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How can French authorities prevent a terrorist attack during Euro 2016?

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As the UEFA European Championship kicks off in France, the memory of last November's [terrorist attacks](#) on the Stade de France and other venues across Paris looms large. French authorities will be examining the previous attacks – including the January 2015 shootings at [Charlie Hebdo](#) – to secure the tournament against any terrorist threat. Even if that means disappointing fans by [shutting down Marseilles' famous beaches](#).

To start with, authorities will be thinking carefully about what kinds of attacks are possible. Both the Paris and Hebdo attacks were made using small arms. Such attacks are popular with terrorist groups, because they are relatively easy to plan and carry out, can cause a high number of casualties and effectively spread terror throughout the population. It's very likely that security forces will be preparing for the potential of a similar style of attack.

Authorities will also be wary of potential attacks by suicide bombers, like the one witnessed [in Brussels](#) earlier this year. Suicide bomb attacks are frequently used by Islamist-inspired groups, and can be carried out in different ways. Individuals may wear home-made bomb vests, or drive vehicles with explosives into places where many people have gathered.

Of course, bombs can also be planted in specific locations. But static bombs are easier to deal with than suicide bombers, as areas and stadiums can be swept for these devices. What's more, entrances to stadiums will be tightly controlled, with strict security requirements, similar to the [London 2012 Olympics](#).

Authorities will also be considering how to police more accessible areas like the fan zones and host cities, as these places will attract thousands of supporters on any given day throughout the tournament. France is already on high security alert, having maintained its state of emergency [since November](#), so many of the locations linked to the tournament will be hard for terrorists to penetrate.

Attacks like the ones we've witnessed in Europe recently are not easy to carry out – they require planning, and a support network. Of course, this does not stop individuals from launching rogue attacks, like the one at [Leytonstone Tube station](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-35018789)[http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-35018789] in December 2015.

But while such attacks can cause casualties – as seen in [Munich last month](#) – they cannot have the same impact as well-planned, well-resourced attacks. And fans attending the tournament can take comfort from the [recent arrest of a French man](#) who was caught transporting weapons, reportedly in order to launch an attack on the tournament.

France is deploying 90,000 police and security personnel to protect citizens. They are likely to be deployed at strategic locations, and no doubt briefed on what to look for. This can include potential terrorist suspects, which intelligence reports have highlighted as possible threats, or keeping an eye out [for behaviour](#) that looks out of the ordinary. Security cordons will also be strategically placed to maximise safety and security.

Intelligence will also play a major part in the security operation. On June 7, 2016, [Europol](#) – the EU's law enforcement agency – [announced that](#) it was directing 200 of its staff to assist French policing agencies and ensure the rapid exchange of any relevant information.

Contingency plans

The French will also be developing contingency plans, based on which responses worked – and which didn't – during the Paris and Brussels attacks. Police and emergency services will have carefully planned a series of responses, tailored to the type of attacks that are likely to occur. This will include ensuring the tactics deployed by police firearms units are suitable to address specific threats, and identifying suitable evacuation zones where people can stay safely and the injured can be treated in the event of an attack.

When attending the games themselves, supporters will be encouraged to get to the stadium well ahead of time, as the security procedure will be strict and time consuming. Further security checks on public transport systems such as the Metro are also likely. People should not be overly concerned about the large police presence; officers are there to keep them safe, as well as deal with any violence from rival supporters. The French government has also [released a mobile app](#) to alert the public in the event of a terrorist attack.

The threat of a terrorist attack is real. As [the Provisional IRA said](#) during the Irish Troubles: the state has to be lucky 100% of the time, the terrorist only once. But when you consider the proportion of attacks which have [been prevented](#), the likelihood of one occurring is still remote.

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