

Organisations should consider using searches of their premises for emplaced threats (such as explosive and incendiary devices) as a tool complementing other protective security measures. The regularity and scale of searches should reflect the threat and be proportionate to the risks faced by the particular organisation and site. Daily searches may be appropriate for higher risk sites, and/or at times of heightened threat. Effective searches are most easily conducted in organisations with good safety and security cultures, where work areas are kept tidy and items or behaviours that are suspicious are readily spotted and acted upon.

### **Developing a search regime**

When developing a search regime, an organisation should consider the following points, noting that the detail will depend upon the circumstances of the organisation and the particular location:

- the rationale for searching;
- what areas are to be searched (e.g. the main public and operational areas, as well as stairwells, fire escapes, corridors, toilets and lifts, and any car parks and surrounding grounds);
- what searches are intending to find;
- when and under what circumstances searches are to be conducted (e.g. daily, and/or in response to some form of security alert);
- who is responsible for conducting searches (for larger sites, responsibility should be divided into manageable areas, noting that individuals who work regularly in an area are best placed to spot unusual or suspicious items. Also, staff should ideally search in pairs to ensure nothing is missed);
- actions to take on finding anything suspicious;
- what training is required to enable staff to conduct searches efficiently and effectively;
- governance of the search regime, including who is responsible for its management and coordination, what records are kept, and how its effectiveness is assured.

### **Searches during and following evacuation**

In the event of premises of higher risk organisations being evacuated, searches of the arranged muster points, the routes towards them and the surrounding areas should be made to ensure there are no secondary devices.

A full search of the premises should also be conducted prior to re-occupation by staff. This is a responsibility that lies with the organisation and not the emergency services. The police will take responsibility for searches of any adjacent public areas.

### **Conducting a search**

- Appoint a Search Co-ordinator to oversee the operation and liaise with nominated searchers.
- Initiate the search by issuing a message over a public address system (perhaps coded to avoid unnecessary disruption and alarm), by text message, via personal radio or by telephone cascade.

- Divide the priority locations into areas of a manageable size for one or two searchers. Ideally, staff should search in pairs to ensure nothing is missed.
- Ensure that those conducting searches are familiar with the areas and what they would normally expect to find there. They do not need to be experts in explosives or other devices but able to recognise anything that should not be there, is out of place or not yet accounted for.
- Develop appropriate techniques for staff to be able to routinely search public areas without alarming any visitors or customers present.
- During the searches place particular focus on: areas that are open to the public; any enclosed areas such as cloakrooms, stairs, corridors and lifts; any evacuation routes and muster points; car parks and other external areas such as goods or loading bays.
- Under no circumstances should a suspicious item found during a search be touched or moved in any way. The police should be informed immediately and they will ensure an appropriate response.

- See more at: <http://www.cpni.gov.uk/Security-Planning/Business-continuity-plan/Search-premises/#sthash.g9Tlb4RJ.dpuf>