

Will I be Able to Live in My House After an Attack?

Yes. Decontamination is difficult but possible, and with reasonable effort and care you should be able to return to a normal safe life in your home.

Should I Buy a Radiation Detector?

No. Unless you have been trained you won't be able to interpret the readings. Many of the Geiger counters available commercially are worthless or uncalibrated.

Should I Buy Potassium Iodide?





No. Potassium iodide (available over the counter) protects people from thyroid cancer caused by radioactive iodine, a cancer-causing agent that can be released in nuclear explosions. Potassium iodide should only be taken in a radiation emergency that involves the release of radioactive iodine, such as an accident at a nuclear power plant or the explosion of a nuclear bomb. A dirty bomb will not contain radioactive iodine, so these pills are of no use.

Conclusions

It is difficult, if not impossible, to predict the time or location of a terrorist attack without adequate information. The only sure way to prevent such attacks is by gathering and acting upon intelligence in a timely manner and by sharing that information with other law enforcement agencies. Our best tool in the war on terrorism is you, the public.

Contact

If you have suspicions about terrorist activities in your community, you should obtain as much information as possible, including:

-  Date, time, and location of the incident
-  Physical identifiers of the person or persons
-  Any vehicle descriptions
-  And a description of the suspicious activity.

THEN call the DPS Texas Intelligence Center at:

(512) 424-7981 (in Austin area)
1-866-786-5972 (outside Austin area)

You may also submit your information via the Emergency Response Network web site at <https://www.texasalert.tx.gov> or send an e-mail to:

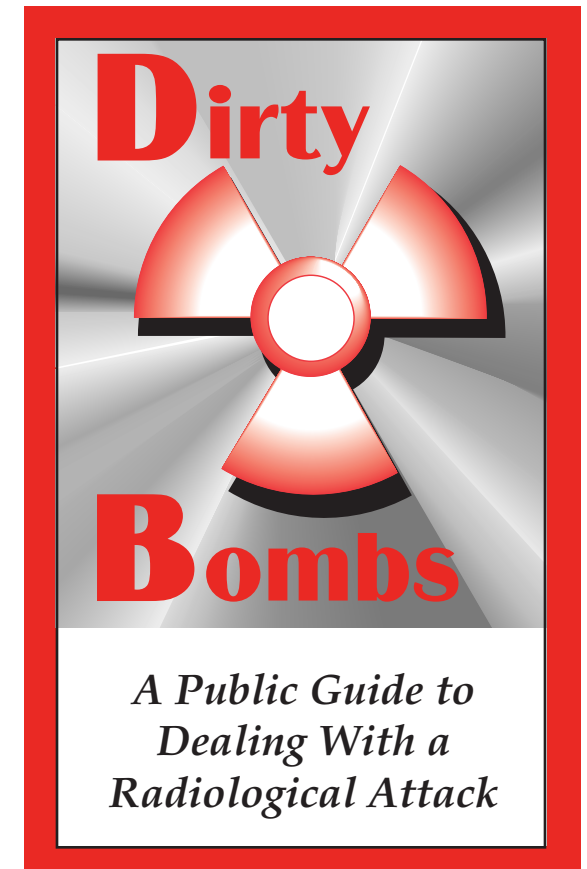
txdpsintelcenter@txdps.state.tx.us

You may also mail in your information to:

Texas Department of Public Safety
Bureau of Information Analysis
PO Box 4087
Austin, TX 78773-0420



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Introduction

This brochure is intended to answer many frequently asked questions and provide information that will help you understand, prepare for, and respond to a "dirty bomb" attack.

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What is a Dirty Bomb?

A dirty bomb is not the same as an atomic bomb. It is a conventional explosive, such as dynamite, packaged with some form of radioactive material. Upon detonation, the radioactive material would be scattered over the surrounding area. This material would likely be stolen from hospitals, nuclear power plants, or other industrial sites. Most dirty bomb casualties will occur from the initial blast of the conventional explosive. The radioactive material that is scattered as a result of the explosion causes the "dirty" part.





What is Radiation?

Radiation is a form of energy that is present all around us. Different types of radiation exist, some of which have more energy than others, and some of which cause more harm to people than others. The dose of radiation that a person receives is measured in units called "rem." For example, the average person gets about 1/3 of a rem from natural exposure during a year, and approximately 1/100th of a rem from one chest x-ray. Radiation comes from man-made sources such as x-ray machines, from the sun and outer space, and from some radioactive materials in the soil, such as uranium.






Signs of Radiological Attack

While the blast will be immediately obvious, the presence of radiation will not be detected until trained personnel with specialized equipment are on the scene. You cannot see, smell, feel, or taste radiation; therefore, it is important to listen to trained personnel for instructions. Symptoms may occur several hours after exposure to high levels of radiation, including nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and swelling and redness of the skin. In the event that you are outside during an attack, proceed to the nearest vehicle or building for extra protection and tune in to your local news or radio station for more information.

How can I Prepare for a Radiological Attack?

-  Stockpile three days of non-perishable food
-  Stockpile three days of water (three gallons per person)
-  Develop family contact plan (how to get in touch via phone, Internet, or other method)
-  Purchasing a Geiger counter, potassium iodide tablets, antibiotics, or a gas mask is NOT recommended

How Can I Protect Myself & My Family?

-  You have time—the amount of radiation from a dirty bomb is unlikely to give you radiation sickness or cancer
-  Follow instructions from emergency personnel
-  Leave the area by foot; do NOT use public transportation
-  Do NOT lick or touch your lips, eat, drink, or smoke until experts have decontaminated you
-  Do NOT immediately rush to an emergency room

If you are advised to stay in your home or office, you should do the following: Close all doors and windows, and turn off ventilators, air conditioners, and forced-air heating units that bring in fresh air from the outside. Only use units to re-circulate air that is already in the building. Close fireplace dampers, move to an inner room, and keep your radio tuned to the emergency response network.

If you are advised to evacuate: follow the directions from your local officials. If immediately available, take a flashlight, portable radio, batteries, essential medicines, cash, and credit cards.

Will I Get Sick?

The effects of a dirty bomb can vary, depending on what type of radioactive material is used and on how much material is scattered. Although a dirty bomb could cause serious injuries from the explosion, it most likely would not have enough radioactive material in a form that would cause serious radiation sickness among large numbers of people. Just because people are near a radioactive source for a short time or get a small amount of radioactive material on them does not mean they will get radiation sickness or cancer.

However, radioactive material is much more dangerous if it gets inside your body by eating or drinking, breathing, or through an open wound than if it remains outside. If you come into contact with radioactive material from a dirty bomb, take the following precautions: Do not eat, drink, or smoke; do not lick your lips; and do not touch your hand to your face or to an open wound until you have left the contaminated area and have been properly decontaminated by experts.

How Fast Must I Leave the Area?

Most likely, anyone who survives the explosion will actually have hours to evacuate. There is no need for panic. It takes hours to accumulate enough radiation from a dirty bomb to cause you to get radiation sickness or develop cancer.

Can I Use my Private Vehicle?

If you drive your car or truck, some radiation material may get inside and will have to be cleaned out. Listen to local news broadcasts for instructions about cleaning your vehicle. If you drive your private vehicle, do not run the heater or air conditioner. When you get home, remove your clothes OUTSIDE and place them in plastic bags. Listen to local news broadcasts for instructions on how to discard contaminated clothing.