



THREAT DETECTION AND PERSONAL SAFETY ENHANCEMENT

Acts of targeted violence are the most heinous of all crimes, always premeditated, often successful. The adversary begins in a superior position as they have selected the time, the location and method of attack that will most likely result in their success. This does not mean that we, as potential targets, are without options. The tactics and techniques detailed below can assist in tipping the scales back in our favour.

FACTS:

- There is no standard profile of a potential attacker.
- Nearly all attackers conduct some form of pre-attack surveillance and reconnaissance (S&R).
- Most do not communicate a direct threat prior to the attack.

HUMAN SAFETY ENHANCEMENT

Threats to human safety can originate from a number of areas, each with a potentially different focus and motivation. These typically include:

- Impulsive attacks
- Opportunistic attacks
- Targeted attacks

Impulsive attacks are reactive in nature. They are immediate. The process from grievance through attack is fluid.

Opportunistic attacks are usually financially motivated and target property; where a residence, business, vehicle or person is attacked. The intention is to gain cash, or property that can be easily converted into cash. In most instances, the perpetrator is drug dependent or a professional thief. These crimes are most often prevented through a comprehensive and consistent approach to security that can be typified as “target hardening”. The idea is to make the target “hard” to strike, thus diverting the attack elsewhere to a “softer” target.

Targeted attacks can also be diverted, in many instances through similar approaches. However, in some instances these attacks involve persons with a specific motivation and a specific focus. The motivation is most often financial reward, although it can be revenge or a bid to gain some form of power over the target. The focus can be an individual, their family, or important assets (physical, financial or intellectual). Targeted attacks include social engineering, stalking and violence.

Targeted attacks can be interrupted if signs are observed or intelligence is received early enough.

UNDERSTANDING PRE-ATTACK BEHAVIOUR AND ACTIVITY

First steps of a planned attack include:

1. Grievance
2. Ideation
3. Research/Planning
4. Preparation
5. Breach
6. Attack

It is in the first four steps that we can identify and interrupt the attempt. This is the best time to take action, with the highest likelihood of success. Waiting, and trying to stop an actual attempt in progress is extremely difficult.

In a planned attack, it is important to assess if the aggressor has:

- A motive
- Means/capacity
- Opportunity

If one of these components is missing, an attack can not occur.

PREVENTING AND MITIGATING RISK

Threats of violence can occur at any time or place, and can arise through events seemingly out of our immediate control. Persons may be vulnerable at work, out shopping, at home, or in a local park. Sadly, wherever and whenever there is an opportunity for us to interact with others, there is a risk – however remote or slight.

In many cases, we have the power and ability to either prevent the threat from becoming an attack, or mitigate the seriousness of the threat or attack.

The key to prevention is perception. Perceiving a threat or assault cue quickly is based upon two factors:

1. Paying attention to the environment and context.
2. Predicting what the situation may develop into, and looking for any cues that could develop into a heightened level of risk, or violence.

In your personal and professional lives, it is important to consider the following points:

1. Where and when are you or your family the most vulnerable to threat/attack?
 - What is it about the time that makes you vulnerable?
 - What is it about the place that makes you vulnerable?
 - What is it about your actions/task/role/purpose that makes you vulnerable?
2. What can you do to prevent threats/attacks at those times and locations?

3. What is the “source” of the threat/attack?
 - Do they have the intent to carry through on the threat?
 - Do they have the means to carry through on the threat?
 - What can be done early on to disrupt the threat?
4. What could you do in response if you or your family were threatened/attacked at that time or place, or from that source?

The keys to success in personal safety are:

- Constant vigilance
- Situational awareness
- Remembering that having a survival mindset will be a substantial help in getting you through.

Watch for signs of unusual activity, and inappropriate communication that could be used to locate and identify a targeted person or group (the first two or three steps). These could include:

- Signs that you are being watched. This usually takes place at locations the aggressor believes are predictable places, and at predictable times, e.g. work and home, at likely times such as shift changes at work, and dinner hour at home.
- Stolen mail or garbage (attempts to learn more about you).
- Signs of trespass, such as gates left open, comments from neighbour, your dog alerting more often than usual.
- Signs of tampering, such as exterior lights damaged or unscrewed.
- Signs of tampering with your vehicle, such as damaged locks or damage rendering the vehicle inoperable.
- Attempts to gain entry into residence, garage, work location, or vehicle.
- Unusual phone calls, or calls where the caller is trying to identify the person who answered, or others present.
- Persons asking questions about you in the work environment
- Persons searching your online profile and social network

NOTE: Take the above activities as very serious pre-cursors to attack activity. When someone has been threatened or targeted, activity described above is common **prior** to a planned attack. These signs can often be misinterpreted as vandalism or intimidation, but can also be seen as early warning indicators to more serious activity.