Emergency Preparedness Scenario Vignettes

This file presents material from Appendix J in *ACRP Research Report 201* in Word format to facilitate use by practitioners. It incorporates line and page breaks to facilitate printing and separating of the printed scenario vignettes.

These vignettes serve multiple functions, including laying the foundation of a discussion-based or tabletop exercise, assisting planners in understanding the multifaceted aspects of accessible emergency communications, and as a starting place for emergency communications strategy development. The vignettes are by no means inclusive of every individual traveler’s experience.

**Active-Shooter Scenario**

Michelle is a 32-year-old vice president of a start-up company that specializes in autonomous vehicle technologies. She has just arrived on an incoming flight and is preparing to gather her bags at baggage claim. Without warning, a person on the departures level pulls out a gun and begins firing indiscriminately into the crowd. An active-shooter warning is paged over the public address (PA) system that tells people to exit through the closest door. As others around her begin to run for the exits, Michelle is forced to lie down behind a baggage carousel because her visual impairment does not allow her to see the location of the exits.

**Bomb Threat**

Harold is an elderly man who has made the trip from his first nation to the local airport to meet his son, who is returning home after a trip to New York City. Harold also is planning to get the batteries in his hearing aids replaced, as they have both died and left him without most of his hearing. This is not usually a problem for Harold, because he has lived alone ever since his wife died a few years ago. After parking, he walks into the terminal and wanders over to the arrivals screen to find his son’s flight, which appears to be on time. Harold settles into a comfortable chair in the arrivals area. Before long, Harold begins to see people leaving the building in a hurry and strains to hear what might be happening. Unable to decipher the PA system, he looks to the television screens but finds no information there. Deciding that there is nothing urgent going on, Harold is eventually surprised when he is confronted by a police officer with an explosives-detection dog. Harold manages to get across that he is a person who is hard of hearing. Eventually, an airport employee who speaks American Sign Language (ASL) explains that the terminal has been shut down and evacuated as a result of a suspicious device.

**Fire**

Miriam is a 40-year-old post-graduate student who is flying to California to complete research for her doctoral dissertation. A congenital condition has left her requiring the use of a wheelchair to get around. After arriving at the airport, she goes to get something to eat before going through the security checkpoint. As she begins to eat her breakfast of bacon and eggs, the fire alarm goes off. She hears the alarm, sees the strobe lights, and begins to make her way back the way she came. Unfortunately, the fire has happened in a neighboring restaurant and her path is blocked by smoke and flames, so she looks for another exit. She discovers a narrow hallway with an exit sign and begins to make her way down it. She reaches the end of the hallway and opens the door to find herself facing a flight of stairs. The hallway is too narrow for her to turn her wheelchair around and she is forced to remain at the doorway until a responding firefighter sees her and helps carry her down the stairs, where she is placed in an ambulance to be evaluated for smoke inhalation.

**Explosion**

Hassan is a Syrian doctor who has been recruited to work at the Mayo Clinic. He speaks enough English to get by; however, he is traveling with his wife Fatima and their young daughter Yara, who don’t speak English. After disembarking from their flight, they make their way to the bathrooms so that Fatima can change Yara’s diaper. While Hassan waits for them outside, an explosion and loud crash interrupt his thoughts. Before he can figure out what is happening, security and police are rushing in one direction, and he is being carried along with the crowd, away from the bathrooms. An immediate announcement is put out over the public address (PA) system and is also flashed on internal screens throughout the airport asking people to leave the terminal by the closest door and stay away from the main entrance. Fatima, speaking no English, is unaware of the problem and is unable to find Hassan after leaving the bathroom. She follows the icons for baggage claim, thinking that Hassan might meet her there. As she moves through the terminal, she is confronted by the first-responding police officers, who find her just inside the main entrance. As they reach her, they mistake her for a threat and arrest her. It is several hours before she is able to explain, through an interpreter, that she was just lost and looking for her husband.