

# Security Spotlight

*An informational Guide for Securitas Canada Clients and Employees*



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## Tourist or Terrorist

### Spotting Suspicious Activity



**The milder weather of spring coaxes green stems to sprout and dreams of travel to blossom. Unfortunately, the weeds of terrorism also sneak out of their underground hiding places and attempt to blend into the crowd of budding spring flowers.**

Travel experts are forecasting a sunny season for increased tourism in 2015. At the same time, security experts are forecasting a stormy year of increased terrorist activity. Unlike the lovely spring flowers, terrorists cannot thrive in the bright light of day. They prefer to strike from the shadows; blending in with innocent people so as to make detection of their despicable plans more difficult. The challenge for the security professional, and the general public, is to spot the weeds as they are sprouting and rip them out by the roots before they can overrun the flower beds.

#### **Focus Your Vigilance**

Most tourists tend to be curious and somewhat adventuresome, occasionally wandering off the beaten path to discover new sights and experiences. Terrorists may also be curious and adventuresome when planning an attack. How will you tell the difference between the two groups? You will have to be alert to some subtle differences in behavior.

#### **Photography**

Tourists love to take photographs and video recordings of the sights they are seeing. Terrorists also use photography and videotaping to

identify weak spots in the security of their targets. Be alert to anyone taking pictures or videos. This may be a regular occurrence, if the site is a normal tourist attraction, such as a museum, stadium, government building, monument, etc. Try to be alert to the subject matter of the photo or video. A tourist will most likely focus on art work, statues, plaques, display cases, and artistic architectural features of a building. A terrorist might be more likely to be taking images of entrances and exits, security personnel, alarm systems, and security camera locations. Be aware of where a camera is being pointed and ask yourself, would I want a picture of that in my snapshot album? If your answer is "No," you may be observing a terrorist gathering intelligence instead of fond memories.

If the site is not a tourist site, you should be even more suspicious if you see someone taking pictures or videos. It is possible that the person has a totally innocent reason for wanting the images, but they could be someone with a more sinister reason.

There are many places where photography or video recordings are permitted, but there are some sites where it is forbidden. If you are at one of the sites where it is forbidden and you see a person taking photos or videos you must handle the situation with caution. The public's rights must be respected. Lately there have been reports of persons deliberately photographing facilities in a suspicious manner with the intent to provoke a confrontation. Do not fall for this tactic.

There are actions you can take, which may deter the photographer/videographer without provoking a confrontation.

1. Approach the person calmly and watch. Let them see you approach, but do not get close to the person. Maintain a nonthreatening distance and attitude. The act of your approaching and observing will let the person know that you are aware of them without your having to say a word and it may serve as a deterrent.
2. Take notes about the incident. Allow the person to see you writing your notes. The fact that you are observing them and taking notes may serve to deter them.
3. If you are a security guard, address the person only if instructed to do so by your Post Orders. Tell them, politely, that your client prefers that people do not photograph or video record the facility. Do not ask them to stop photographing/videotaping. Do not ask them to surrender or delete their photos/videos. Do not be confrontational in any way; simply inform them of the client's wishes. Do not allow them to draw you into a conversation or to question you.
4. If the person is on a client's property, a security guard, if authorized to do so by Post Orders, may politely ask the person to leave the premises.

### **Questions**

Tourists are naturally curious, that's why they are tourists! They want to know many things about the places they visit. Terrorists are also curious, but their curiosity is more focused on security related questions. Be alert to the types of questions people ask. Many terrorists will attempt to engage you in a friendly seeming conversation and craftily try to get you to reveal important information about security measures. Any security related question should be a red flag to you that the person you are talking to may not be an innocent tourist. Watch out for questions like:

"Do you ever have to work late?"

"What time do you start work?"

"What time is the busiest around here?"

"How many guards are there at this place?"

"My grandmother would love to see this place. How close to the building can I park?"

Any of these type questions could be innocent or they could be attempts to probe for weak spots in the site's security. Do not reveal any details of the security arrangements and practices.

### **Packages**

Tourists love to shop. Many also tend to carry supplies for a long day of sightseeing. They may have shopping bags, backpacks, strollers, or camera bags. Sometimes they may put one of their burdens down and then forget to pick it back up when they leave.

This type of behavior is not uncommon and is one of the reasons so many people are hurt in terrorist bombings. The sight of people setting down a bag or backpack and walking away without it does not normally trigger any mental alarm bells, because most people will not assume that the innocent looking bag contains a bomb. Always be suspicious of any unattended package or item (like a stroller). Most of the time, it will turn out to have been innocently forgotten, but the one time that it has been left by a terrorist can result in consequences too horrible to take any chances with. Alert the authorities immediately if you discover an unattended package or item. Keep away from the suspicious thing and calmly warn others away. If it turns out to be something innocent, no harm done. If it turns out that it conceals a bomb, great, harm avoided!

### **Suspicious Behavior**

Any person who appears on a site but does not look like they fit in with the other occupants could be considered suspicious. However, tourists often wander around, looking for sights to see, and their unfamiliarity with the area could cause them to wander onto sites that have no tourism value. There are indications that may help you determine if a person is just lost or is truly suspicious. Watch for the following signs.

- **Lack of eye contact** (most innocent people will make eye contact)
- **Sweating** (especially when it is not hot)
- **Excessive hand movements**
- **Biting fingernails or other nervous ticks**
- **Dry mouth**
- **Blank facial expression**

Always follow Post Orders when dealing with a suspicious person. Fully document all interaction and include descriptive details about the person and the suspicious behavior. If necessary and required by Post Orders, alert the appropriate authorities. Your watchfulness could prevent a tragedy. Stay vigilant and pluck out the weed of terrorism, before it can bear its bitter fruit.

### **Anti-Terrorism Information**

The Government of Canada has a website that outlines the new Anti-Terrorism Act of 2015. The Government is proposing a new Criminal Code offence that would criminalize the promotion of terrorism, provide the courts with the authority to order the takedown of terrorist propaganda and make it easier for police to detain suspected terrorists before they can harm anyone. More information is available at:

<http://www.canada.ca/en/campaign/antiterrorism/>

Public Safety Canada also provides in depth materials on Building Resilience Against Terrorism. This information is posted at:

<http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/rsln-c-gnst-trrrsm/index-eng.aspx#s4help-prevent-terrorist-attacks>