

4.3.20 Terrorism

Terrorism is defined in the Code of Federal Regulations as “the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives” (28 CFR §0.85). Terrorism is less about causing physical damage and injuries/fatalities as it is creating fear in the population. This fear may result in a key policy being changed or business operations (e.g., logging) to cease. Terrorism may include the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), including chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosive weapons; armed attacks; industrial sabotage; cyber terrorism; and other means. There may be significant variation even within these general categories, especially in the areas of chemical and biological weapons.

4.3.20.1 Location and Extent

Terrorism could occur at any location in the Lehigh Valley, depending on the terrorist group’s agenda. Any facility is vulnerable, as terrorists have historically sent chemical or biological agents through the mail. High-risk targets include local, county, state, or federal government facilities; major venues and gathering places; sites with historic, cultural, or other significance; key infrastructure; etc. Damage to or disruption of operations at government facilities could have a profound impact on the Lehigh Valley’s population, even if the terrorism event is relatively small-scale.

4.3.20.2 Range of Magnitude

The magnitude of a terrorism event depends on the scale of the attack, population involved, equipment and other key assets affected, and duration of the incident or exposure to the agent used. In the Lehigh Valley, terrorist attacks could vary from a mere threat to an individual facility to the use of a high-yield explosive or other device in a major urban area. The former is far more common in the Lehigh Valley, with bomb threats being the most prevalent form of terrorism (see Past Occurrence section).

The worst case scenario for a terrorism event in the Lehigh Valley would be a high-yield “dirty bomb” detonating in a major urban area on a weekday. The blast itself would damage buildings and infrastructure, ignite fires, and cause large numbers of casualties and fatalities. Additional individuals, including emergency responders, would then be exposed to radiation for a time after the event.

4.3.20.3 Past Occurrence

The Lehigh Valley has experienced frequent domestic terror threats. Bomb threats, especially school bomb threats, are the most common terrorist event to occur in the Lehigh Valley, with 179 bomb threats reported since 2001. Suspicious devices, packages, substances, etc. together are a close second, with 175 instances since 2001. Table 4.3.20-1 shows the number of terrorist acts in the Lehigh Valley since 2001.

Table 4.3.20-1: Terrorist Events Since 2001

Event	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total	Average
Bomb/Explosives		1		1		1				9	9	21	2
Bomb Threat	29	14	8	8	16	23	27	26	11	11	6	179	16
Suspicious Activity		2	1			2	3	2	2	2	2	16	1
Suspicious Device/ Package/ Substance	73	6	9	4	2	11	5	9	4	8	44	175	16
Threatening/ Barricaded Subject; Hostage situation	2	2	1	1		1	3		3		5	18	2

4.3.20.4 Future Occurrence

The Lehigh Valley does not contain any sites with national symbolism (e.g., the Statue of Liberty), therefore the likelihood of a national-level terrorist attack is *unlikely*. However, based upon the Risk Factor Methodology Probability Criteria the overall likelihood of a localized terrorist attack is *highly likely*. As shown in Table 4.3.20-1, above, the Lehigh Valley can expect almost 20 bomb threats alone each year. Terrorist events in the Lehigh Valley will continue to occur frequently at local schools and government facilities. Lehigh and Northampton Counties have each identified several facilities in the following categories as being vulnerable to terrorism:

- Government facilities
- Major public venues
- Commercial facilities/centers
- Utilities and other critical infrastructure
- Educational facilities
- Tourist attractions

Due to the sensitive nature of this information, specific facility names are not being included in this HMP.

4.3.20.5 Vulnerability Assessment

As stated above, the Lehigh Valley does not have facilities, buildings, or landmarks that are more likely to be targeted than other areas in the country. However, there are several colleges and universities, a major amusement park, and a minor league baseball stadium that could be considered potential targets for local terrorist activity. These facilities, as well as any of the critical infrastructure in the Lehigh Valley, are vulnerable to terrorist attacks. The degree to which they are vulnerable is assessed at the facility level by facility owners and/or local law enforcement.

To reduce their vulnerability to terrorism hazards, Lehigh and Northampton Counties belong to the Northeast Pennsylvania Regional Counterterrorism Task Force (NEPARCTTF), a group of eight counties that collaborate to prevent, protect against, prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate against terrorism and other hazards on a regional level. The NEPARCTTF, like the other regional task forces in Pennsylvania, is funded by the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) using the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Homeland Security Grant Program's State Homeland Security Program (SHSP). The counties of the NEPARCTTF, including Lehigh and Northampton Counties, use this funding to conduct emergency planning, training, and exercise activities, and to purchase equipment to reduce the region's vulnerability to terrorism.

Additionally, the counties may use funding received by the respective counties' Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs) to decrease their vulnerability to chemical hazards, which may be used by terrorists to conduct attacks. LEPCs are bodies of public safety, government, education, and industry representatives that maintain awareness of the chemical hazards in their jurisdictions. They receive fees from chemical facilities and help to administer the counties' chemical preparedness programs through development of off-site emergency response plans and oversight of the counties' hazardous materials response teams (HMRTs). The Lehigh Valley is serviced by the Lehigh County Special Operations Team, with the exception of the City of Allentown, which provides hazardous materials response through the City of Allentown Fire Department. The City of Bethlehem Fire Department also provides hazardous materials response in the City of Bethlehem (PEIRS, 2012).