

**PIERCE COUNTY
HAZARD IDENTIFICATION & RISK ASSESSMENT**

TERRORISM HAZARD¹

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS 1
IDENTIFICATION DESCRIPTION 2
 DEFINITION2
PROFILE..... 3
 LOCATION AND EXTENT.....3
 OCCURRENCES.....4
 IMPACTS.....6
RESOURCE DIRECTORY..... 8
 REGIONAL8
 NATIONAL8

Identification Description

Definition

Title 18 of the United States Code defines terrorism and lists the crimes associated with terrorism. In Section 2331 of Chapter 113(B), defines terrorism as: "...activities that involve violent... or life-threatening acts... that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State and... appear to be intended (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and...(C) occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States...". Within the government, combating terrorism is the Federal Bureau of Investigation's top investigative priority. The FBI further defines terrorism as either domestic or international:

- **Domestic terrorism:** 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.
- **International terrorism:** Perpetrated by individuals and/or groups inspired by or associated with designated foreign terrorist organizations or nations (state-sponsored).

The terrorism threat has evolved significantly since the September 11, 2001 series of coordinated attacks by the Islamist terrorist group al-Qaeda against the United States. The threat landscape (referring to identified threats, trends observed, and threat actors) has expanded considerably. Three factors have contributed to the evolution and expansion of the terrorism threat landscape:²

- **Internet:** International and domestic threat actors have developed an extensive presence on the Internet through messaging platforms and online images, videos, and publications, which facilitate the groups' ability to radicalize and recruit individuals receptive to extremist messaging.
- **Social Media:** Social media has allowed both international and domestic terrorists to gain unprecedented, virtual access to people living in the US in an effort to enable homeland attacks. Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), in particular, encourages sympathizers to carry out simple attacks where they are located against targets—in particular, soft targets. This message has resonated with supporters in the US and abroad. Several recent attackers have claimed to be acting on ISIS' behalf.
- **Homegrown Violent Extremists (HVEs):** The FBI defines HVEs as global-jihad-inspired individuals who are based in the US, have been radicalized primarily in the US, and are not directly collaborating with a foreign terrorist organization (FTO). HVEs may assemble in groups but typically act independently in attacks or other acts of violence.

Domestic terrorists can be 'right-wing' or 'left-wing' extremists such as white supremacists, anti-government militias or anarchists. Domestic terrorists can also be 'single-issue' groups such as animal rights or environmental rights extremists. And, domestic terrorists can also be 'lone wolves' with a personal agenda or grievance and prepares, commits violent acts alone outside of any group support.

According to FBI Director Senate testimony in July 2019, the bureau has recorded about 100 domestic terrorism arrests since December 2018 compared to about 100 international terrorism arrests. The FBI, according to the director's testimony, is most concerned with "lone offender attacks, primarily shootings." Earlier, at a congressional hearing in May 2018, the head of the FBI counterterrorism division testified that the bureau was investigating 850 domestic terrorism cases and of that approximately 350 of the cases involved racially motivated violent extremists³. Most in that group, he said, were white supremacists.

In 2015, the Seattle division of the FBI revealed 70-100 active cases possibly linked to terrorism across the state.⁴ In the years since revealing the breadth of terrorism investigations in Washington State, domestic terrorism arrests outpaced jihad-inspired terrorism arrests nationwide.⁵ The US government acknowledged the problem in its October 2018 'National Strategy for Counterterrorism'. "Notably, domestic terrorism in the United States is on the rise, with an increasing number of fatalities and violent nonlethal acts committed by domestic terrorists against people and property," the strategy paper says.⁶

Profile

Location and Extent

Terrorism events can be distinguished from other types of man-made hazards by three important considerations:⁷

- In the case of chemical, biological, and radioactive agents, their presence may not be immediately obvious, making it difficult to determine when and where they were released, who was exposed, and what danger is present for first responders.
- Terrorist events evoke very strong emotional reactions, ranging from anxiety, to fear to anger, to despair to depression.
- Even failed attacks have long-term economic impacts for the targeted government and critical infrastructure sector disproportionate to the cost of the attack itself.

The form and locations of many natural hazards are identifiable and, even in some cases, predictable; however, there is no defined geographic boundary for terrorism. Based on previous historical events, it is presumed that critical facilities, services, and large gatherings of people are at higher risk.

Pierce County has areas of concentrated population and venues and events that draw large crowds. It also has significant infrastructure that is important locally as well as nationally. The county is a key component in the Pacific Northwest transportation network that supports extensive domestic and international commerce. There are key transportation nodes and routes that cannot be easily replaced or bypassed.

One of the largest joint military bases in the Department of Defense resides in Pierce County. Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) is the jumping off point for the United States' military and strategic influence across the Pacific Rim. Additionally, there are multiple Reserve Component and military recruiting facilities throughout the county. There are significant populations of

military personnel and their families residing in the communities surrounding JBLM as well as a significant number of county residents who are employed on the base. The rural areas of the county contain large swaths of private, state and national forests. Additionally, it contains the Mount Rainier National Park. These areas are sources of revenue and employment for Pierce County residents.

English-language terrorist media continues to identify similar gatherings as “soft targets” and promote them as potential attack sites. For example, Inspire #12 magazine published online by Al Qaeda, suggested targeting locations “flooded with individuals, e.g., sports events . . . election campaigns, festivals, and other gathering [sic]. The important thing is that you target people and not buildings.”⁸ Attacks targeting these types of events will continue to present security challenges to public safety personnel, because attendees are anonymous and generally unscreened for prohibited items. Violent extremist propaganda continues to urge lone actors to attack soft targets using small arms, knives, and vehicles because they are simple and effective. Foreign terrorist organizations implore followers to kill with whatever means available “whether an explosive device, a bullet, a knife, a car, a rock, or even a boot or a fist.”⁹

Occurrences

Prior to the attacks on September 11, 2001, there were less than a dozen major terrorist events in Washington State. Since then, violent extremism has become commonplace, on a global and national scale, and the number of local terrorism and violent extremism cases continue to rise.¹⁰ Some of the most notorious terror cases in Washington State include the arrest of Ahmed Ressay, the “Millennium Bomber,” in December 1999, the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) firebombing of University of Washington’s (UW) horticulture center in May 2001, and the foiled Seattle Military Entrance Processing Station attack plot in 2011.

- On March 26, 2018, Thanh Cong Phan from Everett was arrested after mailing at least 11 suspicious packages to multiple military and government facilities in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, which contained potential destructive devices. He was charged with shipping of explosive materials, after the packages were found to contain small amounts of black explosive powder.¹¹
- On March 31, 2017, Muna Osman Jama of Reston VA and Hinda Osman Dhirane of Kent WA were sentenced to 12 years and 11 years respectively, after being found guilty of conspiracy to provide material support to al-Shabaab. The two reportedly organized an all-female fundraising group, called the “Group of Fifteen,” who provided monthly payments to al-Shabaab; facilitating and tracking money sent through conduits in Kenya and Somalia.¹²
- On August 25, 2017, Melvin Neifert from Selah was arrested and charged with receiving incendiary explosive device materials—specifically, potassium nitrate and other materials to make a potassium nitrate-sugar bomb—that were to be used in connection with the 2016 May Day events. Federal authorities seized evidence and questioned Neifert on May 1, the same day anti-capitalist demonstrations took place in Seattle.¹³
- On September 4, 2016, a fire was intentionally set at the Planned Parenthood clinic in Pullman, WA. Authorities recovered a video from inside the clinic showing a flammable

object had been thrown through the window. While no injuries were reported, and no suspects identified, there is a history of domestic terrorism against the Pullman clinic.¹⁴

- On April 9, 2015, Blake Heger was arrested after attempting to place two shrapnel-laden pipe bombs near a high foot-traffic area outside a hardware store in Puyallup, WA. Police were called after a concerned citizen saw him sharpening large knives in the parking lot. He was found with two additional pipe-bombs, four large knives, and a screwdriver that he had sharpened into a dagger.¹⁵
- On January 1, 2014, Musab Masmari attempted to set fire to a gay nightclub on Capitol Hill in Seattle, WA by spilling gasoline down a set of stairs and lighting it, while 750 people packed the club's New Year's Eve event. According to investigative documents, Masmari told a friend that "homosexuals should be exterminated." In July 2014, he was sentenced to ten years in federal prison for arson.¹⁶
- On July 18, 2014, Ali Muhammad Brown was arrested after killing four people in WA and a college student in NJ, as part of a personal vengeance against the U.S. government for its actions in the Middle East. In 2004, he was arrested and prosecuted for his role in a bank fraud scheme to finance fighters traveling abroad and had known links to a disrupted terror cell in Seattle, WA and Bly, OR in 1999.¹⁷
- On October 27, 2012, Abdisalan Hussein Ali, a 22-year old born in Somalia but raised in Seattle and Minnesota, was the third American killed as an al-Shabaab suicide bomber in Mogadishu. Ali was reportedly one of two bombers in an attack that killed "scores of African Union peacekeepers." He arrived in Seattle in 2000 and moved to Minneapolis before being recruited into al-Shabaab and travelling to Somalia in 2008.¹⁸
- On September 8, 2011, Michael McCright was arrested and charged with second-degree assault for a July 2011 incident where he intentionally swerved his vehicle at a government-plated vehicle occupied by two U.S. Marines in Seattle. Known on the Internet as "Mikhail Jihad," McCright had ties to Abu Khalid Abdul-Latif, a man convicted of plotting to kill federal employees and military recruits in Seattle, WA.¹⁹
- On June 22, 2011, Abu Khalid Abdul-Latif and Walli Mujahidh were arrested for planning to attack the Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) in Seattle with machine guns and grenades after previously planning, but discounting, an attack at Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM). According to FBI investigators, "Abdul-Latif said that 'jihad' in America should be a 'physical jihad,' and not just 'media jihad'."²⁰
- On May 11, 2011, Joseph Brice of Clarkston WA was arrested for assembling, practicing, and detonating explosive devices after an incident that occurred on April 18, 2010, when an explosive device he made prematurely ignited, causing him significant injuries. He had a YouTube channel called "Strength of Allah," where he posted the videos in an attempt to support terrorism.²¹
- On January 17, 2011, Kevin Harpham, an admitted white supremacist, placed a remote-controlled backpack improvised explosive device (IED), with rat-poison coated shrapnel, at a park bench near the marching route on the morning of the Martin Luther King Jr. Day Parade in Spokane, WA. Prosecutors said the device was "constructed with a clear, lethal purpose," and Harpham said it was intended to protest social concepts, such as unity and multiculturalism.²²
- On June 11th 2001, the Westgate Family Medicine Clinic was bombed just after noon.²³

- In 1990 white supremacists had planned to bomb a homosexual bar in Seattle and then move to Pierce County where they would bomb a number of bars with an African American clientele and Korean businesses but were arrested prior to initiating their attacks.
- In 1972 Tacoma's Model Cities and Human Rights offices were burned.

Recurrence Rate

Using the FBI definition above, it can be shown that terrorist activities happen in Pierce County regularly.

Impacts

The scale, nature, methods and level of success of attacks are all variables that will directly affect the impacts. For details on impacts please see the active threat/attack tactics chapter.

Terrorist attacks continue to take place at open-access events, mass gatherings, and outside the perimeter of secured events, possibly because of a perceived lack of security, the availability of publicized schedules, and largely unrestricted admittance. Examples of open-access events include marathons, parades, protests, rallies, festivals, fireworks display, farmers markets, and high-profile funerals and vigils or memorials. Terrorists could also target gatherings located close to ticketed events, such as tailgating adjacent to major sporting events or concerts²⁴. Judging from previous terrorist plots and attacks, terrorists will likely remain interested in conducting opportunistic attacks against civilian targets, most notably mass gatherings. Techniques used in recent terror attacks have included the use of vehicles as weapons, edged weapons, small arms, and improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

Provided below is the 2019 complex coordinated terrorist attack scenario that was developed for the Seattle Urban Area Security Initiative Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment planning. The scenario was developed by the WA State Fusion Center and vetted by local law enforcement in Pierce, King, and Snohomish Counties. The scenario, finalized on August 8, is based on the current threat environment.²⁵

The radicalization of Pacific Northwest extremist groups has recently been promoted by other national terrorism movements which have called for violent resistance to destroy human life and disable critical infrastructure. Radicalization starts to build in the Winter of 2018. Over the next six months there is an increase in expression of on-line animosity towards the U.S. Government which calls for action on June 24th. In recent weeks there has been an increase via social media of on-line extremist groups indicating an intense animosity and a belief of injustice by the U.S. Government. These local online indicators show lone actors, inspired by extremist ideology, have been able to circumvent security measures to take up small arms, make vehicle borne and rudimentary standalone improvised explosive devices (IEDs) with the stated intent to attack the Region. In addition, there are calls for "Leaderless Resistance" making it difficult to locate, mitigate, or prevent their stated intent. Within the Seattle Region, there is increasing concern about a number of these groups starting to influence public opinion, which may lead to violent actions. The on-line information promotes and warns of the need for longer and ongoing

acts of violence to achieve superiority over current government authority. On July 3rd, there are several online attacks which are a precursor to the July 4th physical attacks on an iconic building, multiple active shooter events, vehicle borne violence and IEDs, and unattended small items across the City of Seattle and surrounding areas.

Resource Directory

Regional

- **Pierce County Department of Emergency Management**
<http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/PC/Abtus/ourorg/dem/abtusdem.htm>
- **Washington State Patrol, Homeland Security Division**
<http://www.wsp.wa.gov/crime/homeland.htm>
- **Pierce County Sheriff's Department**
<http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/pc/abtus/ourorg/sheriff/default.htm>

National

- **Federal Bureau of Investigation**
<http://www.fbi.gov/homepage.htm>
- **Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism**
<http://www.mipt.org/Patterns-of-Global-Terrorism.asp>
- **US Department of Homeland Security**
<http://www.dhs.gov/index.shtm>
- **Worldwide Incidents Tracking System**
<https://wits.nctc.gov>

Endnotes

- ¹ This chapter has been reorganized but was originally written by Doug Larm with the WA State Fusion Center in 2019.
- ² Federal Bureau of Investigation. 2019. Terrorism Webpage. Accessed online on 8/26/19 from <https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/terrorism>.
- ³ Zapotosky, Matt. July 23, 2019. Wray says FBI has recorded about 100 domestic terrorism arrests in fiscal 2019 and many investigations involve white supremacy. *The Washington Post*. Accessed online on 8/26/19 from https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/wray-says-fbi-has-recorded-about-100-domestic-terrorism-arrests-in-fiscal-2019-and-most-investigations-involve-white-supremacy/2019/07/23/600d49a6-aca1-11e9-bc5c-e73b603e7f38_story.html.
- ⁴ Kim, Hana. December 11, 2015. FBI investigating 70 to 100 cases in Washington State with possible ties to terrorism. *Q13 Fox News*. Accessed online on 8/26/19 from <https://q13fox.com/2015/12/11/fbi-investigating-up-to-a-100-cases-possibly-linked-to-terrorism-in-washington/>.
- ⁵ Barrett, Devlin. March 9, 2019. Arrests in domestic terror probes outpace those inspired by Islamic extremists. *The Washington Post*. Accessed online on 8/26/19 from https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/arrests-in-domestic-terror-probes-outpace-those-inspired-by-islamic-extremists/2019/03/08/0bf329b6-392f-11e9-a2cd-307b06d0257b_story.html.
- ⁶ Dilanian, Ken. August 9, 2019. There is no law that covers 'domestic terrorism.' What would one look like? *NBC News*. Accessed online on 8/26/19 from <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/justice-department/there-no-law-covers-domestic-terrorism-what-would-one-look-n1040386>.
- ⁷ Mid-America Regional Council. 2015. *Regional Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan*. Accessed online on 8/26/19 from https://www.marc.org/Emergency-Services-9-1-1/pdf/2015HMPdocs/HMP2015_Sec4-HAZ-Terrorism.aspx.
- ⁸ National Counterterrorism Center. 2018. Planning and Preparedness Can Promote an Effective Response to a Terrorist Attack at Open-Access Events. Accessed online on 8/26/19 from <https://www.dni.gov/files/NCTC/documents/jcat/firstresponderstoolbox/First-Responders-Toolbox---Planning-Promotes-Effective-Response-to-Open-Access-Events.pdf>.
- ⁹ National Counterterrorism Center. 2018. Planning and Preparedness Can Promote an Effective Response to a Terrorist Attack at Open-Access Events. Accessed online on 8/26/19 from <https://www.dni.gov/files/NCTC/documents/jcat/firstresponderstoolbox/First-Responders-Toolbox---Planning-Promotes-Effective-Response-to-Open-Access-Events.pdf>.
- ¹⁰ United Nations Development Programme. 2016. Prevent Violent Extremism Through Promoting Inclusive Development, Tolerance and Respect for Diversity. Accessed online on 8/26/19 from <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/norway/undp-ogc/documents/Discussion%20Paper%20-%20Preventing%20Violent%20Extremism%20by%20Promoting%20Inclusive%20%20Development.pdf>.
- ¹¹ Shayanian, Sara. March 28, 2018. Man charged with sending explosives to D.C. military sites. *United Press International*. Accessed online on 8/26/19 from https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2018/03/28/Man-charged-with-sending-explosives-to-DC-military-sites/5591522255789/.
- ¹² Department of Justice. Friday, March 31, 2017. Two Women Sentenced for Providing Material Support to Terrorists. Accessed online on 8/26/19 from <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/two-women-sentenced-providing-material-support-terrorists>.
- ¹³ Meyers, Donald W. August 31, 2016. Bail decision delayed in Selah explosives case. *The Seattle Times*. Accessed online on 8/26/19 from <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/crime/bail-decision-delayed-in-selah-explosives-case/>.
- ¹⁴ The Associated Press. September 10, 2015. Video shows object thrown in Planned Parenthood arson. *The Seattle Times*. Accessed online on 8/26/19 from <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/video-shows-object-thrown-in-planned-parenthood-arson-in-pullman/>.
- ¹⁵ McCarty, Kevin. August 10, 2015. Man arrested after 2 bombs discovered outside Pierce County hardware store. *KIRO 7*. Accessed online on 8/26/19 from <https://www.kiro7.com/news/man-arrested-after-two-bombs-discovered-outside-pi/28802706>.
- ¹⁶ Carter, Mike. July 31, 2014. Man who set fire in Capitol Hill nightclub sentenced to 10 years. *The Seattle Times*. Accessed online on 8/26/19 from <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/man-who-set-fire-in-capitol-hill-nightclub-sentenced-to-10-years/>.
- ¹⁷ Collins, Laura. September 18, 2014. Revealed, one man's terrifying 'jihad' on U.S. soil: Extremist 'executed four in revenge for American attacks in the Middle East and carried out bank fraud for the Cause'. *Daily Mail Online*.

Accessed online on 8/26/19 from <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2759901/Revealed-terrifying-one-man-jihad-U-S-soil-Extremist-executed-four-revenge-American-attacks-Middle-East-carried-bank-fraud-Cause.html>.

¹⁸ Kron, Josh. October 30, 2011. American Identified as Bomber in Attack on African Union in Somalia. *The New York Times*. Accessed online on 8/26/19 from https://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/31/world/africa/shabab-identify-american-as-bomber-in-somalia-attack.html?_r=0.

¹⁹ Carter, Mike. May 29, 2012. Felon admits he tried to run Marines off I-5. *The Seattle Times*. Accessed online on 8/26/19 from <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/felon-admits-he-tried-to-run-marines-off-i-5/>.

²⁰ The Associated Press. June 5, 2012. Seattle terror suspect wants evidence tossed. *Fox News*. Accessed online on 8/26/19 from <https://www.foxnews.com/us/seattle-terror-suspect-wants-evidence-tossed#ixzz28jz1MkOE>.

²¹ Pignolet, Jennifer. Wednesday, June 12, 2013. Clarkston man convicted of trying to aid terrorists *The Spokane Spokesman-Review*. Accessed online on 8/26/19 from <https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2013/jun/12/bomb-maker-sentenced/>.

²² Clouse, Thomas. December 20, 2011. MLK bomb maker gets 32 years in prison. *The Spokane Spokesman-Review*. Accessed online on 8/26/19 from <https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2011/dec/20/mlk-parade-bomber-seeks-guilty-plea-withdrawal/>.

²³ Pierce County Hazard Identification and Vulnerability Analysis, September 2002, p. 94.

²⁴ National Counterterrorism Center. 2018. Planning and Preparedness Can Promote an Effective Response to a Terrorist Attack at Open-Access Events. Accessed online on 8/26/19 from <https://www.dni.gov/files/NCTC/documents/jcat/firstresponderstoolbox/First-Responders-Toolbox---Planning-Promotes-Effective-Response-to-Open-Access-Events.pdf>.

²⁵ A copy of the full scenario can be found on the Pierce County Emergency Management Risk Committee Webpage <https://www.piercecountywa.gov/6081/Risk-Committee>. Note that locations are provided in the full version of the scenario. The scenario was developed with the intent that local jurisdictions could take this scenario and personalize by changing the locations or timeframe for planning purposes. For instance, the timeframes could be changed so that school is in session and that students are reacting to the cyber impact.