

Threat to life policy

This guidance is based on the [Association of Chief Police Officers \(ACPO\) guidelines](#).

This guidance is based on the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) guidance

Threat to life policy

About this guidance

About this guidance What a threat to life is What to do if you receive a threat to life	<p>This guidance tells you about Home Office policy when there is a threat to human life, the legislation used to identify a threat to life, and the action you must take.</p> <p>The guidance tells you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• what a threat to life is• what the Home Office's threat to life policy is• the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) threat to life policy• the legislation that identifies a threat to life• what you must do if you receive a threat to life. <p>For general information on ACPO, see related link.</p> <p>Changes to this guidance - This page lists the changes to this guidance, with the most recent at the top.</p> <p>Contacts - This page explains who to contact for more help or advice.</p> <p>Information owners - This page tells you about this version of the document and who owns it.</p>	<p>In this section</p> <p>Changes to this guidance</p> <p>Contact</p> <p>Information owner</p> <p>Links to staff intranet removed</p>
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Changes to this guidance

About this guidance What a threat to life is What to do if you receive a threat to life	This page lists changes to threat to life policy guidance, with the most recent at the top.		Related links What a threat to life is What to do if you receive a threat to life See also Contact Information owner Links to staff intranet removed
	Date of the change	Details of the change	
	23 July 2013	<p>Six month review by the modernised guidance team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What a threat to life is:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ the content of the link 'ACPO national threat to life policy' has changed• What to do if you receive a threat to life:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ sub-heading 'The potential assailant', first bullet point, new final sub-bullet 'method of attack'• Minor housekeeping changes.	
	23 January 2013	<p>Six month review by the modernised guidance team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What to do if you receive a threat to life:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ restricted information has changed• Contact:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ restricted information has changed• Minor housekeeping changes.	
		For previous changes you will need to access the archived guidance. See related link: Threat to life policy – archive.	

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What a threat to life is

About this guidance What a threat to life is What to do if you receive a threat to life	<p>This section defines a threat to life.</p> <p>A threat to life occurs when, because of a deliberate intention or the criminal act of another, the Home Office, police or another law enforcement agency identifies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a real and immediate threat to a loss of life• a threat to cause serious harm, or• a threat of injury to another. <p>A threat to life also includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• serious sexual assault, and• rape. <p>For the purposes of this policy 'real and immediate' means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a risk that is reasonably assessed to be real, and• the potential assailant has the intention and current ability to carry out the threat. <p>The Home Office has adopted the Association of Chief Police Officers' (ACPO) national threat to life policy, see related link.</p> <p>The Home Office threat to life policy is based on article 2 of the Human Rights Act 1998, which enshrines the right to life in British law.</p> <p>British and European legislation places an obligation on the Home Office, police and other law enforcement agencies, to take all reasonable steps to protect a person whose life is in 'real and immediate' danger from the criminal acts of another.</p>	<p>In this section</p> <p>The Human Rights Act and the threat to life</p> <p>Links to staff intranet removed</p>
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	<p>There is a public expectation for all law enforcement agencies to take all reasonable steps to protect life and if they fail to effectively take reasonable steps it may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• lead to a loss of life• cause serious injury to another, or• undermine public confidence in them and in their ability to manage serious issues. <p>The objectives for the Home Office threat to life policy are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• protect the life of any intended victim(s)• preserve the lives of all others involved• prevent serious injury• make sure the public is safe• maintain the safety of all those involved in attempting to reduce the risks• protect intelligence sources, and• provide a standardised national framework for dealing with these incidents with other law enforcement agencies and across police force boundaries.	
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The Human Rights Act and the threat to life

About this guidance What a threat to life is What to do if you receive a threat to life	<p>This page tells you about identifying a threat to life and applying article 2 of the Human Rights Act 1998.</p> <p>When the ‘right to life’ applies</p> <p>A threat to life is considered to be one that you could apply article 2 of the Human Rights Act 1998 to, for more information, see related link.</p> <p>It states that:</p> <p>‘Everyone’s right to life shall be protected by law. No one shall be deprived of his life intentionally save in the execution of a sentence of a court following his conviction of a crime for which the penalty is provided by law’.</p> <p>Deprivation of life shall not be regarded as inflicted in contravention of this article when it results from the use of force which is no more than absolutely necessary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• in defence of any person from unlawful violence• to effect a lawful arrest or to prevent the escape of a person lawfully detained• in action lawfully taken for the purpose of quelling a riot or insurrection’. <p>When the ‘right to life’ does not apply</p> <p>The ‘right to life’ is absolute, but there are situations when it does not apply.</p> <p>A person’s right to life is not breached if they die when a public authority uses necessary force to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• stop them carrying out unlawful violence• make a lawful arrest• stop them escaping lawful detainment, or	Links to staff intranet removed
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• stop a riot or uprising. <p>The force used by a public authority must be absolutely necessary and strictly proportionate.</p> <p>For more information on the Human Rights Act 1998, see related link.</p>	
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What to do if you receive a threat to life

About this guidance What a threat to life is What to do if you receive a threat to life	<p>This page tells you what you must do if you receive a threat to life.</p> <p>If you receive either information or intelligence suggesting there is a threat to human life, you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• make a written record of a threat in either your:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ daybook, or○ official note book• and include the following details:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ date and time you received the threat to life○ who provided the information about the threat to life○ how you received the information. <p>You must be able to show you acted logically and considered what the next sequence of events might be. Below is a list of points you must consider in relation to a threat to life.</p> <p>The victim(s) You must consider whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the victim can be identified by either:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ their name○ their description, or○ membership of a group• anyone else may be affected and does it depend on how close they are, such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ family members○ children, or○ close associates living elsewhere• the victim has the ability to retaliate.	Links to staff intranet removed
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	<p>The potential assailant You must consider if the potential assailant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can be identified by their: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ name ○ description ○ membership of a group, or ○ method of attack • is capable of carrying out the threat and if they have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a history of violence ○ access to firearms or other weapons ○ access to the victim ○ the physical ability • intends to carry out the threat, and whether: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ they have carried out any preparatory acts ○ they have made previous threats, or ○ you are meant to believe the threat • has any motivation to carry out the attack, for example, whether: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ there is financial incentive ○ they have a grudge against the victim, or ○ they have suffered loss or injury. <p>Other factors You must also consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if the place for the attack can be identified by name or description or if you can deduce it • what the timescale is for the potential attack or if it depends on an event • if there are any conditional factors, for example, is the attack possible or does it depend on the victim or potential assailant doing, or not doing, something • if the intelligence has been evaluated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ if so, check what the 5x5x5 intelligence rating is, for more information about this rating, see related link: Manual of standards - Recording and dissemination of 	
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	<p>intelligence material.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• what the risks are to the source of the intelligence• if there is an evidential allegation of crime that can be openly investigated. <p>This list is not exhaustive but if you consider these points it will help you make a realistic assessment of the threat.</p> <p>If you are made aware of a possible threat to life you must immediately contact:</p> <div><p>Restricted – do not disclose – start of section</p><p>The information in this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.</p><p>Restricted – do not disclose – end of section</p></div> <p>The crime directorate's specialist teams will then decide the appropriate action to take in response to the threat.</p>	
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Contact

About this guidance What a threat to life is What to do if you receive a threat to life	<p>This page explains who to contact if you need more help with a question about the Home Office's threat to life policy.</p> <p>If you have read this guidance and still need more help, you must first ask your line manager. If they cannot answer your question you can contact:</p> <div><div>Restricted – do not disclose – start of section</div><div>The information in this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.</div><div>Restricted – do not disclose – end of section</div></div> <p>Changes to this guidance can only be made by the modernised guidance team (MGT). If you think the policy content needs amending you must contact the policy team, using the related link: Email: CI inbox who will ask the MGT to update the guidance, if appropriate.</p> <p>The MGT will accept direct feedback on broken links, missing information or the format, style and navigability of this guidance. You can send these using the related link: Email: Modernised guidance team.</p>	<p>In this section</p> <p>Changes to this guidance</p> <p>Information owner</p> <p>Links to staff intranet removed</p>
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Information owner

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This page tells you about this version of the Home Office's threat to life policy and who owns it.

Version	3.0
Valid from date	23 July 2013
Policy owner	Criminal investigation immigration enforcement specialist teams
Cleared by director	David Pennant (and Sonia Dower)
Director's role	Director, criminal investigation, immigration enforcement (and director, operational policy and rules)
Clearance date	29 June 2012
This version approved for publication by	Steven Clement
Approver's role	Acting assistant director, modernising guidance project team, immigration enforcement
Approval date	22 July 2013

Changes to this guidance can only be made by the modernised guidance team (MGT). If you think the policy content needs amending you must contact the policy team, using the related link: Email: CI inbox, who will ask the MGT to update the guidance, if appropriate.

The MGT will accept direct feedback on broken links, missing information or the format, style and navigability of this guidance. You can send these using the related link: Email: Modernised guidance team.

In this section

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[Contact](#)

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