

Members' Briefing

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Use of commercial vehicles as a weapon

Since 2017, there have been a number of terrorist attacks across Europe where a vehicle has been used as an improvised weapon to deliberately target publicly occupied areas. In several of the attacks, the drivers of the vehicles concerned have ended up being overpowered, and in some cases killed. With the easing of lockdown restrictions, the police and security services continue to highlight the risk of vehicles to be used as weapons, particularly in urban environments.

As an industry, MPA members operate a large number of HGVs and smaller commercial vehicles in urban areas around the country. While London is clearly a focus, incidents elsewhere in Europe have highlighted that any urban area has the potential to be viewed as a target.

The types of operations industry vehicles undertake can involve vehicle engines being left running both on and off site on a routine basis, which makes them especially vulnerable.

There are various steps that can be taken to counter these risks which are set out in the MPA Drivers Handbook. [New guidance](#) designed to prevent commercial vehicles, including vans, lorries, buses, coaches and even cranes, from being used as weapons in acts of terrorism has been published by the British Standards Institution (BSI) as a Publicly Accessible Standard (PAS 29000:2021) with support from the Department for Transport to prevent criminals and terrorists from accessing commercial vehicles.



However, the most significant action that can be taken is to recognise that the threat exists in the first place by raising awareness amongst staff. Attacks are rarely undertaken on the 'spur of the moment', and most require a degree of planning and prior preparation.

The Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI) - a government agency that reports to MI5 - offers helpful [guidance](#). It outlines what individuals looking to undertake any form of criminal activity are looking to achieve in advance of any action and gives some simple steps that can be taken to disrupt what is described as 'hostile reconnaissance':

- DENY individuals the opportunity to gain information
- DETECT them when they are conducting their reconnaissance
- DETER them by promoting failure through messaging (signs warning of CCTV coverage) and physical demonstration of effective security (challenging individuals on site)

If any suspicious or unusual behaviour is observed at or near a vehicle, site or office, this should be reported to site management, so it can be logged and potentially reported to the police (via the 101 service).

Members are also encouraged to highlight incidents to security@mineralproducts.org to assist coordination with the national police service.

For further information, please contact:

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