FBI tips for hotels. How to spot terrorists and what to do.

22 February 2012

Hotel Lawyer with “Potential Indicators of Terrorist Activities Related to Hotels and Motels.”

Hoteliers, I have 3 questions for you:

1. Do you know the red flags of suspicious activity that may indicate a terrorist is staying at your hotel?
2. Do you know what to do when you see these red flags?
3. Do you know what the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) say about these matters?

Recently, the FBI and the BJA set up a joint regional intelligence center, a hotline, and published a Release with some tips specifically for hotels and motels. Here are the highlights from the Release, as well as a link to download the full text.

What should I consider suspicious?

Guests who:

- Request specific room assignments or locations.
- Use cash for large transactions or a credit card in someone else’s name.
- Arrive with unusual amounts of luggage.
- Make unusual inquiries about local sites, including government, military, police, communications, and power facilities.
- Refuse cleaning service over an extended time.
- Use entrances and exits that avoid the lobby.
- Abandon a room and leave behind clothing and toiletry items.
- Do not leave their room.
- Change their appearance.
- Leave the property for several days and then return.

Thefts of official vehicles, uniforms, identification, and access cards.

Reports of guest rooms with:

- Burn marks or discoloration on the walls or door.
- Unusual odors or liquids seeping from a guest room.
- Unusual amounts of traffic.

Discovery of unusual items in guest rooms or facility dumpsters:

- Fertilizer or agricultural products.
- Chemicals or chemical containers.
- Fuel or fuel containers.
- Weapons, ammunition, and explosives.
- Extremist training manuals or literature.
- Fraudulent credit cards or documents.

Parked vehicles in isolated areas.

What should I do?

Be part of the solution.

- Report vehicles abandoned on the property to law enforcement authorities.
- 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.

A few final considerations

The Release also adds a few cautions worth noting:

Each indicator listed above, is by itself lawful conduct or behavior and may also constitute the exercise of rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. In addition, there may be a wholly innocent explanation for conduct or behavior that appears suspicious in nature. For this reason, no single indicator should be the sole basis for law enforcement action. The totality of behavioral indicators and other relevant circumstances should be evaluated when considering any law enforcement response or action.

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.

For more information

For more information, contact the Joint Regional Intelligence Center (JRIC), www.jric.org, (888) 705-JRIC (5742) mention “Tripwire.”

Download the full text of this 1-page Release by clicking: Potential Indicators of Terrorist Activities Related to Hotels and Motels.

This is Jim Butler, author of www.HotelLawBlog.com and hotel lawyer, signing off. We’ve done more than $87 billion of hotel transactions and have developed innovative solutions to unlock value from hotels. Who’s your hotel lawyer?
Our Perspective. We represent hotel lenders, owners and investors. We have helped our clients find business and legal solutions for more than $87 billion of hotel transactions, involving more than 3,900 properties all over the world. For more information, please contact Jim Butler at jbutler@jmbm.com or +1 (310) 201-3526.

Jim Butler is a founding partner of JMBM, and Chairman of its Global Hospitality Group® and Chinese Investment Group™. Jim is one of the top hospitality attorneys in the world. GOOGLE “hotel lawyer” and you will see why.

Jim and his team are more than “just” great hotel lawyers. They are also hospitality consultants and business advisors. They are deal makers. They can help find the right operator or capital provider. They know who to call and how to reach them.