

Communities Against Terrorism

Potential Indicators of Terrorist Activities Related to Tattoo Shops

What Should I Consider Suspicious?

It is important to remember the application of body art, including symbols commonly associated with extremist ideology, may be an exercise of the right of free speech or expression. Therefore the sole act of seeking a specific tattoo or unusual placement of tattoos should not in and of itself be considered suspicious or reported. Rather it is a combination of suspicious behavior and or requests, as assessed by the shop owner based on professional experience that should lead to possible reporting of the activity.

People Who:

- Provide identification that is inconsistent or suspect or demands identity "privacy"
- Insist on paying with cash or uses credit card(s) in different name(s)
- Significantly alters appearance from visit to visit (shaving beard, changing hair color, style of dress, etc)
- Have missing hand/fingers, chemical burns, strange odors or bright colored stains on clothing
- Make racist or extreme religious statements coupled with comments that are violent or appear to condone violence
- Make suspicious comments regarding anti-US, radical theology, vague or cryptic warnings that suggest or appear to endorse the use of violence in support of a cause

People or Groups Who:

- Make repeated returns with multiple individuals requesting identical tattoos
- Request a tattoo and state intent is to target specific group or individual
- Inquire about unusual methods of tattooing or placement of tattoos which could allow the concealment of extremist symbols

It is important to remember that just because someone's speech, actions, beliefs, appearance, or way of life is different; it does not mean that he or she is suspicious.

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What Should I Do?

Be part of the solution.

- ✓ Require valid ID from all new customers.
- ✓ Keep records of purchases.
- ✓ Talk to customers, ask questions, and listen to and observe their responses.
- ✓ Watch for people and actions that are out of place.
- ✓ Make note of suspicious statements, people, and/or vehicles.
- ✓ **If something seems wrong, notify law enforcement authorities.**

Do not jeopardize your safety or the safety of others.

Preventing terrorism is a community effort. By learning what to look for, you can make a positive contribution in the fight against terrorism. The **partnership between the community and law enforcement** is essential to the success of anti-terrorism efforts.

Some of the activities, taken individually, could be innocent and must be examined by law enforcement professionals in a larger context to determine whether there is a basis to investigate. The activities outlined on this handout are by no means all-inclusive but have been compiled from a review of terrorist events over several years.