

## WORST-CASE SCENARIO®

# HOW TO SURVIVE A HOSTAGE SITUATION

Terrorists need to exercise power and control, and they do this by turning their victims into objects, which are easier to mistreat. Follow these tips to avoid mistreatment or worse.

**1 Stay calm.**

Help others around you to do the same—remember that the hostage takers are extremely nervous and scared. Do not do anything to make them more so. Do not speak to them unless they speak to you.

**2 If shots are fired, keep your head down and drop to the floor.**

If you can, get behind something, but do not move far—your captors may think that you are attempting to make an escape or an attack.

**3 Do not make any sudden or suspicious movements.**

Do not attempt to hide your wallet, passport, ticket, or belongings.

**4 Comply with all demands.**

Hesitation on your part may get you killed instantly, or may mark you for later retribution or execution. Remain alert and do not try to escape or be a hero. If you are told to put your hands over your head, to keep your head down, or to get into another body position,

do it. It may be uncomfortable, but do not change your position on your own. Talk yourself into relaxing into the position—you may need to stay that way for some time. Prepare yourself both mentally and emotionally for a long ordeal.

**5 Never look at a terrorist directly or raise your head until you are directed to speak to him or her.**

Always raise your hand and address the hostage takers respectfully. When answering questions, be respectful but not submissive. Speak in a regulated tone of voice.

**6 Never challenge a hostage taker.**

They often look for potential execution victims, and if you act contrary in any way, they may select you.

**7 Carefully observe the characteristics and behavior of the terrorists.**

Give them nicknames in your mind so that you can identify them. Be prepared to describe them by remembering attire, accents, facial characteristics, or height—any aspect that might later help authorities.

**8 If you are the victim of a skyjacking, know where the plane's closest emergency exits are located.**

Count the rows between you and the exit. In the event of an emergency rescue, smoke may obscure visibility, and you must know the fastest path out of the aircraft. Do not attempt escape unless it is clear that a massacre is imminent.

**9 If a rescue team enters, get down and stay still.**

Shots may be fired, and any sudden movements may draw terrorist or friendly fire.

**10 Upon resolution, be prepared to identify yourself and terrorists to the rescuers.**

Some terrorists may try to exit with you, posing as hostages.

### **Be Aware**

- To avoid making yourself attractive to terrorists, try not to take out your passport in public places.
- Be especially alert at airports, train stations, bus stations, in lobbies of expensive hotels, and in stores that cater to affluent tourists. While civil strife and guerrilla activity usually focus on nationals—thus tourists are relatively safe—terrorists often choose targets that will get them the most attention.