



4.12 Terrorism

Description

The Terrorism hazard is assessed as a way to monitor different types of terrorism and acts of violence inflicted on a civilian population. Terrorism is defined 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, Section 0.85). Tools used to conduct acts of terrorism include Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), biological, chemical, nuclear, and radiological weapons, arson, incendiary, explosives, armed attacks, industrial sabotage, intentional hazardous materials release, and cyberterrorism.

The Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) produces an annual terrorism report, which contains profiles and chronologies of terrorism incidents in the United States. Terrorism can be both International and Domestic, where International Terrorism is defined as acts “perpetrated by individuals and/or groups inspired by or associated with designated foreign terrorist organizations or nations (state-sponsored)” (Source: FBI). The second is Domestic Terrorism, which is defined as acts “perpetrated by individuals and/or groups inspired by or associated with primarily U.S.-based movements that espouse extremist ideologies of a political, religious, social, racial, or environmental nature” (Source: FBI).

Types of terrorism include cyberterrorism, agroterrorism, terrorism (biological), and terrorism (chemical). Stakeholders have also requested discussion on active aggressors as part of this hazard assessment. These types of terrorism and other complex/coordinated events are defined below:

- **Cyberterrorism:** Cyberterrorism is an electronic attack using one computer system against another, and attacks can be directed towards computers, networks, or entire systems. A cyber-attack may last minutes to days. Homeland Security, the FBI, and the Federal Communications Commission and Department of Justice are often involved in developing countermeasures that focus on reducing the threat, vulnerability, and likelihood of attack.
- **Agroterrorism:** Agroterrorism is a direct, generally covert contamination of food supplies or the introduction of pests and/or disease agents to crops and livestock. An agricultural-based terror attack can last days to months.
- **Biological Terrorism:** Biological terrorism includes use of bacteria, viruses, or toxins to incite terror. This mode of terrorism can last minutes to months.
- **Chemical Terrorism:** Chemical terrorism includes use of nerve agents, choking agents, blood agents, or blister agents to attack normal bodily functions of the nervous, respiratory, and circulatory system, and skin respectively. Usually, an act of chemical-based terror lasts only minutes.
- **Active Aggressor:** An active aggressor is an armed individual or group of individuals that is intending to cause harm or inflict terror on a civilian population. An active aggressor (or group) may be armed with guns, knives, bombs, or any other weapon/implement that may be used to inflict harm.

Location

Terrorism events have generally been localized within a single jurisdiction. Coordinated events have occurred historically, greatly expanding the number of affected jurisdictions. Based on the nature of the event, several jurisdictions may respond to an incident.



Extent

The extent of each of these terrorism events includes:

- **Cyberterrorism:** Typically, the built environment is unaffected by a cyber-attack. Inadequate security can facilitate access to critical computer systems allowing them to be used to conduct attacks. Though the infrastructure may not be destroyed, it may malfunction, causing additional hazards. Cyberterrorism may also include online wire fraud, which is often targeted at the elderly. This abusive practice often extorts the elderly and results in economic losses.
- **Agroterrorism:** Agroterrorism is a viable primary aspiration for terrorists, as agriculture is the largest single sector in the U.S. economy. It lacks the traditional shock factor of attacks, but its extent could be large and longer lasting. The extent of the effects varies by type of incident. Inadequate security can facilitate the adulteration of food and introduction of pests and disease agents to crops and livestock resulting in animal suffering, loss of valuable animals, cost of containment of outbreaks, and lost trade and other economic effects.
- **Biological Terrorism:** A biological attack could cause illness and even kill hundreds of thousands of people, overwhelm public health capabilities, and create significant economic, societal, and political consequences. Public health infrastructure must be prepared to prevent illness and injury that would result from biological terrorism.
- **Chemical Terrorism:** Most chemical agents can cause serious injuries or death, and their often-rapid course of action means there is very little time to act when an act of chemical terrorism occurs. Public health infrastructure must be prepared to prevent illness and injury that would result from chemical terrorism. Terrorism events that are caused due to chemicals impact the environment as well. Impacts can be large and felt by the environment in several different ways such as altering the quality of air and water, affecting sewage and wastewater systems, and displacing aquatic ecosystems and soils that sustain wildlife.
- **Active Aggressor:** Active aggressor incidents often occur in areas where several people gather regularly. This may be a place of employment, a neighborhood gathering area (church, recreational center, school, etc.), or other location.

Terrorist threats may also occur among school districts within the County. Threats can last several hours or even days and cause multiple problems such as disturbing a school's order, causing traffic jams, and inducing civil panic. Individuals, groups, and institutions should be aware of and understand how to react to such potential threats immediately and appropriately.

History

There have been no reported terrorism events in Clinton County. Although events such as the World Trade Center Bombings (1993 & 2001) did not occur in Ohio, there is an implied threat in this state. In 1995, an Ohio resident was able to order samples of Plague bacilli. Although this attempt was thwarted, it indicates viability of bio-terrorist threats. Terrorist plots have been thwarted in Columbus, Dayton, Cincinnati, and Cleveland, among other locations. Mass shootings, such as a school shooting, are an example of an Active Aggressor situation.

While there are no recorded school shootings or terrorism incidents in Clinton County, local officials have determined that the risk of such an incident occurring in Clinton County exists. The Homeland Security Unit in the Clinton County Sheriff's Office serves as the primary division responsible for domestic and/or foreign security issues serving as a liaison to other state and local organizations.



Probability

Terrorism-related events have a low probability and are not predictable. As these events are man-made, they should be considered unlikely, but not impossible. Cyberattacks are becoming more likely with 2,596,947 total attacks in 2021 versus the 470,029 attacks in 2016. The total estimated cost of cybercrime in 2021 was \$6 trillion globally.

Vulnerability Assessment

Infrastructure Impact

Above ground structures such as utility systems, government buildings, churches, libraries, and schools, as well as below-ground infrastructure such as natural gas pipelines, are at risk for terrorism damage. Cyberterrorism has the potential to target systems that may influence or control infrastructure. The Homeland Security Unit conducts vulnerability assessments on critical infrastructure and other key resources in the County.

Population Impact

The population of Clinton County is likely to be impacted should an act of terror occur. It is important that public health organizations are prepared to prevent illness and injury that may result from acts of terror.

Property Damage

Since coordinated incidents can occur anywhere within the County, property damage is a possible outcome of such an event. Agroterrorism may result in damage to crops, and an active aggressor situation may result in minimal property damage.

Loss of Life

Acts of terror are likely to result in loss of life and cause long-term impacts to health. It is important that public health and healthcare organizations are prepared to act quickly should an act of terror occur.

Economic Losses

Since the probability of a coordinated attack happening in Clinton County is very low, local terrorism-related economic losses are estimated at zero. However, terror attacks occurring in other locations have the potential to have economic impacts in Clinton County. It is estimated that cybercrime will cost \$10.5 trillion globally.

Transportation networks, such as air transportation, can be shut down because of terrorism, impeding profits and resulting in economic losses to organizations within the County. Any nationwide complex/coordinated attack or act of terror that results in a temporary freeze of goods or services has the potential to limit or suspend economic activity in Clinton County as well.

Future Trends

Land Use and Development Trends

Terrorism-related events can occur anywhere. Non-residential land uses are more likely to be targeted for terror events or active shooters. Schools and government buildings should have active shooter plans in place. Farmers must be prepared for agroterrorism by locking certain areas of their farms or using cameras to monitor who is on their fields.