Soft Target Hardening
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What is a “soft target”

“....a person or thing that is relatively unprotected or vulnerable, especially to military or terrorist attack.”
- Theater
- Mall
- Concert Hall
- Church
- Sports venue
- Restaurant/Bar
- Vacation destination

The intent of attacks on soft targets is not only "to kill or injure" but also "to generate terror, create chaos, and intimidate" the public.
Recent Soft Target Attacks

Orlando, FL – Pulse Nightclub June 12th 2016
49 killed – 53 injured
Recent Soft Target Attacks

Brussels, Belgium – Brussels Airport and Malbeek Metro Station
March 22nd, 2016

32 killed – 300 injured
Recent Soft Target Attacks

Paris, France – Various locations November 15th 2015
130 killed – 368 injured
Recent Soft Target Attacks

Boston, MA – Boston Marathon - April 15th 2013

3 killed – 264 injured
Recent Soft Target Attacks

Aurora, CO – Century 16 Movie Theaters - July 20th, 2012

12 killed – 70 injured
Recent Soft Target Attacks

Virginia Polytechnic Institute Blacksburg, VA – April 17th, 2007

32 killed – 17 Injured
Other soft targets
Soft Target Attacks

What do these locations and events have in common?

People feel safe at soft targets

Entertainment

Community feeling

Escape everyday world

People want to be there
Why Terrorist Focus on Soft Targets?

• Easier, cheaper, short planning cycle
• Increased likelihood of success
• Success = Credibility
• Recruiting value
• Proof of viability
• As a group’s last gasp
• Backed into a corner
• Test a new strategy, tactic or weapon
Why Terrorist Focus on Soft Targets?

• Fundraising through kidnapping, hostage taking
• Quickly damage a market
• Delegitimize a government – can’t protect its people
• Get the government to the negotiation table
• Cause political instability during an election
• Attain global media coverage
• Target rich environment
• Psychological fear
Assessing Soft Target Vulnerabilities

Physical Vulnerabilities

• Access control
  • Unrestricted public access
  • Unrestricted access to areas adjacent to assets
• Unprotected HVAC systems
• Building design
• Building Location
  • Environmental setting
  • Adjacent areas (streets, parking facilities, etc.)
Assessing Soft Target Vulnerabilities
Access Control
Assessing Soft Target Vulnerabilities
Environmental Setting
Assessing Soft Target Vulnerabilities

• Dependencies
  • Utilities
  • Supply Chains
• Redundancies
  • Independent backups
  • Pre-planned alternate suppliers and chains
• Resiliency
  • Approach to inventory
  • Continuity of Operations plans
Assessing Soft Target Vulnerabilities
Cyber Security
Assessing Vulnerabilities

• Does your organization have effective internal security procedures?
• What is the law enforcement presence in your area?
• What is the hardness, level of blast protection, etc. of your facilities?
• How accessible (security presence, access control, id badges, metal detection buffer zones, fences, etc.) is your facility?
• Are your assets and/or its potential recognized as a symbol?
• What level of public access is necessary for you to function?
• Can you control high-speed vehicle approaches to your facility?

Source: FBI –Terrorism Vulnerability Self-Assessment Checklist
Types of Vulnerabilities

**Static Vulnerability:**

a vulnerability that is relatively insensitive to the nature of the threat.

People waiting to enter the convention center

**Dynamic Vulnerability:**

a vulnerability that has characteristics that vary based on the threat.

Protest Outside Convention Center
“Lone Wolf” Attacks

- A ‘lone wolf’ is the name for an individual with no known links to terrorism, who may or not have become radicalized as a terrorist, and is not on law enforcement’s radar.

- A lone wolf is extremely dangerous.

- A radicalized lone wolf is far more dangerous!

- One of most dangerous types of criminals in the United States. Why?
How Can We Protect Ourselves from a Soft Target Attack?

360 Burglars said…

Perception of Effectiveness of Burglary Deterrents According to Burglars:
% of sample identifying factors that would cause them to avoid a target
(N=360)

Most Effective Deterrents

- Steel bars
- Dog inside
- Car in driveway
- People walking nearby
- Limited escape route
- Traffic nearby
- Cameras / Surveillance
- Seeing neighbors
- Alarm
- Noise inside
- Officer nearby
- People inside
How Can We Protect Ourselves from a Soft Target Attack?

Dr. Martin Gill’s research of murders on death row:
• Why criminals choose their targets - because they are easy!

• CCTV does not affect the way violent actors commit their offenses, in fact, may escalate their actions

• More concerned about being stopped by people than any type of technology

• Favor large, bulky security guards since they can be outrun

• The decision to shoot and kill a lone security guard actually comes easy - eliminates the one key piece of evidence

• Seeing the potential crime scene through the eyes of a criminal is invaluable
How Can We Protect Ourselves from a Soft Target Attack?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vY4_8tbpi3c
Soft Target Attack Truths

• Actions cause results.
• Inaction also causes results.
• “Not seen” does not mean “not there”.
• Goal: remove the enemy from the fight before it starts.
• Actions are not universally applicable, must be tailored.
• The plan is fluid; constantly assess/adjust based on changes in the environment.
• The “fog of war” means you don’t know everything about the threat, there are inescapable unknowables.
• You have no experience with the situation that might occur in your organization; nothing that happened in the past can prepare you.
• Copycat attacks will happen.
Soft Target Emotional Traps

1. **Hopelessness**— There’s nothing we can do about it.

2. **Infallibility**— It will never happen here.

3. **Inescapability**— If it’s unavoidable, why even try to prevent?

4. **Invulnerability**— It can’t happen to me/us.

5. **Inevitability**— If it’s going to happen anyway, why prepare?
Crisis Management Training

- Who should actively participate

- Stakeholders internal/external

- Understanding that the roles you THOUGHT you had are NOT THE ROLES YOU WILL HAVE

- Title defines the role not the individual

- Good managers may NOT BE GOOD CRISIS MANAGERS

- THE LOUDEST PERSON MAY NOT BE THE BEST PERSON IN THE CRISIS

- USE ALL THE STRENGTHS of your TEAM - There is no ‘I’ in TEAM

- Practice. Practice. Practice.
Crisis Management Training

- EXERCISES are not “plans” for failure or trickery
- Exercises that are well designed are LEARNING tools
- Make the objectives reasonable and understandable
- Identify opportunities for improvement
- SIMPLE CHANGES CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE - CRAWL, WALK, RUN
Crisis Management Training

- Exercises: practice response from desktop exercises, to realistic events all the way to “simulator training”

- Establish a command center or a hold room with computers, phones, water and supplies, first aid kit, checklists; evacuation point

- Be prepared on social media – craft the message

- Red Teaming of Soft Targets: outside assessment
What Can Members of the Public Do?

- Be Vigilant
- Be Proactive
- Be Observant
- Be Inquisitive
- If You See Something, Say Something
- Have a Personal Emergency Plan and Practice It
- Notify Law Enforcement
- Join Community Watch Groups
14 Takeaways

1. We all have a psychological blind eye to soft targeting that impacts our preparation.

2. Soft targets are now hit everyday worldwide.

3. With asymmetric threats, what we don’t know is more important than what we know. Encourage use of imagination, instinct.

4. Identify the “Achilles heel” – the weakest, most vulnerable part of your organization.

5. “The human is the best weapons system” – technology not the central part of security.

6. Build your crisis leadership skillset.

7. Security officers and vehicles deter.
14 Takeaways

8. Strongly consider the insider threat.

9. Fight the 5 emotional traps.

10. When budgeting, ask “what is the cost of NOT protecting our facility/people?”

11. Think about vulnerability, not probability.

12. Invest in preparedness, not prediction.

13. Think consequences, not likelihood.

14. Try to strike a balance between normalcy and vigilance.
Takeaways

Soft Target Hardening: Protecting People From Attack
By Dr. Jennifer Hesterman
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Questions

It's QUESTION TIME!!