

This month marks a year after the terrible events of July 7 when 52 people died in a terrorist attack on the London Underground. Supt Steven Doel, involved in developing the capability to deal with such incidents, writes about a training package to deal with a CBRN terrorist strike.

There can be no doubt that we have to face the reality of the threat that CBRN materials (Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear) will be used against the UK and its population in the future. The 'when, not if' phrase has been used again and again. The transcripts from recent court cases and the historic interests shown by extremist terrorists, all point towards a desire to use this type of lethal weapon. This is part of the reason the second version of a CBRN awareness DVD has been launched – to inform those who may become a first responder at the scene of a terrorist strike. This DVD, distributed by the Police National

Terror

Illustration: Lisa Ryszkowska

CBRN Centre, promotes the simple safety message Steps 1-2-3 (Safety Triggers for Emergency Personnel) and provides more detail on what to look for at an incident.

“If you have not seen it, I urge you to ask why, as it is fundamental that the simple messages set out in the DVD are seen as widely as possible.”

Only six out of around 1,000 delegates at the Police Federation's Conference last year said they had seen the first training package. This second version has already been sent to chief officers across the country and will also be available on force intranet sites to try to ensure police officers and staff on the ground have seen a copy.

Terry Hayden, the Police Federation's lead on CBRN issues, officially launched the DVD at the Federation's annual conference this year. If you have not seen it, I urge you to ask why, as it is fundamental that the simple messages set out in the DVD are seen as widely as possible.

Having worked as a CBRN Silver commander I know what it is like to try and decide what action do I take next? What are the risks to my staff and the public? In the case of the many white powder hoaxes - how can I be sure this is not the real thing?

Whilst the DVD is aimed at all staff, trained and untrained, we are seeking to improve our response through better use of trained and equipped officers over the next five years. We are currently looking for applications from officers to support the Police National CBRN Operational Response Programme (ORP). The purpose of the programme is to seek improvement through the following:

Capacity – increasing the numbers of trained and equipped to deal with a CBRN incident

Capability – understanding better what the role is and providing better equipment

Availability – locating this enhanced capability and capacity when and where it is needed

Coordination – ensuring these strands are in place and sustained for lifetime of the current CBRN threat

The process of interview and selection is taking place now to

tactics



