



Shopping Malls

The United States has more than 46,000 shopping malls nationwide, ranging in size from small open-air neighborhood “strip” shopping centers containing fewer than 10,000 square feet (ft²) of store area to super-regional malls with more than 1 million ft².



Potential Indicators of Terrorist Activity

Terrorists have a wide variety of weapons and tactics available to achieve their objectives. Specific threats of most concern to shopping malls include:

- Improvised explosive devices
- Arson
- Chemical/biological/radiological agents
- Small arms attack

Terrorist activity indicators are observable anomalies or incidents that may precede a terrorist attack. Indicators of an imminent attack requiring immediate action may include the following:

- Persons in crowded areas (e.g., mall common areas, food courts) wearing unusually bulky clothing that might conceal suicide explosives; weapons (e.g., automatic rifle) may also be concealed under their clothing
- Unattended vehicles illegally parked near mall buildings or places where large numbers of patrons gather
- Unattended packages (e.g., backpacks, briefcases, boxes) that might contain explosives
- Unauthorized access to heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) areas; indications of unusual substances near air intakes

Indicators of potential surveillance by terrorists include:

- Persons using or carrying video/camera/observation equipment over an extended period
- Persons discovered with shopping mall maps, photos, or diagrams with facilities highlighted
- Persons parking, standing, or loitering in the same area over a multiple-day period with no apparent reasonable explanation
- Mall personnel being questioned off-site about practices pertaining to the mall
- Employees changing working behavior or working more irregular hours
- Persons observed or reported to be observing mall receipts or deliveries
- A noted pattern or series of false alarms requiring a response by law enforcement or emergency services
- Unfamiliar cleaning crews or other contract workers
- An increase in buildings being left unsecured
- An increase in threats from unidentified sources
- Unusual or unannounced maintenance activities in the vicinity of the mall
- Sudden losses or thefts of guard force equipment

Common Vulnerabilities

The following are key common vulnerabilities of shopping malls:

- Unrestricted public access
- Large number of access points
- Unrestricted access to peripheral areas, such as parking lots
- Unrestricted access to areas adjacent to buildings
- Access by suppliers, vendors, and maintenance workers to nonpublic areas
- Limited employee background checks
- Limited security force
- Lack of exercises for emergency plans
- Unprotected HVAC systems and utility services
- Building designs that are not security oriented
- Multiple locations to place explosives or hazardous agents

Protective Measures

Protective measures include equipment, personnel, and procedures designed to protect a facility against threats and to mitigate the effects of an attack. Protective measures for shopping malls include:

- **Planning and Preparedness**
 - Develop a comprehensive security plan and emergency response plan
 - Conduct regular exercises of the plans
 - Maintain constant awareness of current threat condition and available intelligence information
 - Develop policies and procedures for dealing with hoaxes and false alarms
 - Establish liaison and regular communication with local law enforcement and emergency responders
- **Personnel**
 - Conduct background checks on mall employees
 - Incorporate security awareness and appropriate response procedures for security situations into mall and mall tenant employee training programs
 - Maintain an adequately sized, equipped, and trained security force
- **Access Control**
 - Provide appropriate signs to restrict access to non-public areas
 - Identify and control access by all mall and mall tenant employees, vendors, delivery personnel, and contractors
 - Install and regularly test electronic access control systems and intrusion detection systems in sensitive areas
 - Identify key areas in or adjacent to mall buildings, and prohibit parking in these areas
 - Remove any vehicles that have been parked for an unusual length of time
- **Barriers**
 - Provide adequate locks, gates, doors, and other barriers for designated security areas
 - Install and inspect blast-resistant trash containers
 - Reduce interior glazing or replace it with shatter-proof material
 - Introduce traffic barriers and traffic flow calming techniques
 - Install active vehicle crash barriers at selected areas to protect buildings and populated areas
- **Monitoring, Surveillance, Inspection**
 - Install closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems, intruder detection systems, and lighting to cover key areas
 - Train security personnel to watch for suspicious or unattended vehicles on or near facilities; watch for repeated visitors or outsiders who have no apparent business in non-public areas of the mall; watch for abandoned parcels, suitcases, backpacks, and

packages and any unusual activities; and monitor utility supplies and routine work activities scheduled on or near assets

- Regularly inspect lockers, mail room areas, trash bins, parking lots and garages, and all designated security areas under access control

- **Communications**

- Install, maintain, and regularly test the facility security and emergency communications system
- Develop redundancy in the equipment, power supply, and means used to contact security officials
- Communicate threat level information to mall employees and mall tenants
- Take any threatening or malicious telephone call, facsimile, or bomb threat seriously
- Encourage employees and the public to report any situation or suspicious activity that might constitute a threat

- **Cyber Security**

- Implement and review hardware, software, and communications security for computer-based operational systems
- Eliminate any information from mall web site that might provide security information to adversaries

- **Infrastructure Interdependencies**

- Provide adequate security and backup for critical utility services (e.g., electricity, natural gas, water, telecommunications)
- Locate fuel storage tanks at least 100 feet from all mall buildings and customer congregation points

More detailed information on shopping malls is contained in the document, *Shopping Malls: Potential Indicators of Terrorist Activity, Common Vulnerabilities, and Protective Measures*. Information on issues relevant to a wide range of critical infrastructures and key resources is available in the document, *Overview of Potential Indicators of Terrorist Activity, Common Vulnerabilities, and Protective Measures for Critical Infrastructures and Key Resources*. Both are available from the contacts listed below.

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