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Terrorist attacks in London force us to reevaluate our current security efforts

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Northeast Security

On July 7th, London, England experienced a serious breach of security when terrorists attacked three high-traffic train lines and one double-decker bus. These attacks are assumed to have been planned in accordance with the G8 Summit meeting and in response to British troops that continue to be stationed in Afghanistan. As a result of these attacks, more than 700 people were wounded with the death toll exceeding 50 people. While London's mass transit system is protected by one of the highest-level security monitoring systems, it is important to realize that terrorists will use any opportunity to breach these types of systems and carry out an attack. In light of these recent menacing events, city officials in five cities, including Boston, were asked to increase security on and around their transportation systems as a precaution. Although there were no specific threats against Boston or the state of Massachusetts, Governor Mitt Romney conferred with transportation and safety officials and ordered an increase in security and

an explosives inspection by the transit police focusing on storage yards, tracks and out-of-service trains and buses.

London may be across the Atlantic, but these attacks have a direct affect on the United States and force us to reevaluate our current security efforts and to realize that we too are at risk for similar attacks. Like London, there are many buildings which sit atop transit lines and stations in Boston. These buildings are therefore at greater risk for terrorist attacks because of their proximity to high-traffic pedestrian areas. Kings Cross, Russell Square and Edgware stations, near to where the bombings took place in London, are easily comparable to North Station on the Green Line, Government Center on the Blue and Green Lines and Prudential on the Green Line, all of which are located near high-traffic areas, and are below large buildings. In addition to the frightening comparison of the underground stations, the BST, the double-decker bus on the Hammersmith and CityLine which exploded 131 feet from the Tavistock Hotel in London, is alarming similar to buses traveling Rtes. 39, 9 and 10 which run through Copley Square and past many hotels in downtown Boston.

The people who are around these stations and routes everyday have confidence that the stations and buildings are secure and protected from these types of attacks. They

rely on security and building personnel to prevent large-scale catastrophes from happening. It is now more important than ever for building owners and managers to take the next step to fully secure all buildings, especially those located in high-risk areas where thousands travel through each day.

During this high-alert time, the state of Massachusetts in collaboration with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, have come up with some safety recommendations that will help protect buildings and their surrounding areas from security breaches or a possible attack. Because many office buildings are large in size, it proves a difficult task to keep track of every inch of the property. This is why it becomes extremely important to remind everyone who passes through the building to be aware at all times. While it is the building manager/owner's responsibility to keep the building safe and secure, those who are in the building on a daily basis are valuable tools in continuing the effort to maintain a safe environment. In order to make this work, it is important to provide a number or contact information in case tenants observe activities or things that seem out of place or out of the ordinary.

Building managers can announce or post this information along with a list of possible threats that everyone should be on alert for including: unattended packages or bags,

unauthorized people in restricted areas, suspicious behavior, disorderly conduct or unexplainable odors, substances or smoke. In the event of an attack or other security breach, it is extremely essential that all public address systems are working properly so that you can communicate with people throughout the entire building. If the situation becomes critical and evacuation is necessary, it is also key that up-to-date evacuation plans are posted throughout the building and that these plans provide the best possible route for exiting the building.

Northeast Security is constantly informed of the latest up-to-date information through our connections with local safety agencies. Being that Northeast Security is headquartered in New England, over the years we have developed professional relationships with Boston city officials, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority and a number of New England security agencies and officials. With their assistance, we are able to immediately receive vital information that can prevent threatening situations. By continuing to work together, everyone can make a difference in keeping Boston and New England safe.

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