

# Anti-Terrorism Guidelines for Apartment Owners

## From the Los Angeles Police Department

Recently, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) published the following threat advisory: "There are indications that discussions were held about the possibility of terrorists renting apartment units in various areas of the United States and rigging them with explosives. The FBI has no information indicating that this subject advanced beyond the discussion stage."

The FBI has stated this information is not corroborated or specific. FBI officials further indicated that "if the FBI develops additional credible and specific information it will be passed along."

Although this advisory concerns a non-specific, uncorroborated threat, the Los Angeles Police Department has developed a set of guidelines for apartment property owners and managers. These guidelines are only advisory in nature. Apartment property owners and managers should refer to their own policies and legal advisors before taking any specific action. Questions concerning these guidelines can be directed to your local community police station commanding officer.

## Apartment Property Owner/Manager Guidelines

1. Thoroughly follow your company/owner procedures for completing tenant applicant background checks. Focus particularly on:

- Do they have valid state identification?
- Verify their vehicles are registered to the prospective tenant.
- Be cautious of prospective tenant using only rental vehicles.
- Be cautious of prospective tenants with little or no previous rental history.
- Verify the prospective tenant is able to pay rent.
- Verify employment thoroughly.
- Be cautious of prospective tenants seeking month to month or week to week rentals.
- Be cautious of tenants paying rent with cash only, money orders, or third party checks unless they have established a consistent record of doing so.
- Be cautious of prospective tenants seeking only to rent ground floor apartments unless the request is due to a disability. Be cautious of prospective tenants who show undue concern for renting an apartment that cannot be seen by other homes or apartments.
- Be cautious of prospective tenants who claim to operate non-zoned business applications such as jewelry, industrial art, metal work, electric repair, chemistry, etc.

2. Observe new tenants when they move in to see if they are bringing in any unusual items. Some examples are: machinery; liquid containers; barrels; buckets, drums, sacks, and bags; compressed air tanks; boxes carried with extreme caution; large batteries; electrical wire; and fireworks.
3. Monitor tenant activity in public areas consistent with company/owner policies. Watch for unusual or oddly sized packages (see list in item No. 2) being brought into units.
4. Watch for tenants who use an apartment in unusual ways; e.g., rarely occupy the unit, over-occupy the unit with more people than allowed on the rental agreement.
5. Monitor for unusual odors emanating from apartment units such as gasoline, diesel fuel, ammonia, sulfur, acids, or the odor of fireworks.
6. Watch for unusual digging or trenching near ground floor apartment units.
7. Watch for unusual guest traffic to a single apartment unit.
8. Newer complexes where tenants are less likely to know each other and in more densely developed areas and more likely to attract a potential terrorist. High-rise apartment buildings with large number of units may be more attractive to potential terrorists.
9. Install surveillance equipment to serve as deterrent to criminal activity.
10. Watch for tenants or guests using special knocks or signals devices such as hanging towels, opening curtains, placing a cushion in a special way, etc.  
Property managers who observe suspicious activity consistent with these guidelines should immediately notify the Police Department.