

16 April 2013

(U) Update: Pressure Cookers as IED Components

(U) This is an update of an RCR published on 1 July 2010. Rudimentary improvised explosive devices (IEDs) using pressure cookers to contain the initiator, switch, and explosive charge frequently have been used in Afghanistan, India, Nepal, and Pakistan. Pressure cookers are common in these countries, and their presence probably would not seem out of place or suspicious to passersby or authorities. Presence in an unusual location—or if noticed in a container such as backpack—should be treated as suspicious.

(U) Examples of Recent Attacks Involving Pressure Cooker Devices

- (U) Based on preliminary examination of photographs and on-scene reports, one IED that exploded at the 15 April 2013 Boston Marathon incorporated a pressure cooker. The Second device was also housed in a metal container, but currently there is insufficient evidence to determine if this was a pressure cooker as used in the first device.
- (U) One of the three devices used in the 1 May 2010 attack in Times Square incorporated a pressure cooker containing approximately 120 firecrackers.

(U) Indicators of Pressure Cooker Devices

(U) Terrorists can exploit the innocuous appearance and transportability of pressure cookers to conceal IED components. Pressure cookers can also be concealed in bags or other containers, offering few if any indicators of an impending attack. Alertness and quick reaction to the discovery of such concealment devices in unusual locations or circumstances can improve chances of early detection and prevention of an attack. Potential indicators of a pressure cooker configured as an IED include:

- (U) Protruding wires or fuses:
- (U) Unusual smells such as chemical odors;
- (U) Unusual wetness or stains on a container; and
- (U) Apparent abandonment of a pressure cooker in a high traffic or otherwise strategic location.

(U) 15 April 2013 Boston Marathon



(U) Remains of backpack.



(U) Remains of pressure cooker.



(U) Pressure Cooker.

(U) DHS provides detailed information for law enforcement on improvised explosive devices at [TRIPwire.dhs.gov](http://tripwire.dhs.gov) or the TRIPwire Community Gateway (<http://cs.hsin.gov>). For further information on TRIPwire and bombing prevention, contact the DHS Office for Bombing Prevention at obp@dhs.gov.