



THE CERT ALERT

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CERT INSTRUCTOR EXPERIENCES LONDON TERRORIST ATTACKS

By Larry "Murph" Murphy

On July 7th my wife, granddaughter and I were riding on the Circle Line in London twenty minutes before the terrorists' bombs started going off. We left Paddington Station and passed through Earls Cross Station shortly before the bomb detonated in the third tier tube. The most damage done by any of the bombs was in that station because the lowest level tube has only six inches of clearance around the train—making it like a bullet being shot out of a rifle barrel when the bomb went off. The other tubes have ten to fifteen feet of clearance around them and the force of the explosives dissipates much more quickly. The London Early Response Teams and Special Police did a fantastic job of responding and managing the situations at multiple locations.

The bus that was bombed was right across from a building housing a get together of medical personnel who were discussing disaster response situations. They ran out of their meeting and triaged the injured before the ambulances and police officers arrived on the scene. Many of the victims of the blasts were helped by fellow passengers, and then evacuated to three local hospitals by emergency service personnel. The reason the bodies were not identified to the public for four days was that by British Law, once a body is identified it must be given over to the family for burial. The authorities in the Anti-Terrorist Unit wanted all the forensics done before they released the dead. Despite the importance of gathering evidence, it didn't make the families of the missing very happy, and I am sure there will be some political fallout.

The second wave of attacks on July 21st are another reminder that determined individuals can succeed in perpetrating terrorist attacks no matter how tight security may be. How we react as individuals may determine who lives and who dies in an emergency. The "unthinkable" can, and does, happen—always be ready!



Larry "Murph" Murphy has extensive experience as a Red Cross advanced first aid instructor, and has 30 years experience in teaching outdoor living, survival skills, search and rescue and mountain rescue. He is a retired mentor teacher and has a background in military intelligence. He has AA, BA and MA degrees and attended the Defense Language Institute where he studied Arabic. **Thanks Murph for your many important contributions to the Fresno CERT program.**

LESSONS LEARNED IN LONDON – ADVICE TO CERT MEMBERS

Carry a small penlight at all times—sudden darkness is extremely disorienting and even a small light can help navigate in dark or smoke filled environments.

Each time you enter an enclosed space (building, bus, train, airplane, etc.), note where all of your exits are and consider your evacuation options. Be sure to note how the exits open.

Wear clothing made from natural fibers, as they are less combustible than synthetic materials.

Be alert to the people around you, and assess their capabilities to help if disaster strikes.

If there is smoke, stay low and move away from the source.

Stay calm—the British people were remarkable and their steadiness prevented hysteria and additional problems.

**Remember CERT Rule #1
Your Safety First!**