visible while on the property.
8. Strictly requiring property employees using employee parking areas to display agency issued parking permits on their cars.

2.4 Transit system employees

Transit agency employees can also be a source of RCM. The RCM premise of disrupting preoperative surveillance by engaging in random and changing variations to employee activities can be utilized by employees who are not directly involved in security work but whose everyday work routines can be applied in a tactical manner from a security standpoint. Some examples include the following:

1. Conducting normal inspections of critical infrastructure systems, such as track areas, right-of-way and power systems, can be increased or conducted in a manner that prevents identification of set routines or patterns.
2. Assigning additional uniformed employees to transit facilities, such as train stations and bus terminals and/or having employees increase their visibility to the public by wearing orange reflective safety vests.
3. Having employees actively hand out safety and security material to passengers (e.g., "If you see something, say something" campaigns or evacuation instructions).
4. Increasing the use of public communications on transit facilities (e.g., public address systems, posted materials).
5. Using employees not normally working in the public view (e.g., administrative managers and other employees) to be visibly present in public areas of transit facilities by wearing reflective safety vests.

2.5 Use of other agencies

In order to further enhance the ability to conduct RCM, transit agencies and their law enforcement providers can consider the possibility of leveraging the use of agency personnel from other official entities to help develop a show of force. This is particularly important for agencies with smaller personnel resources or with a scope of operations in multiple jurisdictions. Generally this can be most easily accomplished by first developing agreements with local resources. This can involve the following such personnel:

1. Local and neighboring law enforcement and first response personnel.
2. Local code enforcement personnel (e.g., uniformed parking enforcement agents inspecting parking areas adjacent to transit facility entrances or transit commuter parking lots).
3. State National Guard personnel.
4. TSA personnel (e.g., VIPR teams, canine teams, screening personnel).
5. Other local, state and federal safety and security personnel.

2.6 Security personnel of properties adjacent/co-located to transit facilities

Government buildings and iconic structures are themselves potential targets, which can make adjacent transit facilities targets as well. For example, the World Trade Center attacks (1993 and 2001) destroyed all or part of adjacent subway stations. Further, transit facilities can also be targets if they are located on a line or route that serves such buildings and structures. For example, the Tokyo sarin gas attack (1995) specifically targeted lines that served the Japanese government and legislative offices. More comprehensive and sophisticated RCM could involve the simultaneous activity of RCM at adjacent facilities by their security personnel and law enforcement at the same time they are being conducted on the transit facility.

3. Interagency coordination

Interagency coordination can be utilized for RCM purposes by potentially leveraging personnel from multiple agencies. This can be especially important for smaller agencies in helping them create RCM capabilities. For example, Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) groups that are in place to support the planning, equipment, training and exercise needs of high-threat, high-density urban areas around the country may be able to assist in RCM activities by using them as an opportunity to practice response and training. State and local emergency management offices can also play a role in a similar way. Additionally, the TSA Transit Security Grant Program (TSGP) provides funding grants for visible/unpredictable deterrence activities, such as canine and mobile screening teams, and VIPR teams.

4. Contingency planning

RCM may be conducted in the context of potential contingency response to incidents and events or to practice HSAS alert level activities. This can include the following:

1. Instructing employees conducting RCM about security and emergency response related information for the locations where they are deploying.
2. Utilizing existing agency HSAS response plans as a guideline for potential RCM activity by employees.
3. Utilizing RCM involving multiple agencies as an opportunity to practice NIMS.
4. Practicing mobilization response on an intra- and inter-agency basis and using the assembled personnel to conduct extensive or brief targeted RCM activities.
5. Using RCM to practice potential heightened awareness or emergency response activities. This can be helpful in allowing law enforcement, security and front-line employees to engage in and practice activities that they may be called upon to do in a real situation. In addition to providing a dry run of various types of security activity, it also allows for agencies to assess them in order to prioritize their potential use for actual incidents.

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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.

target hardening. Actions taken to create a strong, visible defense around a facility to deter or delay an attack; opportunity reduction.

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.

Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response (VIPR) team. A TSA initiative, conducted with local law enforcement, in which TSA personnel comprised of a mix of federal air marshals, surface transportation security inspectors, transportation security officers, behavior detection officers and explosives detection canine teams assist in providing highly visible coverage at transit facilities.

Abbreviations and acronyms

ALERTS   Allied Law Enforcement for Rail and Transit Security
Amtrak PD   Amtrak Police Department
CRV   critical response vehicle
DHS   Department of Homeland Security
HSAS   Homeland Security Advisory System
IndyGo   Indianapolis Public Transportation Corporation
K-9   canine
LEO   law enforcement officer
MASS   Multi-Agency Super Surge
MBTA   Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority
MBTA PD Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority Police Department
Metro   Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
MTPD   Metro Transit Police Department
NIMS   National Incident Management System
NYCT   New York City Transit

NYPD	City of New York Police Department
PATH	Port Authority Trans-Hudson rail
PD	police department
RCM	random counterterrorism measures
SWAT	special weapons and tactics
TIDE	Terrorism Identification And Deterrence Effort
TOMS	train order maintenance sweeps
TSA	Transportation Security Administration
TSGP	Transit Security Grant Program
UASI	Urban Areas Security Initiative
VIPR	visible intermodal prevention and response
WMATA	Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
ZEUS	Zone Enforced Unified Sweeps