



SMALL BUSINESS CRISIS TOOLKIT

MOVE TO CRITICAL

MOVE TO CRITICAL TOOLKIT

This guidance is designed to help businesses respond to a rise in the UK Threat Level to CRITICAL. It is divided into 3 sections.

Considerations to keeping your business operating when the threat level is at CRITICAL

Activities to undertake if you decide to keep your business operating

Considerations when the threat level reduces to SEVERE

This toolkit can be stored and accessed on your mobile device, tablet or desktop and/or can be printed and kept in an accessible location in your premises.

Please note the information does not constitute legal or other professional advice. It is provided free and without the intention of creating a contract or explicitly establishing any legal responsibility. All other legislation including health, safety and fire regulations, where applicable should be adhered to.



MOVE TO CRITICAL EXPLAINED

The Threat Level indicates the likelihood of a terrorist attack in the UK. When the threat level rises to **CRITICAL** it means that a terrorist attack is highly likely in the near future. **CRITICAL** is the highest of five levels.

CRITICAL - AN ATTACK IS HIGHLY LIKELY IN THE NEAR FUTURE

SEVERE - AN ATTACK IS HIGHLY LIKELY

SUBSTANTIAL - AN ATTACK IS LIKELY

MODERATE - AN ATTACK IS POSSIBLE BUT NOT LIKELY

LOW - AN ATTACK IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY

The threat level may be raised to **CRITICAL** following an attack, in the early stages of an investigation, often when there are outstanding suspects, and if authorities are not sure if there may be other attacks.

There is no set period of time that the UK Threat Level will remain at **CRITICAL**, however it is usually short, at most generally 3-4 days.

It can be a period of uncertainty and concern as the authorities work to address the threat. You are likely to see more police, armed officers, the deployment of military personnel at key sites and security checks in public places. Government buildings and public services are likely to change how they operate to keep people safe.

As a business owner you will need to decide whether you will operate your business when the threat level moves to **CRITICAL** and if you do, whether you need to change how you operate during this time. You have every right to carry on trading and working and it is important you do so, but equally it is appropriate to reflect what the change in threat level could mean for you, your staff and your business.

Listed below are some factors to consider. The key decision for many business operators is whether your venue(s) can remain open. This will be informed by a number of issues, including for example the extent to which it is essential for your business to be physically open to enable you to trade. For hospitality venues it is likely to be very difficult to operate other than by being open. For other businesses, there may be an option to work remotely or from an alternative site for what is likely to be a short period of time.

The safety of staff, customers and others as always is a key consideration and decisions about remaining open should take into account concerns they may have regarding the heightened threat level.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER REGARDING OPENING

1. Location and environment

- Is your business located near high-profile or crowded areas (e.g. transport hubs, landmarks, large venues)?
- If the increase in threat level followed a terrorist attack, is the type of location or area where it occurred similar to the one in which your business is located (e.g. shopping centre, open-air market)?
- Have local police or authorities issued any specific guidance or warnings for your area?
- Have local police or authorities issued any specific guidance or warnings to an identified group, linked to your business (e.g. LGBTQIA+, Jewish, Military)?

2. Your premises security

- Are your existing physical security measures (CCTV, locks, alarms) functioning and up to date?
- Do you have a clear procedure for identifying and reporting suspicious behaviour or packages?
- Are staff already trained in basic security awareness, such as ACT (Action Counter Terrorism) guidance?

3. Staff and customer safety

- Can staff and customers evacuate quickly and safely if needed?
- Are emergency contact numbers, procedures and assembly points clearly communicated to all staff?
- Do you have a reliable method for communicating urgent updates to employees (e.g. group messaging)?
- Can you manage vulnerable staff and visitors in an emergency?
- Would a temporary closure help reassure staff and customers while security advice is reviewed?

4. Operational considerations

- Do you have a business continuity plan to help you manage short-term closure or disruption?
- If transport networks are impacted, are staff still able to travel to work at times they are required?
- Can staff be allowed to work from home during this period?

If multiple answers raise concerns or highlight unpreparedness, consider temporarily closing or modifying operations until the threat level is reduced or additional safety measures are implemented. Always refer to official guidance from police or local authorities before making a decision.

If you decide to remain open, you can prepare your staff and business premises to reduce the likelihood and impact of a terrorist attack at your business premises.

MOVE TO CRITICAL ACTIVITY

PREPARE YOUR STAFF

Increase staff awareness – Explain to staff that the threat level has changed and why

Encourage staff to report suspicious activity and behaviour. Provide staff with the Anti-Terrorist Hotline number - 0800 789 321

Ensure staff know to call 999 in an emergency (poster)

Brief staff on the HOT Principles (poster)

Brief staff on the Run, Hide, Tell principles (poster)

Brief your staff on your security plans – make sure they know how to evacuate, invacuate/lockdown

Consider your staffing requirements - You may need to alter or extend staff shifts, or cancel leave if you need to raise your level of security or decide to work from home if applicable

Check who is first aid trained and when they will be on duty – is it during this critical period?

PREPARE COMMUNICATION

Ensure you can alert staff and visitors of any imminent or immediate threat or incident

Practice your arrangements, make sure your systems work and ensure staff know what is expected of them

Monitor news and media channels for updates – MPS X account link, MPS Engage

Keep staff updated with any relevant information to build confidence and reassurance

Identify critical operations within your business and how they can be maintained during this period. E.g Consider supply chains and whether they are remaining operational during this time, critical staff and equipment

Consider cancelling non-urgent business, visitors and deliveries to your business, where appropriate for this period of time

MOVE TO CRITICAL ACTIVITY

PREPARE YOUR PLANS

Review and walk-through your security plans especially plans to evacuate, invacuate/lockdown. Evacuation assembly points for a terrorist incident should be different to well-known fire evacuation assembly points and more than one option should be identified, which will give you options depending on where the threat is located

Ensure your contact list of staff and next of kin is up to date and readily accessible in an emergency

Ensure you have key business contact details (insurance, suppliers) identified and are available remotely

Identify critical operations within your business and how they can be maintained during this period. E.g Consider supply chains and whether they are remaining operational during this time, critical staff and equipment

Consider cancelling non-urgent business, visitors and deliveries to your business, where appropriate for this period of time

PREPARE YOUR BUILDING

Ensure bins inside and outside are emptied regularly to avoid them being used to hide items

Keep external areas, entrances, exits, stairs, reception areas and toilets clean, tidy and well-lit to reduce areas where items can be concealed.

Undertake regular checks of your premises to identify any potential suspicious or unaccounted for items

Keep likely escape routes clear from clutter and obstruction

Check first aid kits, and if you have one a grab bag, are fully stocked and staff know where they are kept

Ensure any CCTV is clean and working effectively

THREAT LEVEL REDUCTION - CRITICAL TO SEVERE

When the UK national threat level is reduced from CRITICAL to SEVERE, it signals that an attack is still highly likely, but no longer imminent. Businesses must remain vigilant but can begin to adjust some of the emergency security postures adopted during the period of CRITICAL threat.

Here's what a business should consider during this transition:

- **Maintain vigilance and awareness - a SEVERE threat level means an attack is still highly likely**
- **Stay tuned into information being provided by the Government and local police**
- **Review the information and intelligence provided by local police (and others) and whether your business might be affected**
- **Inform your staff about the change in threat level and what it means for business operations**
- **Ensure staff remain vigilant both during work and personal hours and encourage the reporting of suspicious activity and behaviours**
- **Notify any customers or businesses that operational changes during the period of CRITICAL have returned to BAU**

A downgrade from CRITICAL to SEVERE allows businesses to relax some emergency measures however the overall posture must remain vigilant and prepared.

FURTHER INFORMATION

**If you wish to know more about planning for an incident,
please explore the following links:**

PROTECTUK

www.protectuk.police.uk

NATIONAL PROTECTIVE SECURITY AUTHORITY

www.npsa.gov.uk

WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL

www.westminster.gov.uk

METROPOLITAN POLICE SERVICE

www.met.police.uk

BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE

www.btp.police.uk

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON

www.tfl.gov.uk

WEST END SECURITY GROUP

www.westendsecuritygroup.com