

Student Guide

Short: Antiterrorism/Force Protection

Purpose	Refresh the understanding of the DoD terrorist threat levels and the Force Protection Conditions
Estimated completion time	10 minutes

Introduction

Consider this situation. You arrive at work at your normal time, but as you approach the gate, things seem different. There is an unusual slowdown. Guards are asking random vehicles to pull over to the inspection area. What's going on?

Chances are, what you are witnessing is a direct result of a change in the Force Protection Conditions, or FPCONs. The slowdown and random vehicle checks are additional preventive security measures to protect against suspected terrorist threats. Remember, terrorists are not just an ocean away anymore. They can be right at the front gate. We are all familiar with terrorist threat levels and FPCONs but how well do we understand how they impact our day-to-day lives?

This Short will refresh your understanding of these tools, which the Department of Defense uses to protect its personnel and assets from terrorist attacks.

Threat Levels and FPCONs

The DoD Antiterrorism Program includes tools the DoD uses to safeguard its assets and personnel. Two of these are the DoD Terrorist Threat Levels and Force Protection Conditions, or FPCONs. Terrorist Threat Levels are analytical assessments of terrorist activity. They range from low to high and are used to quantify the level of terrorism threat on a country-by-country basis. FPCONs are graduated categories of measures or actions commanders take to protect personnel and assets from attack. The measures add progressive levels of countermeasures in response to a terrorist threat to U.S. military facilities and personnel.

Threat level assessments, which are based on Terrorist Threat Levels, are provided to senior leaders to assist them in determining the appropriate local FPCONs. However, there is no one for one correlation between Terrorist Threat Levels and FPCONs. For example, a Terrorist Threat Level of Low does not necessarily signify that the local FPCON would be Normal. Still, there is a relationship between the two. In general, as the threat increases, so does the level of protection. The measures imposed at different FPCONs impact your day-to-day activities on an installation. For example, if your

installation commander sets the FPCON to Alpha, you might see more random vehicle checks, limited access to facilities, and enhanced crime prevention efforts. At the other end of the spectrum, planned activities and movements might be delayed, or canceled, and units could be placed on a high state of alert.

While the conditions imposed at increasing FPCONS can be quite inconvenient, they are necessary to ensure protection of DoD personnel and assets. And whatever the FPCON at your installation, you play a role in its effectiveness. You can help by adopting an alert, defensive posture, reducing public exposure, complying with special instructions, and preparing and reviewing personal emergency action plans. Your role is important – make security a part of your daily routine.

Threat Levels

Low Threat Level:

- No terrorist group is detected or there is a low risk of terrorist attack

Moderate Threat Level:

- Terrorists are present, but there is no indication of anti-U.S. activity
- Operating environment favors the host nation or the U.S.

Significant Threat Level:

- Terrorists are present and attack personnel as their preferred method of operation, or a group uses large casualty-producing attacks as their preferred method but has limited operational activity
- Operating Environment is neutral

High Threat Level:

- Terrorists are operationally active and use large casualty-producing attacks as their preferred method of operation
- There is a substantial DoD presence, and the operating environment favors the terrorist

Force Protection Conditions**FPCON Normal:**

- Applies when a general global threat of possible terrorist activity exists and warrants a routine security posture

FPCON Alpha:

- Applies when there is an increased general threat of possible terrorist activity against personnel or facilities, the nature and extent of which are unpredictable.
- Must be capable of being maintained indefinitely

FPCON Bravo:

- Applies when an increased or more predictable threat of terrorist activity exists.
- Sustainment for a prolonged period may affect operational capability and relations with local authorities

FPCON Charlie:

- Applies when an incident occurs or intelligence is received indicating some form of terrorist action or targeting against personnel or facilities is likely
- Prolonged implementation may create hardship and affect the activities of the unit and its personnel

FPCON Delta:

- Applies in the immediate area where a terrorist attack has occurred or when intelligence has been received that terrorist action against a specific location or person is imminent
- Normally declared as a localized condition
- Not intended to be sustained for substantial periods

FPCONs and You

Terrorism is unpredictable, and FPCONs can change at any time, moving from Alpha to Charlie without notice. Do you know what to expect if this happens? Consider each situation, and how it might affect your routine as the FPCON changes.

		The Situation		
		Arriving at Work	Attending an Offsite Meeting	Attending an Event
FPCON	Normal	It looks like business as usual. Under normal conditions, you can expect random ID and vehicle checks.	Your co-worker wants to have your meeting over lunch at that new open-air café outside the east gate. You have only an hour until your next meeting, but if you leave now you'll be able to make it.	It looks like it could start pouring rain at any time, good thing you were able to park close to the theater. Enjoy the ceremony!
	At FPCON Normal, protective measures include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying alert for suspicious activities • Random ID and vehicle checks 			
FPCON	Alpha	Hopefully you weren't running late this morning, or things are just going to get worse. Under Alpha conditions, the probability of a random vehicle check is highly likely. You may even have your vehicle searched.	You receive an email from a coworker reading: <i>Subject: Lunch Meeting</i> <i>This place will take a little longer to get to, but I've heard the food is really good and we won't have to worry about a crowd there.</i> Today you have plenty of time, so going a little farther off-base is possible. Even if you are subjected to a random vehicle check, you'll be fine.	It looks like parking at the theater is restricted so you'll have to find a parking space down the street. Do you have an umbrella? It looks like it could rain at any time.
	At FPCON Alpha, protective measures can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of possible terrorist activity • Increased random ID and vehicle checks 			

		The Situation		
		Arriving at Work	Attending an Offsite Meeting	Attending an Event
FPCON	Bravo	<p>Oh boy! It looks like it's going to be one of those days. Expect delays getting onto the installation. And, once on the installation, don't be surprised if you can't move around from one facility to the other as freely as you normally would.</p>	<p>A coworker with whom you had lunch plans left this note on your desk:</p> <p><i>Check this out. We may not want to go off-base for lunch today. Let me know what you think.</i></p> <p>- S</p> <p>Security Increased, FPCON Bravo Set</p> <p><i>Commuters experienced delays getting on the installation Friday morning because of increased vehicle checks. The FPCON had risen overnight from Alpha to Bravo.</i></p> <p><i>The area commander ordered the higher threat condition in view of events taking place elsewhere in the world, said installation security director Katherine Hayes. "We don't believe there are any direct or immediate threats, but we believe it's important to emphasize personal security and awareness."</i></p> <p><i>All personnel should be extra alert, limit public exposure, and think about personal plans in the case of an incident.</i></p> <p>Higher FPCONs can make getting back on base pretty slow. Sometimes it's better to change your plans, especially if you have a busy day.</p>	<p>Good thing you arrived early. They are checking IDs. Hand-carried items like purses and backpacks might be inspected too.</p>
		<p>At FPCON Bravo, protective measures can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checking ID of all personnel entering the installation • Increased inspections of facilities and deliveries 		

		The Situation		
		Arriving at Work	Attending an Offsite Meeting	Attending an Event
FPCON	Charlie	<p>Unfortunately your vehicle will <i>definitely</i> be searched today. You better leave all non-essential items at home and allow extra time to get onto the installation.</p>	<p>You receive a voicemail from a coworker saying:</p> <p><i>Hey, did you hear about the incident in town? Someone made a bomb threat. Let's stay here for our lunch meeting, OK?</i></p> <p><i>Oh – Lisa told me they're doing a 100% ID check at the pizza place at the PX, so don't forget your badge!</i></p>	<p>You arrive at the installation for the event and find the gate closed. The guard comes to your vehicle window and says:</p> <p><i>I'm sorry, Sir. The change of command is canceled. Unless you have official business on the installation, please make a U turn in the parking lot on the right. If you require access, move your vehicle to the inspection area.</i></p>
	<p>At FPCON Charlie, additional protective measures can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased control of traffic flow • Increased random security patrols • Increased inspections prior to entering installation • Enhanced security at facilities 			
FPCON	Delta	<p>Uh-oh – bad news. You won't be allowed on the installation today. Hopefully, you don't have any urgent work to do.</p>	<p>There's been an incident on the installation, and you are informed everyone needs to remain indoors until installation security advises otherwise. There's no telling how long this lockdown will last, so hopefully you brought a lunch or have money for the vending machine.</p>	<p>Due to heightened security, no one is allowed to enter the installation at this time. You have no choice but to comply with the restrictions and leave the area.</p>
	<p>At FPCON Delta, additional protective measures can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricted access to the installation • Inspecting contents of all baggage (suitcases, packages, and briefcases) brought on the installation • Facility lockdown 			

Summary

In this Short, you reviewed the terrorism threat levels and FPCONs, two tools the DoD uses to protect personnel and assets from terrorist attacks. You also got a chance to explore how changes in FPCONs might impact your day-to-day activities. Remember, if you make security a part of your daily routine, and follow instructions as they come out, you are providing important support for your installation's security posture. To support your installation's security posture:

- Adopt an alert, defensive posture
- Reduce your public exposure
- Comply with special instructions
- Prepare and review personal emergency action plans