



City of Johnstown Emergency Management Agency

Terrorism



**World Trade Center after Terror Attack
9/11/2001**

The events and subsequent impact of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on this nation clearly established the potential that terrorism is a real threat to Pennsylvania communities. The threat of attack using conventional explosives or a Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD), which includes radiological, biological or chemical devices, represents a challenge for every elected official and emergency manager in the state. Through the creation of the Office of Homeland Security, the federal government is working with the states to prepare this county for what had been the unthinkable threat. September 11, 2001 will be recognized as an historic benchmark in the evolution of the emergency management/preparedness program in this nation.

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." When terrorism strikes, communities may receive assistance from State and Federal agencies operating within the existing Integrated Emergency Management System. FEMA is the lead Federal agency for supporting State and local response to the consequences of terrorist attacks.



City of Johnstown Emergency Management Agency

Terrorism

FEMA's role in managing terrorism includes both **antiterrorism** and **counterterrorism** activities. Antiterrorism refers to defensive measures used to reduce the vulnerability of people and property to terrorist acts, while counterterrorism includes offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, and respond to terrorism. Within the emergency management arena, antiterrorism is a hazard mitigation activity and counterterrorism falls within the scope of preparedness, response and recovery.

Terrorism is often categorized as "**domestic**" or "**international**." This distinction refers not to where the terrorist act takes place but rather to the origin of the individuals or groups responsible for it. For example, the 1995 bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City was an act of domestic terrorism, but the attacks of September 2001 were international in nature. For the purposes of consequence management, the origin of the perpetrator(s) is of less importance than the impacts of the attack on life and property; thus, the distinction between domestic and international terrorism is less relevant for the purposes of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery than understanding the capabilities of terrorist groups and how to respond to the impacts they can generate.

Terrorism Information