

# Don't Be a **Passive BYSTANDER**

May 2020

In most cases, concerning behavior was observed **BEFORE** an attack.

If you See Something Suspicious, **REPORT IT!**



U.S. ARMY



Always Ready, Always Alert  
*Because someone is depending on you*







## **Don't Be A Passive BYSTANDER**

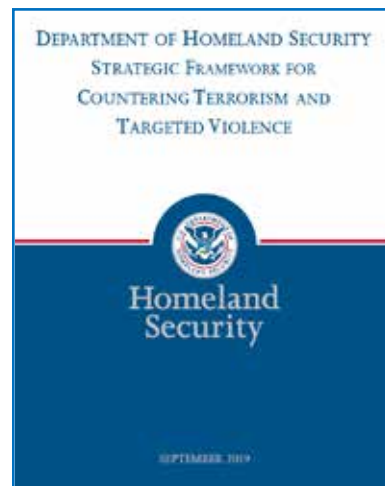
---

**“An aware society is the best foundation for preventing terrorism and targeted violence.”**

---

The Department of Homeland Security Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism and Targeted Violence demonstrates the national commitment to addressing the numerous challenges associated with terrorism and violent extremism. The framework includes expanding community outreach to those most likely to witness pre-operational indicators of violence – bystanders.

The framework addresses increased societal awareness of violent extremism and mobilization to violence **and increased bystander knowledge of available referral networks (i.e., what to do upon recognizing concerning behavior).**



[https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/19\\_0920\\_ply\\_strategic-framework-countering-terrorism-targeted-violence.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/19_0920_ply_strategic-framework-countering-terrorism-targeted-violence.pdf)



## **Don't Be A Passive BYSTANDER**

**Purpose:** This product, “**Don't be a Passive Bystander**,” leverages the FBI’s “Lone Offender” research to educate Army communities about the power of bystanders.<sup>1</sup> When bystanders are active observers and report suspicious activity or behavior (“Every Person is a Sensor”) they extend the eyes and ears of law enforcement and security.

**What is a bystander?** In general terms, a bystander is a person who is present at an incident or event but does not take part, or an individual who may witness a range of concerning behavior prior to an attack, incident, or event.

**The Bystander:** While the term bystander traditionally refers to individuals who witness a specific event, counterterrorism professionals sometimes use an expanded definition of bystander. The FBI defines bystanders “as individuals whose relationship and level of interaction with a person of concern enables them to witness or become aware of activities or behavior that may indicate radicalization or mobilization to violence.”

### **The FBI Groups Bystanders into Categories:**

- **Family:** Individuals such as parents, spouses, stepparents, siblings, aunts and uncles.
- **Peers:** Individuals such as coworkers, classmates, close friends, and acquaintances
- **Authority Figures:** Individuals such as religious leaders, professors, employers, mental health professionals, and law enforcement
- **Strangers:** Individuals such as persons from commercial establishments who sold precursor material or weapons, or individuals who witnessed offender behavior in online or offline public spaces

Individuals who knowingly provide assistance to an offender during the attack planning, preparation, or action are not considered bystanders – they are treated as criminals and may be prosecuted.

---

**Bystanders often have a piece of the puzzle,  
but do not know the full extent of the threat,  
therefore it is imperative that suspicious  
activity is reported to complete that puzzle.**

---

<sup>1</sup> Lone Offender, A Study of Lone Offender Terrorism in the United States (1972-2015), November 2019, DoJ, FBI, National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (p. 52)



## **Don't Be A Passive BYSTANDER**

---

**Bystanders are often best-positioned to spot indicators of radicalization and mobilization toward violence, often prior to law enforcement's awareness or ability to investigate.**

---

Examples of the type of behavior or activity which bystanders may observe or become aware and should report include (list is not all inclusive):

- Persons advocating loyalty to a foreign interest over loyalty to the U.S.
- Persons expressing hatred for or advocating violence against American society or government.
- Persons advocating support for terrorist or violent extremist organizations.
- Persons attempting to radicalize others, especially peers and family members.
- Persons expressing acceptance of violence as a means to achieve ideological goals.
- Evidence of terrorist training or attendance at terrorist facilities.
- Persons repeatedly viewing websites that promote terrorism.
- Persons participating in on line sites or groups that promote violent extremism or exchanging information on websites that promote use of force against the U.S.
- Persons joking or bragging about association with a foreign intelligence service, terrorist group, or violent extremist group.
- Persons sending large amounts of money to foreign countries.
- People photographing, drawing or measuring important facilities.
- Persons asking questions about sensitive information such as building blueprints, security forces/plans/procedures, or VIP travel schedules.
- Persons purchasing explosive devices or bomb-making materials or seeking instructional information on their design and use.
- A briefcase, suitcase, backpack or package left unattended.
- Vehicles left unattended in No Parking zones adjacent to important buildings.



## **Don't Be A Passive BYSTANDER**

- Intruders found in secure areas where they are not authorized/don't belong.
- Chemical smells or fumes that are out of the ordinary or that worry you.

---

**“Trust your instincts” – if it doesn't look  
right or sound right, report it.**

---

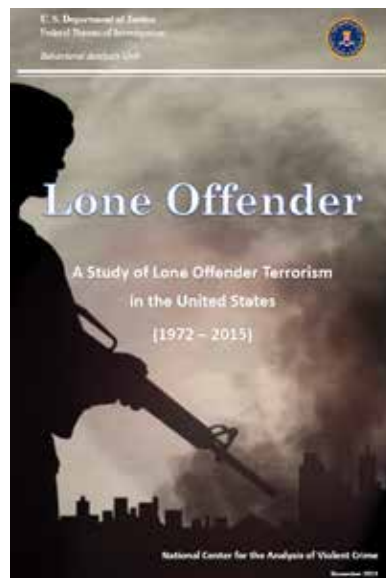


# Don't Be A Passive BYSTANDER

## Building from Lone Offender Research

A 2019 report titled, “Lone Offender, A Study of Lone Offender Terrorism in the United States (1972-2015),” examines offenders who carried out their attacks independent of any direction from a terrorist group or organization. The report provides an overview of the data, including bystander observations, offenders’ backgrounds, family and social networks, behavioral characteristics, radicalization, and attack planning. The report aims to inform broader goals of enhancing bystander education and awareness, as well as to aid the prevention efforts of law enforcement and multi-disciplinary threat assessment teams working to counter targeted violence.

The offenders studied in the report [<https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/fbi-releases-lone-offender-terrorism-report-111319>] were identified by reviewing FBI case files and partner law enforcement records, in addition to searching academic literature, open source media, and the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) Global Terrorism Database (GTD). The “snap shot” presented on the next two pages reflects a portion of the Lone Offender research findings based on the study’s population and methodology.





## **Don't Be A Passive BYSTANDER**

### **Select Research Findings**

*(Source: Lone Offender Report)*

In more than half of the cases studied (56%), offenders had contact with at least one other family member or associate who was sympathetic to radical or violent ideological views.

More than a third of offenders associated with individuals who believed the use of violence in furtherance of an ideology was justified. These individuals were sometimes supportive of or affiliated with violent ideological groups or organizations.

Approximately half of the offenders (52%) lived with at least one other person at the time of their attack, usually with a spouse, parent(s), and/or other family member(s).

Twenty three offenders (44%) had previously claimed group membership or affiliation with an ideological movement, or associated with its group members.

Thirty seven offenders (71%) of offenders were at some point rejected by at least one individual. This included rejection by family members, romantic partners, friends, or other social acquaintances.

Twenty-one offenders (40%) of offenders were at some point marginalized or rejected by a group or organization. This included rejection by social groups, professions, or religious institutions for a variety of reasons.

---

**Most offenders had at least some level  
of interaction with others and were not  
completely isolated from outside influence.**

---





## **Don't Be A Passive BYSTANDER**

### **Select Research Findings on What Bystanders Observed**

*(Source: Lone Offender Report)*

Bystanders were exposed to a range of concerning behaviors and statements made by offenders before their attacks, not all of which were directly related to an offender's ideology or attack planning.

In most cases (90%), bystanders were aware of at least one stressor (such as Financial, Physical injury, Family, Marriage problems, Criminal, legal, etc.) the offender experienced. Usually, two or more stressors were noted.

In every case, concern was expressed over at least one of the offenders' behaviors at some point in time before their attack.

---

**In most cases (73%), concerning behavioral changes were observed in the year before their attack.**

---

A change in behavior was noted when an existing behavior escalated in frequency, intensity, or concern, or when a new behavior emerged. In most cases (73%), concerning behavioral changes were observed in the year before their attack. A change in behavior was noted when an existing behavior escalated in frequency, intensity, or concern, or when a new behavior emerged.

In most cases (83%), bystanders were concerned at some point with offenders' anger or aggression.

Bystanders were also frequently troubled by offenders' interpersonal interactions (85%).

In 40% of the cases, bystanders were worried about offenders' work and/or academic performance.

In a third of the cases (33%), bystanders were troubled by offenders' impulsivity or recklessness, which included behaviors such as engaging in risky activities, sudden travel, or erratic spending.

Offenders were often vocal about their ideological beliefs prior to their attacks.



## **Don't Be A Passive BYSTANDER**

More than half had used a public platform (e.g., protests, radio shows, presentations, workshops, written materials, online forums, or blog posts) to promote their grievances or violent extremist beliefs.

Many offenders (79%) had previously expressed the belief that violence was justifiable in service of a cause or objective.

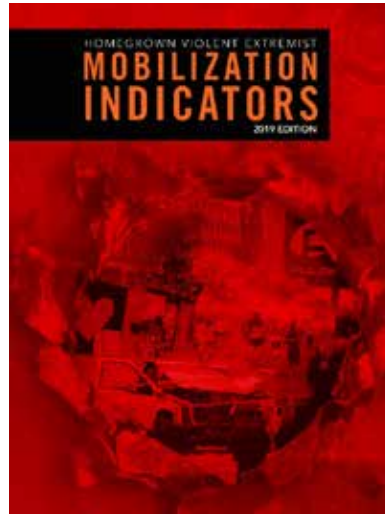


# Don't Be A Passive BYSTANDER

## Information and Training to Support Community Awareness

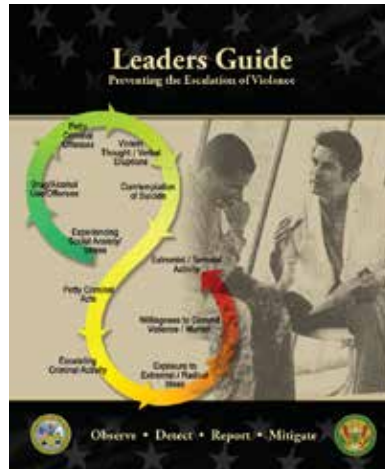
### Homegrown Violent Extremism

**Mobilization Indicators:** The indicators described in this product are observable behaviors that could help determine whether individuals or groups are preparing to engage in violent extremist activities, such as conducting an attack or traveling overseas to join a foreign terrorist organization. Law enforcement continues to see that members of the community—such as family members and peers—are often best positioned to witness signs of mobilization to violence. Community members are almost always the first to detect hints that an individual may be considering violent action in the Homeland or overseas.



### Leaders Guide to Preventing the Escalation of Violence

By mitigating low-impact, high-frequency violence, Army leaders may be able to prevent an escalation of violence. This guide addresses the violence spectrum, from petty crime, through terrorist activity or violent extremism, and offers suggestions of potential signs of high-risk behavior.





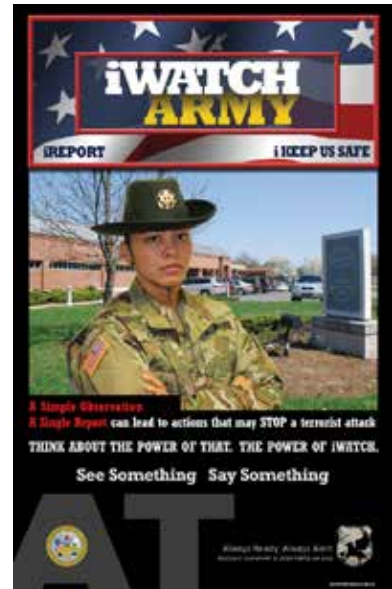
## Don't Be A Passive BYSTANDER

**iWATCH Army:** iWATCH Army encourages and empowers the Army community to identify and report suspicious behavior potentially associated with terrorist activity. The passive element of iWATCH Army is individual situational awareness. The active element of iWATCH Army involves individuals taking action to report suspicious behavior or activities to military police or local law enforcement for investigation. A single observation, a single report, can lead to action that help stop a terrorist attack. Think about the power of that ... think about the power of iWATCH.

**iSALUTE:** iSALUTE is an Army counterintelligence reporting program to assist in preventing espionage, sabotage, subversion, terrorist-associated insider threat, extremist activity, and international terrorism. The program supports the Army's counterintelligence policy established in AR 381-12, Threat Awareness and Reporting Program.

### Additional ways to report suspicious activity or behavior:

- U.S. Army CID Crime Tips:
  - » <https://www.cid.army.mil/>
  - » <https://www.cid.army.mil/report-a-crime.html>
- FBI Tips: <https://tips.fbi.gov/>



---

**Be an Active observer -  
If You See Something,  
Say Something.**

---



## **Don't Be A Passive BYSTANDER**

### **Department of Homeland Security**

### **If You See Something, Say Something**

*Module 3.1, The Bystander Effect (one module of an 11 module series)*

<https://www.dhs.gov/if-you-see-something-say-something/module-31-bystander-effect>

Social psychologists call the reluctance to act the “**Bystander Effect.**” This effect is heightened in large group settings when individuals assure themselves that someone else will eventually intervene.

Some people believe that reporting is “not my responsibility,” when in reality community safety should be viewed as everyone’s responsibility. In fact, local authorities can’t be successful alone and are counting on your observations and information.

The **Bystander Effect** is now widely used in education programs for anti-bullying or to teach ways to identify sexual violence. The same concepts can apply to our willingness to report suspicious activity.

As it relates to possible terrorist activities, we know that many of the signs of suspicious activity are precursors and therefore are likely subtle in nature.

You can remind yourself in these situations that once you report the activity, your job is done, and your tip may contribute to preventing an incident and ultimately save lives. Local authorities are counting on all of us to be the eyes and ears in the communities where we work and live.

When you can overcome your reluctance to report information, you are playing a role in keeping your community safe, and you can “protect your every day.”

### **Department of Homeland Security**

### **If You See Something, Say Something**

### **“Are You Ready to SeeSay?”**

<https://www.dhs.gov/see-something-say-something/are-you-ready-to-seesay>



# Don't Be A Passive BYSTANDER



---

**An aware society is the best foundation for preventing terrorism and targeted violence.**

---





**U.S. ARMY**



**Always Ready, Always Alert**  
*Because someone is depending on you*

