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# UNIT II: DEVELOPING THE SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT A TERRORIST THREAT

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**FEDERAL RESPONSE PLAN**  
**TERRORISM INCIDENT ANNEX**  
**PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS**

The following assumptions have been drawn from the Terrorism Incident Annex to the Federal Response Plan:

1. No single agency at the local, State, Federal, or private-sector level possesses the authority and expertise to act unilaterally on many difficult issues that may arise in response to a threat or act of terrorism, particularly if WMD are involved.
  2. An act of terrorism, particularly an act directed against a large population center within the United States involving WMD, may produce major consequences that would overwhelm the capabilities of many local and State governments almost immediately.
  3. Major consequences involving WMD may overwhelm existing Federal capabilities as well, particularly if multiple locations are affected.
  4. Local, State, and Federal responders will define working perimeters that may overlap. Perimeters may be used to control access to the area, target public information messages, assign operational sectors among responding organizations, and assess potential effects on the population and the environment. Control of these perimeters may be enforced by different authorities, which will impede the overall response if adequate coordination is not established.
  5. If appropriate personal protective equipment is not available, entry into a contaminated area (i.e., a hot zone) may be delayed until the material dissipates to levels that are safe for emergency response personnel. Responders should be prepared for secondary devices.
  6. Operations may involve geographic areas in a single State or multiple States, involving responsible FBI Field Offices and Regional Offices, as appropriate. The FBI and FEMA will establish coordination relationships as appropriate, based on the geographic areas involved.
  7. Operations may involve geographic areas that spread across U.S. boundaries. The Department of State is responsible for coordination with foreign governments.
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## INTERAGENCY DOMESTIC TERRORISM CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS PLAN (CONPLAN)

The points shown below have been excerpted from the Interagency Domestic Terrorism CONPLAN (Section III, Situation).

### A. INTRODUCTION

The complexity, scope, and potential consequences of a terrorist threat or incident require that there be a ***rapid and decisive capability*** to resolve the situation. The resolution to an act of terrorism demands ***an extraordinary level of coordination*** of crisis and consequence management functions and technical expertise across all levels of government. No single Federal, State, or local government agency has the capability or requisite authority to respond independently and mitigate the consequences of such a threat to national security. The incident may affect ***a single location or multiple locations***, each of which may be a disaster scene, a hazardous [materials] scene, and/or a crime scene simultaneously. [Emphasis added.]

### B. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WMD INCIDENTS AND OTHER INCIDENTS

As in all incidents, WMD incidents may involve mass casualties and damage to buildings or other types of property. However, there are several factors surrounding WMD incidents that are unlike any other type of incidents that must be taken into consideration when planning a response. ***First responders' ability to identify aspects of the incident (e.g., signs and symptoms exhibited by victims) and report them accurately will be key*** to maximizing the use of critical local resources and for triggering a local response. [Emphasis added.]

1. The ***situation may not be recognizable*** until there are multiple casualties. Most chemical and biological agents are not detectable by methods used for explosives and firearms. Most agents can be carried in containers that look like ordinary items.
  2. There may be ***multiple events***. . . .
  3. ***Responders are placed at a higher risk of becoming casualties***. Because agents are not readily identifiable, responders may become contaminated before recognizing the agent involved. ***First responders may, in addition, be targets for secondary releases or explosions***.
  4. The location of the incident ***will be treated as a crime scene***. . . .
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**INTERAGENCY DOMESTIC TERRORISM  
CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS PLAN (CONPLAN)**

5. ***Contamination of critical facilities and large geographic areas may result.*** Victims may carry an agent unknowingly. . .because they don't realize that they are contaminated. First responders may carry the agent to fire or precinct houses, hospitals, or to the locations of subsequent calls.
  6. ***The scope of the incident may expand geometrically and may affect mutual aid jurisdictions. . . .***
  7. There will be a ***stronger reaction from the public*** than with other types of incidents. . .
  8. ***Time is working against responding elements.*** . . .effects of some chemicals and biological agents worsen over time.
  9. ***Support facilities. . .are at risk as targets.*** [Emphasis added.]
  10. Specialized State and local response capabilities may be overwhelmed.
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