



Office of Security Policy and Industry Engagement—Surface Division

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ATTENTION—SURFACE TRANSPORTATION SECURITY STAKEHOLDERS ACTIVE SHOOTER ONBOARD A HIGH-SPEED TRAIN IN FRANCE

On Friday, August 21, at approximately 5:45 p.m. (EST), a 26-year-old man reportedly opened fire onboard a high-speed train traveling from Amsterdam to Paris, injuring three passengers during the attack. The shooter, later identified as Ayoub El-Khazzani of Morocco, was subdued by the heroic actions of three U.S. citizens—two service members and a college student—and a British man who lives in France. Ayoub El-Khazzani was reportedly carrying a Kalashnikov AK-47 rifle, an automatic pistol with ammunition clips, and a box cutter. Although it has been reported that El-Khazzani was known to European intelligence officials, the motive behind this event is under investigation.

Unfortunately, these types of active shooter events are not new. In the U.S. alone, 160 active shooter incidents have been identified over a 13-year period according to the U.S. Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Investigation in their report *A Study of Active Shooter Incidents in the United States Between 2000 and 2013*. In 2010, the highest year of the study, there were 26 events. 40% of the events would qualify as mass killings. From 2007 through 2013, there was an average of 16.4 events per year. Among shootings where duration could be determined, 69% were over in 5 minutes or less and 36% were over in 2 minutes or less. Of the majority of events in the report, 60% were over before police arrived at the scene. The report highlights location types such as schools, businesses, malls, government properties, houses of worship, and open space.¹ Further, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) SAM issued on October 23, 2014 highlights recent incidents against surface transportation targets. These events and statistics demonstrate the continued need for heightened security awareness for transit employees and passengers alike. They highlight the importance that active shooter incidents can happen anytime, anywhere, and reinforce the value of conducting drills and exercises in addition to promoting customer awareness campaigns—ex: “See Something/Say Something”—campaigns.

Subsequently, for situational awareness, TSA is providing this Security Awareness Message for the upcoming Labor Day holiday weekend and 9/11 anniversary, September 3–14, 2015. The Labor Day holiday weekend is associated with increased travel and mass gatherings, to which crowds often take public transportation. It is also noteworthy that the 14th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attack falls during this period. Given the close proximity of the 9/11 anniversary to the Labor Day holiday, increased vigilance is encouraged.

Even though this message is not in response to a specific threat to surface transportation and there are presently no National Threat Advisory System alerts (<http://www.dhs.gov/alerts>), TSA is sending this message to our transportation industry partners in an effort to encourage continued vigilance and timely reporting of suspicious incidents by their employees and customers. A recent report from DHS Intelligence and Analysis underscores the importance of suspicious incident reporting.² TSA also recommends that operators review their security and emergency response plans to ensure they are up-to-date. As operators work toward modifying their security operations during this time period, all should be aware of the following planned security operation:

For mass transit and passenger rail operators, Operation RAILS SAFE efforts are scheduled for September 3 and September 11, 2015. Law enforcement agencies in areas where Amtrak® operates are encouraged to increase security presence for railroad stations and the railroad right-of-way. The Amtrak Police Department Operation RAILS SAFE website (<http://police.amtrak.com/operation-railsafe>) provides additional information. Transit or passenger rail systems that have received Transit Security Grant Program funds may reprogram funding to cover Operation RAILS SAFE activities, including overtime expenses, if eligible under program guidance.

Sincerely,

Sonya T. Proctor
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Office of Security Policy & Industry Engagement
Transportation Security Administration
Department of Homeland Security



¹ <https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/2014/september/fbi-releases-study-on-active-shooter-incidents/pdfs/a-study-of-active-shooter-incidents-in-the-u.s.-between-2000-and-2013>

² (U//FOUO) Disrupted German Bomb Plot Reinforces the Value of Suspicious Activity Reporting,” August 7, 2015.