

Tool Box Talk No.9

H.O.T Protocol



Introduction

Between 1991 and 2001, 2.5 million reported items were left unattended on Britain's transport system.

The railways and the road system are even busier today so this figure will have increased.

The aim of this Tool Box Talk is to remind and advise you on the very real ongoing terrorist threat to the transport system and its users in the United Kingdom.

In the early 1990's the British Transport Police devised advice primarily for use on the railways by way of a "mental prompt" in the form of what has become known as the **"HOT"** Protocol.

This protocol can be applied to all areas of public life and any transport system.

WHY THE **"HOT"** PROTOCOL IS IMPORTANT

The threat to the UK from terrorism is both real and serious. Since 1991 to date there have been over 50 terrorist attacks on the railways alone, killing many people and injuring hundreds more.

Over 8,000 bomb threats have been made against the United Kingdoms transport system during this period.

The United Kingdoms transport system is difficult to protect, millions of people use all forms of it every day. Rail and road travel is designed to be accessible so it's difficult to restrict access to transport hubs and the vehicles that carry us, this means potentially lots of casualties and less chance terrorists will be detected amongst the crowds.

SO WHAT DOES **"HOT"** STAND FOR

"H" = HIDDEN

"O" = OBVIOUS

"T" = TYPICAL

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ME?

Experience tells us that the most likely way of attacking the heart of our transport system is by what is known as an Improvised Explosive Device or I.E.D. By design these can be carried by one person and can also be small enough to fit into everyday bags/briefcases or be easily disguised as everyday objects.

Most people who wish to attack us also wish to escape detection so it is the placing of these devices which is the key to the **"HOT"** Protocol.

So upon finding any item of luggage/shopping/parcels that is unattended you need to ask yourself:

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Is it Hidden?

Why would anyone leave that there? Is it partially covered?

Is it Obviously Suspicious?

Has it been left in plain view on a bench where people were sitting a moment before? Are there wires or batteries visible?

Is it Typical?

Would you normally expect to see that sort of item there? Does it have anything unusual about it?

If you come across any unattended items whilst carrying out your duties which raise any suspicions based on the **"HOT"** protocol you are to immediately inform a duty member of staff or the Police.

"SAFE SYSTEM OF WORK, ALWAYS"