

Threat Level Orange– Seven Words to Help People Understand What It Means

Finally, in seven simple words, U.S. residents can know and understand what the meaning and level of their involvement should be while government agencies are rapidly raising their awareness and security procedures during the “Orange Threat” status.

Norris L. Beren, Director of the Emergency Preparedness Educational Institute, publisher of the new book *When Disaster Strikes Home! 101+ ways to protect your family from unthinkable emergencies* says, “People are finally realizing that the changes in Threat Level Status are primarily for government agencies. All residents of the country, however, need to understand that they too have a role in providing an additional security and preparedness dimension for the safety of themselves, their community and the country as a whole.”

Beren says, “There is a lot of confusion and even some ridicule about the ever-changing status of the threat level, but increased government security is only part of the reason to heighten the threat level.” Beren continues, “Just like a concert or a sporting event when you add more traffic enforcement because it makes sense, alerting the country with heightened security renews everyone’s awareness and sensitivity. Well, when the best information tells you to have more security, it is probably a good idea.”

The Emergency Preparedness Educational Institute, an education, training and information-gathering organization, works with business, government and volunteer organizations providing information and workshops on designing family disaster plans. The primary goal of the Institute is to teach people to avoid the terrible consequences of a disaster or emergency.

The following seven words can help U.S. residents understand and prepare for an unexpected terrorism event.

- Awareness – Report to authorities any activities, objects, people, and situations that may seem out of the ordinary, unusual, or “suspicious”, especially in crowded places or critical infrastructure areas such as power plants, bridges, government buildings, crowded places, etc.
- Preparedness – Develop family emergency plans and get ready for an interruption in your lifestyle.
- Assistance – Be ready to give and get assistance to others, whether it is first aid, information, or shelter.
- Communication – Have a plan to give and get information to family members especially when communication systems are overwhelmed, out of service or delayed.
- Cooperation – Follow instructions of officials and work together to ensure the safety of your family and others.

- Training – Know what to do in an emergency which includes how to help others as well as your own family.
- Readiness – Review your personal disaster plan and update your emergency supplies kit.

These key words are important, no matter what the color alert status is. Every citizen needs to take the time to be informed, get prepared, and be ready. Your best protection is knowing what to do in an emergency; plan and practice in case it happens.