



Information Bulletin

Title: Potential for Terrorist Use of Rental Vehicles: Indicators for the Car, Truck, and Limousine Rental Community

Date: August 5, 2004



This is a joint FBI and DHS Information Bulletin.

FBI and DHS intend to update this Information Bulletin should they receive additional relevant information, including information provided to them by the user community. Based on this notification, no change to the Homeland Security Advisory System (HSAS) level is anticipated; the current HSAS national threat level is YELLOW-ELEVATED. The current threat level for the financial services sectors in New York City, Northern New Jersey and Washington, DC is ORANGE-HIGH.

FBI and DHS encourage recipients of this Information Bulletin to report information concerning suspicious or criminal activity to their local FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) – the FBI regional phone numbers can be found online at <http://www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/fo.htm> – and the Homeland Security Operations Center (HSOC) or the National Infrastructure Coordinating Center (NICC), a sub-element of the HSOC in support of the private sector and critical infrastructures. The HSOC can be reached via telephone at 202-282-8101 or by email at HSCenter@dhs.gov. The NICC/HSOC can be reached via telephone at 202-282-9201 or via email at NICC@dhs.gov. Each report submitted should include the date, time, location, type of surveillance, number of people and type of equipment used for the activity, the name of the submitting company and a designated point of contact (POC).

ATTENTION: State Homeland Security Advisors, Facility Security Managers, Emergency Services Sector, Real Estate ISAC, Highway/Trucking ISAC, and Car, Truck and Limousine Rental Companies

OVERVIEW

As demonstrated by recent attacks in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and elsewhere, terrorist operatives worldwide continue to rely on vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIEDs) as a method of attack. This tactic has been used here in the past, notably in the 1993 World Trade Center and 1995 Oklahoma City bombings. The World Trade Center and Oklahoma City attacks were carried out with rented vehicles, highlighting the need for awareness among the car, truck, and limousine rental community of the potential for vehicle-borne attacks in the United States.

DETAILS

There is no standard type of vehicle associated with VBIEDs. Terrorists appear to select vehicles based on an assessment of vehicles common to and available in a region, vehicles

possessing routine access to the target area or the security posture of the intended target. Vehicles of any type or size can be utilized in vehicle bombings, although the size of the explosive charge may, to some degree, dictate the size of the vehicle required. In the 1993 World Trade Center attack, approximately 1,200 pounds of improvised explosives were placed in a rental van which had been reported stolen by one of the conspirators. Other large vehicles—such as limousines—should also receive consideration as potential VBIEDs, since limousines have larger storage capacity than regular passenger vehicles. In addition, limousines often convey an impression of authority or prestige, which may facilitate their access to specific locations in a building or facility denied to the general public.

Analysis of terrorist preparations for past attacks overseas and in the United States suggests that preoperational indicators may be present in the days or weeks prior to an attack. The following indicators may point to possible planning to use rental vehicles in a terrorist attack. Alone, each indicator can result from legitimate commercial activity or criminal activity not related to terrorism; however, multiple indicators can suggest a terrorist threat.

- Customers who attempt to give vague or unverifiable references or employment information on rental agreements, who insist on paying in cash and/or who seem overly concerned about privacy.
- Attempts to expedite collection of deposits made on rental vehicles reported as "stolen."
- Suspicious inquiries concerning whether vehicles can be modified to handle heavier loads, create additional storage areas or increase fuel capacity or vehicle speed.
- Suspicious inquiries concerning the use of limousines by private drivers or a limousine's exact length, height or interior volume.
- Reports of rental vehicles parked for prolonged periods of time near sensitive facilities such as government, military, utility or other high profile sites.
- Suspicious attempts to gain employment at vehicle dealerships and/or rental agencies.
- Customers displaying burns or chemical exposure symptoms who provide vague or illogical explanations as to the circumstances surrounding the injuries.
- Returned rental vehicles with altered company logos, Department of Transportation numbers, or structural or appearance modifications.

When reporting suspicious incidents, car, truck and limousine rental company employees should provide as much detailed information as possible on:

- **Who:**
 - Name
 - Date of Birth
 - Place of Birth
 - Driver's License Number
 - Passport Number
 - Description
 - Citizenship

- **Where:**
 - Name of rental facility
 - Place where vehicle was sighted or parked
 - List various locations if activity was moving

- **When:** Date and time of activity

- **What:** Describe the activity, particularly what made it suspicious

CONCLUSIONS

The U.S. Government remains concerned that al-Qaida or other terrorist organizations are planning to carry out terrorist attacks in the United States during the summer and fall 2004 time frame. Although the FBI and DHS possess no specific information indicating terrorists plan to use rental vehicles, rental company personnel are encouraged to remain alert for indicators of preoperational activity and immediately report any situation that appears to constitute a terrorist threat to the FBI and DHS offices listed on the first page.

For comments or questions related to the content or dissemination of this Information Bulletin, please contact the DHS/Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection Directorate's Requirements Division at DHS.IAIP@DHS.GOV.