

## What Does HSAS Mean?

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Several weeks ago the White House announced a new homeland security initiative. The Homeland Security Advisory System (HSAS). It will provide a comprehensive and effective means of information regarding the risk of terrorist attacks to federal, state and local authorities and to the American people. President Bush signed the Homeland Security Directive #3, creating the New HSAS. This will be the foundation for building the comprehensive and effective communications structure for the dissemination of important information in a fast and effective manner.

The Attorney General will be responsible for the developing, implementing and managing the system. The lines of communication will be through our prosecutor's office here in Burlington County. Currently the Attorney General has an open comment period for 45 days. The first of May will start the review period for comments. Final version of the HSAS will be implemented August time frame. In the mean time, we all need to do our part as public servants to provide clear guidance and accurate information to the public.

This advisory system characterizes appropriate levels of vigilance, preparedness and readiness in a series of graduated Threat Conditions. The Protective Measures that correspond to each Threat Condition will help government and citizens decide what action to take. Based on the threat level, federal agencies will implement appropriate Protective Measures. State and County governments will be encouraged to adopt compatible systems. We should be evaluating this information for our specific areas. We should apply this to our facilities and assess local business and industry for their response. The intent of the HSAS will apply nationally, regionally, by sector or to potential targets.

Public announcements of threat advisory and alerts will help deter terrorist activity, notify law enforcement, State and County government officials of the threat, inform the public about government preparations and provide you with the necessary information to respond to the threat. Heightened Threat conditions can be declared for the entire nation or for a specific geographic area, functional or industrial sector.

The HSAS establishes five Threat Conditions with associated suggested Protective measures.

### Low Condition

#### GREEN

Low risk of terrorist attacks. The following Protective Measures may be applied:

- Refining and exercising preplanned protective measures
- Ensuring personnel receive training on HSAS, department or agency specific protective measures
- Regularly assessing facilities for vulnerabilities and taking measures to reduce them.

### Guarded Condition

#### **BLUE**

General risk of terrorist attack. In addition to Green Protective Measures the following may be applied:

- Checking communications with designated emergency response or command locations
- Reviewing and updating emergency response procedures
- Providing the public with necessary information

### Elevated Condition

#### **YELLOW**

Significant risk of terrorist attacks. In addition to Green and Blue Protective measures, the following may be applied:

- Increasing surveillance of critical locations
- Coordinating emergency plans with nearby jurisdictions
- Assessing further refinement of Protective Measures within the context of the current threat conditions
- Implementing, as required contingency and emergency response plans.

### High Condition

#### **ORANGE**

High risk of terrorist attack. In addition to Green, Blue and Yellow Protective Measures, the following may be applied:

- Coordinating necessary security efforts with armed forces or law enforcement agencies
- Taking additional precautions at public events
- Preparing to work at alternating site or with dispersed workforce
- Restricting access to essential personnel only

### Severe Condition

#### **RED**

Severe risk of terrorist attack. In addition to all of the previously outlined Protective Measures, the following may be applied:

- Assigning emergency response personnel and pre-positioning specially trained teams
- Monitoring, redirecting or constraining transportation systems
- Closing public and government facilities
- Increasing or directing personnel to address critical emergency needs

Burlington County has a Terrorism Task Force that has been chartered to develop policies and guidance for the safety of our community. We will continue to release information as it becomes available. The threat against the banks in our area still exists. The Threat condition is YELLOW it is recommended that you evaluate you area of responsibility and take the appropriate actions.

Feel free to contact your County Emergency Management Team at any time.