

Tech Sector Outreach: Identifying Violent Extremist Indicators and Reporting Mechanisms for Online Service Providers

Most Common Mobilization Indicators Observed Online^c

			MOBILIZATION INDICATOR BOOKLET #	OBSERVABLE BEHAVIORS (Based on NCTC-DHS-FBI US Violent Extremist Mobilization Indicators Booklet)	ACTIONS
	MOBILIZATION		3 7	Disseminating a martyrdom or last will video or statement; unusual postdeath instructions	For emergencies or immediate threat to life, call 9-1-1 Contact the FBI: (800) CALL FBI (225-5324)
			5	Stating specific details of an intended violent activity, including target(s), time frames, and participant roles	
	PREPARATION		23	Sending or receiving unexplained/unusual amounts of currency, including digital assets, to or from violent extremists, along with other indications of interest in violent extremist activities	Contact the FBI: (800) CALL FBI (225-5324) https://tips.fbi.gov
			22	Planning or pursuing suspicious travel activity in a manner that raises suspicion of potential violence (e.g., conducting unusual purchase of one-way tickets or unusual or very specific searches in online navigation tools in conjunction with other indications of interest in violent extremist activities)	
			13	Unusual purchase of military- or law enforcement-style tactical equipment, such as body armor or personal protective equipment, in a manner that raises suspicion of planning violence or in conjunction with other indications of interest in violent extremist activities	
			19 20	Unusual efforts to obtain explosives precursors or acquisition of weapons or ammunition for suspected criminal purposes	
			25	Conducting research for target or tactic selection for violent acts especially when coupled with indicators of the intent to pursue specific targets or evade security	Contact the FBI: (800) CALL FBI (225-5324) https://tips.fbi.gov or FBI Field Office and/or State or Local Fusion Center
			09	Unusual interest in researching, building, acquiring knowledge, materials, or testing of explosives, especially if tailored to a specific target	
			14	Breaking away from a larger group or creating a more exclusive or operationally secure group to discuss or plan specific violent activity	
	MOTIVATION		30	Threatening specific violence against a particular physical target or category of target, especially in response to sociopolitical or other flashpoint events related to ideological concerns	
			31	Threatening violence toward specific individuals or groups, including civilian, government, law enforcement, or military personnel	
			36	Praising, fixating on, or researching past successful or attempted attacks or attackers	

SCOPE: This product is based on the *NCTC-DHS-FBI US Violent Extremist Mobilization Indicators*, a booklet of 42 indicators or observable behaviors suggesting how close an ideologically motivated US-based violent extremist is mobilizing to violence. This product is intended as a reference for the most common mobilization indicators that may be observed^a by online service providers. Some of these indicators may involve otherwise lawful or constitutional behaviors. Online service providers are not legally compelled to take specific action in response to online content that suggests the presence of one or more indicator; however, this product may be useful when considering how to apply terms of service to online content on their own platforms. **Always call 9-1-1 in case of an emergency or threat to life.** The incorporation of “unusual” in many of the indicators refers to behaviors that are different enough from the individual’s baseline to cause concern.

Online radicalization, particularly that of juveniles, is a growing problem worldwide. Many violent extremists use social media, online gaming, and encrypted messaging platforms to communicate, recruit, spread terrorist messaging, or plot attacks.^b The desire of violent extremists to communicate with other like-minded individuals because of their use of technology, the tech sector may be positioned to observe and report some of the indicators outlined in this product helping to enhance public safety.

- Mobilization Indicators**
Physical or virtual actions suggesting an attack or violent extremist travel may be imminent
- Preparation Indicators**
Physical or virtual actions suggesting an attack or violent extremist travel may occur in the near term
- Motivation Indicators**
Physical or virtual actions that build, solidify, or communicate violent ideological beliefs

^aBystanders are people whose relationship and level of interaction with a person of concern enables them to witness or become aware of activities or behavior reasonably indicative of terrorism or other criminal activity.

^bThe mere advocacy of or presence in groups that advocate political or social positions, political activism, use of strong rhetoric, or generalized philosophical embrace of violent tactics does not necessarily constitute violent extremism and may be constitutionally protected by the First Amendment. Strong rhetoric and divisive terms should not be assumed to reflect or further violent extremist activity, absent additional information, and should be considered in the context of all applicable laws and policies regarding privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties.

^cSome of the indicators may be lawful or constitutionally protected and should not serve as the sole basis for any investigative activity. Additional facts and circumstances that clearly support a determination that the observed behavior is not innocent but rather reasonably indicative of pre-operational planning associated with terrorism are necessary to constitute a basis for reporting to authorities.

US Violent Extremist Mobilization Indicators

Mobilization Indicators

- 1
- Traveling, within the United States or abroad, to carry out or participate in violent extremist activity or join a violent extremist group
- 2
- Threatening or violently resisting law enforcement on the basis of violent extremist ideology
- 3
- Disseminating one's own martyrdom or last will video or statement (such as a preattack manifesto or other final statement)
- 4
- Conducting a dry run of an attack or assault or attempting to get near or access identified targets
- 5
- Stating—in person or online—about specific details of an intended violent activity, including target(s), time frames, and participant roles
- 6
- Disposing of meaningful personal assets or belongings in an unusual manner, including sudden unexplained account closures and disbursements, particularly with a sense of urgency or without regard for personal financial gain
- 7
- Unusual goodbyes or postdeath instructions

Preparation Indicators

- 8
- Communicating intent to engage in violence or a direct threat with justification for action, particularly if presented as necessary or inevitable, in person or online
- 9
- Unusual interest in researching, building, or testing explosives, especially if tailored to a specific target; unusual injuries
- 10
- Planning or preparing to travel abroad to join violent extremist organizations, seek training, or engage in violent activities in a conflict zone
- 11
- Planning or preparing to travel within the United States to participate in violent extremist activity
- 12
- Seeking or claiming religious, political, or ideological justification for a planned violent act
- 13
- Unusual purchase of military- or law enforcement-style tactical equipment, such as body armor or personal protective equipment, in a manner that raises suspicion of planning violence
- 14
- Breaking away from a larger in-person or online group or creating a more exclusive or operationally secure group to discuss or plan specific violent activity
- 15
- Surveilling potential attack targets

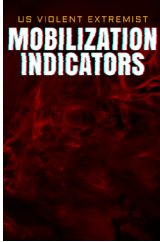
- 16
- Increased use of physical concealment tactics (for example, countersurveillance techniques or disposable phone) in support of planning a specific act of violence
- 17
- Increased use of online concealment tactics (such as deleting, hiding, or manipulating social media or other online accounts to misrepresent location or hide group membership, contacts, or activities) in support of planning a specific act of violence
- 18
- Communicating directly or seeking to develop a relationship with violent extremists for suspected criminal purposes
- 19
- Unusual efforts to obtain explosives precursors, especially illegally or surreptitiously
- 20
- Acquisition of weapons or ammunition for suspected criminal purposes
- 21
- Change in or initiation of physical or weapons training for suspected criminal purposes
- 22
- Planning or pursuing suspicious travel (for example, unusual purchase of one-way tickets, false excuses for international travel, or fraudulent passport application) in a manner that raises suspicion of planning violence
- 23
- Sending or receiving unexplained financial resources or equipment to/ from violent extremists
- 24
- Creating, joining, or implying membership/association—in person or online— with violent extremist groups for the purpose of furthering violent activity
- 25
- Conducting research related to target or tactic selection for violent acts (for example, seeking blueprints, maps, schematics, or technical specifications)
- 26
- Pursuing or exploiting jobs or personnel who provide sensitive access to enable violent acts (in sectors such as critical infrastructure, the Intelligence Community, law enforcement, or the military)
- 27
- Seeking technical expertise (for example, in aviation, biology, chemistry, or electronics) to enable planning violence

Motivation Indicators

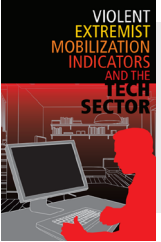
- 28
- Expressing intent to harm law enforcement if law enforcement takes action that the individual believes is unjustified, or statement of intent to harm others (typically ideological opponents) if confronted
- 29
- Expressing desire for notoriety or willingness to die through violent extremist acts
- 30
- Threatening specific violence against a particular physical target or category of target, especially in response to sociopolitical or other flashpoint events related to ideological concerns

- 31
- Threatening violence toward specific individuals or groups, including civilian, government, law enforcement, or military personnel
- 32
- Producing, promoting, or extensively consuming violent extremist content online or in person, including videos, narratives, media, and messaging for suspected criminal purposes
- 33
- Posing with weapons and imagery associated with violent extremism in pictures or videos, especially if paired with threats of or expressed interest in violence against an ideological target
- 34
- Expressing acceptance of violence, including destruction of critical infrastructure and key resources, as a necessary means to achieve ideological goals and rejection of nonviolent means as ineffective or unavailable
- 35
- Attempting to radicalize others—especially family members and peers—to violence
- 36
- Praising, fixating on, or researching past successful or attempted attacks or attackers
- 37
- Adherence to narratives that create a sense of crisis (or urgency) to justify violence against ideological opponents
- 38
- Having outbursts around, fighting with, or condemning behavior of family, peers, community members, or authority figures while advocating violent extremist ideology
- 39
- Adopting more than one violent extremist ideology
- 40
- Rejecting engagement with nonviolent voices in favor of violent extremist ideologies
- 41
- Changing vocabulary, style of speech, or behavior to reflect a hardened point of view or new sense of purpose associated with violent extremist causes, particularly after a catalyzing event
- 42
- Isolating oneself from family and others, particularly while citing violent extremist doctrine or ideology particularly if citing violent extremist doctrine or ideology

Resources



NCTC-DHS-FBI
[US Violent Extremist Mobilization Indicators](#)



NCTC-DHS-FBI
[Violent Extremist Mobilization Indicators and the Tech Sector](#)



PRODUCT FEEDBACK

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<https://www.JCAT-url.com>

For further information, please email JCAT
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(U) The Joint Counterterrorism Assessment Team (JCAT) is a collaboration by NCTC, DHS, FBI, state, local, tribal, and territorial government personnel to improve information sharing and enhance public safety. The First Responder's Toolbox is an ad hoc, unclassified reference aid intended to promote counterterrorism coordination among federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial government authorities and partnerships with private sector officials in deterring, preventing, disrupting, and responding to terrorist attacks.