

July/August/September 1995

TO: Executive Addressed

FR: James E. Lukaszewski, APR, Fellow PRSA Chairman

RE: Travel During Times of Terrorist Threat: Advice for Employees

A reporter for *The Wall Street Journal* called during the recent Unabomber threat to Los Angeles International Airport to ask what advice employers should give their employees who travel on company business. Here are the precautions we recommend companies and their employees take during times of activist or terrorist threat:

1. **Be cautious:** Pay attention to your surroundings and avoid predictable patterns of movement. In airports, you might change your seat locations occasionally if you have a long layover. Or, you might consider joining an airline club so that you have a private, secure place to wait.
2. **Avoid strangers:** Be a bit more circumspect about those with whom you speak. Road warriors tend to strike up conversations with total strangers in bars and restaurants and while waiting for planes and ground transportation. If you initiate the conversation, that's fine. Be doubly careful of people who walk up to you or seem to come from nowhere and start a conversation with you.
3. **Avoid trouble:** When disturbances occur in public places such as airport terminals, building lobbies and foyers, and parking lots and ramps, move away from the commotion. Unless you're from New York, where this move-away behavior is ingrained, most of us either want to look or see if we can help. This is the wrong way to respond. Instead, move to a place of safety and quiet where you can refocus on your surroundings and what is going on around you. Let the police handle disturbances. Move along.
4. **Be findable:** Do formal itineraries with names, telephone numbers, destination addresses, and travel routes and directions. Make certain those you trust have copies -- people who will pay attention to your arrivals and departures during your travels and who are in a position to summon help on your behalf. Share your itinerary only with those who will not give out information to people who have no need to know your travel plans.
5. **Know how to get help:** Keep emergency telephone numbers in a conveniently- reached location. Carry a cellular telephone pre-programmed to auto-dial the most crucial emergency numbers. Now is the time for all good companies to update after-hours contact and notification telephone numbers and emergency medical assistance programs. Consider installing special 24-hour 800 numbers to ensure that employees can get help at lightening speed.
6. **Avoid airport ATMs:** Get your cash in the privacy of your own bank lobby before going to the airport.
7. **Never let your personal luggage out of your sight.** Pack your own bags and never agree to accept or carry items for strangers.

8. Report anything or anyone who is suspicious: The authorities will welcome your help, express their appreciation, and check it out. Random acts of violence are possible in part because of a public which assumes it is secure. American travelers especially fall into this category. Citizens of other countries tend to pay much closer attention to what is going on around them and to unattended packages and luggage. If you're sitting near a box or bag that clearly doesn't belong to anyone you can identify, report it.

* These and related concepts are explained more fully in the monograph, *Coping with Activist Intrusions and Threats*. Call for a free brochure or send \$20 per copy plus \$4 for shipping and handling to The Lukaszewski Group Inc., Ten Bank Street, White Plains, New York 10606-1933, (914) 681-0000.

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