

## BEST PRACTICES FOR VEHICLE SCREENING AGAINST TERRORIST TACTICS

Terrorists will probably use a variety of tactics to attach and hide items, such as GPS trackers, Wi-Fi positioning system (WPS) locators, and IEDs to target, track or attack vehicles. The placement location of such devices will vary depending upon a variety of factors, such as the device's purpose, size, construction, and installation time. Malicious actors may affix a device in an area that can be quickly and easily reached, such as the lower engine compartment, steering system, drivetrain, wiring-harness points, exhaust system, wheel wells, and other spaces. Personnel should be observant of their vehicles and surroundings, as well as diligent in the performance of vehicle screening upon entry and exit, to identify and prevent terrorists from attempting to target and track their vehicles.

**WARNING:** Never touch, move or remove a suspicious or extraneous device from a vehicle and follow organizational guidelines. The handling of any device may potentially cause injury, damage and contaminate forensic evidence.

**CONSIDERATIONS:** Regular and proper vehicle screening, inspection, and maintenance to ensure safety and equipment readiness.

- **GENERAL SCREENING:** Personnel can mitigate attempts at targeting vehicles by performing cursory visual examination and taking mental note of the vehicle and its surroundings. Screen the vehicle upon exit and entrance and when unattended for lengthy duration. The first step in finding a hidden tracker, attached IED, or indications of tampering is to perform a visual sweep of areas on a vehicle that a malicious actor could reach relatively quickly.

- Understanding “what is supposed to be there and what is not,” including recognition of aftermarket installations, may require assistance from knowledgeable fleet service personnel and equipment installers.
- Knowing where magnetically attached devices may be placed on a vehicle should aid in discovery of suspicious or dangerous devices. If possible, photograph and document details which can later be provided to law reinforcement to best preserve it for technical use and forensic examinations.
- Understanding that devices may be camouflaged but have visible light(s), antennas, or protruding wires.
- Screening vehicles at the pickup point when taking delivery of the vehicle from an outside maintenance or repair provider.
- Ensuring that items are not overlooked in plain sight.

- **SELF SCREENING:**

- When exiting a vehicle:
  - \* Note your surroundings and establish a sense of normal.
  - \* When possible, park in well-lit and easily visible areas.
  - \* Remove personal items and clear trash from the interior of the vehicle.
  - \* Open interior compartments, raise headrests, and lower sun visors.
  - \* Close vehicle windows, lock doors, and set alarm.
- When returning to vehicle:
  - \* Do not solely focus on the vehicle. Take a moment to observe surroundings from a distance, paying close attention to packages, trash, devices, chemical residue, puddles, stains, or odors around the vehicle.
  - \* Perform systematic and thorough screening to identify any changes in the steps you took when you parked.

- **SAFETY:**

- Ensure that the engine is off and the parking brake is set before inspecting the vehicle.
- **HOT!** Use caution when inspecting engines, exhausts, refrigeration coils, auxiliary heaters, and other components. Gloves may provide extra protection.
- Do not reach through or near cooling fan blades, which can operate when the engine is not running.

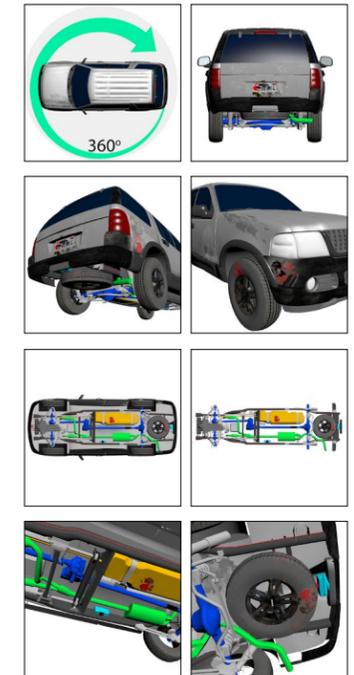
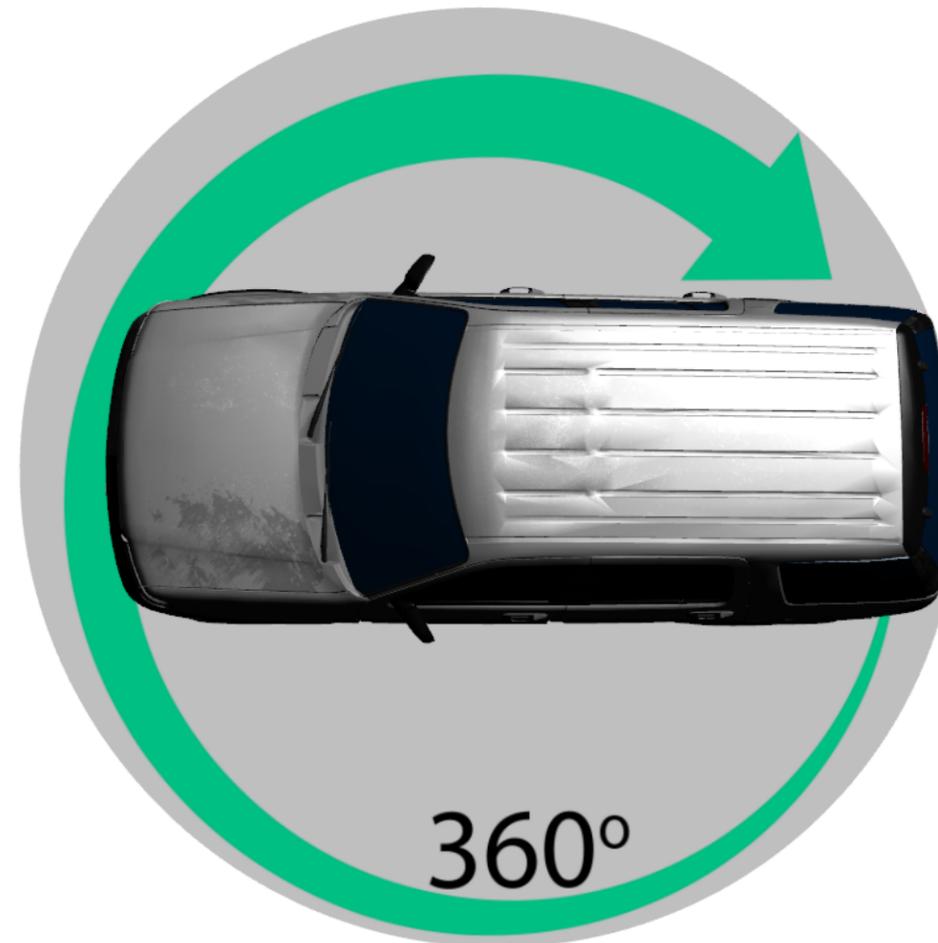
- **DEVICES:** Only the imagination and skill of a malicious actor limit the design and placement of a **device** within a vehicle:

- **IEDs** come in a variety of shapes, weights and sizes; they may be attached by numerous means, including magnets, adhesives, and fasteners, and they may be detonated using remote control, a timing device, or a movement sensor.
- **GPS trackers** are small electronic devices that rely on GPS and cellular networks to track the location of a vehicle. Legitimate uses include fleet management, delivery dispatch, and theft recovery. They are readily available online and through electronics retail outlets.
- **WPS locators** work to locate users of wireless networks through their wireless access points. These systems may complement or substitute for GPS systems, or use GPS data to track users. WPS locators can work in areas that GPS trackers cannot.

**RESOURCES:**

- **TRAINING AND OUTREACH:** The DHS Office for Bombing Prevention provides:
  - Various training to build counter-IED capabilities and enhance awareness of IED threats: <https://www.dhs.gov/bombing-prevention-training>
  - Bombmaking Materials Awareness Program is a national outreach initiative to promote private-sector point-of-sale awareness and suspicious activity reporting: <https://www.dhs.gov/bmap>

**COMPREHENSIVE SCREENING:**



**NOTICE:** This product was developed by the Joint Counterterrorism Assessment Team (JCAT), which is a collaboration by NCTC, DHS, the FBI, and state, local, tribal, and territorial government personnel to improve information sharing and enhance public safety. The product is intended to promote coordination among intergovernmental authorities and the private sector in identifying, preventing, and responding to foreign terrorist activities in the US. The product should be considered within the context of existing laws, authorities, agreements, policies or procedures. For additional information contact us a JCAT@NCTC.GOV.

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WHAT TOPICS DO YOU RECOMMEND?

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