

**COMPARISON OF
DEPT. OF DEFENSE (DOD) FORCE PROTECTION CONDITION (FPCON) –
U.S. COAST GUARD (USCG) MARITIME SECURITY (MARSEC) –
DEPT. OF HOMELAND SECURITY (DHS) HOMELAND SECURITY ADVISORY
SYSTEM (HSAS) LEVELS**

SUMMARY:

DoD FPCON	USCG MARSEC	DHS HSAS
Norma	Level 1	Level Green
Alpha	Level 1	Level Blue
Bravo	Level 1	Level Yellow
Charlie	Level 2	Level Orange
Delta	Level 3	Level Red

BACKGROUND:

Department of Defense – Force Protection Conditions (FPCONs) System

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the proponent for approving and standardizing the FPCONs System. The FPCONs facilitate inter-Service coordination and support to US military antiterrorism activities. However, the Geographic Combatant Commander is responsible to ensure that FPCONs are uniformly implemented and disseminated within their area of responsibility.

The FPCON system discussed here is mandated in DoD Directive 2000.12, DoD Antiterrorism (AT) Programs and DoD Instruction 2000.16, DoD Antiterrorism Standards. They describe progressive levels of security measures for implementation in response to threats to U.S. Army personnel, information, and critical resources must be implemented immediately after that FPCON is declared.

The FPCON system allows all military commanders and DoD civilians exercising equivalent authority the flexibility and adaptability to develop and implement AT measures that are more stringent than those mandated by higher authorities whenever FPCONs are invoked. Each set of FPCON measures is the minimum that must be implemented when a change in local threat warrants a change in FPCON or when a higher authority directs an increase in FPCON. Authorities directing implementation may augment their FPCON by adding measures from higher FPCONs as necessary but may not lower an FPCON or implement measures that are less rigorous than those appropriate for the declared FPCON.

FPCON NORMAL. Applies when a **general global** threat of possible terrorist activity exists and warrants a **routine** security posture.

FPCON ALPHA. Applies when there is an **increased general threat** of possible terrorist activity against personnel and facilities, and the nature and extent of the threat are **unpredictable**. ALPHA measures must be capable of being maintained indefinitely.

FPCON BRAVO. Applies when an **increased or more predictable threat** of terrorist activity **exists**. Sustaining BRAVO measures for prolonged period may affect operational capability and military-civil relationships with local authorities.

FPCON CHARLIE. Applies when an **incident occurs** or intelligence is received indicating some form of terrorist action or targeting against personnel or facilities is **likely**. Prolonged implementation of CHARLIE measures may create hardship and affect the activities of the unit and its personnel.

FPCON DELTA. Applies in the immediate area where a **terrorist attack has occurred** or when intelligence has been received that terrorist action against a specific location or person is **imminent**. This FPCON is usually declared as a localized condition. DELTA measures are not intended to be sustained for an extended duration.

Source: Army Regulation 525-13, Antiterrorism 11 Sept 2008

U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) - Maritime Security (MARSEC) Levels

The Coast Guard has a three-tiered system of Maritime Security (MARSEC) levels consistent with the Department of Homeland Security's Homeland Security Advisory System (HSAS). MARSEC Levels are designed to provide a means to easily communicate pre-planned scalable responses to increased threat levels. The Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard sets MARSEC levels commensurate with the HSAS. Because of the unique nature of the maritime industry, the HSAS threat conditions and MARSEC levels will align closely, though they will not directly correlate.

MARSEC levels are set to reflect the prevailing threat environment to the marine elements of the national transportation system, including ports, vessels, facilities, and critical assets and infrastructure located on or adjacent to waters subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S.

MARSEC Level 1 means the level for which minimum appropriate security measures shall be maintained at all times. MARSEC 1 generally applies when HSAS Threat Condition Green, Blue, or Yellow are set.

MARSEC Level 2 means the level for which appropriate additional protective security measures shall be maintained for a period of time as a result of heightened risk of a transportation security incident. MARSEC 2 generally corresponds to HSAS Threat Condition Orange.

MARSEC Level 3 means the level for which further specific protective security measures shall be maintained for a limited period of time when a transportation security incident is probable, imminent, or has occurred, although it may not be possible to identify the specific target. MARSEC 3 generally corresponds to HSAS Threat Condition Red.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) – Homeland Security Advisory System

In accordance with the March 11, 2002 Homeland Security Presidential Directive-3, the Nation requires a Homeland Security Advisory System to provide a comprehensive and effective means to disseminate information regarding the risk of terrorist acts to Federal, State, and local authorities and to the American people. Such a system would provide warnings in the form of a set of graduated "Threat Conditions" that would increase as the risk of the threat increases. At each Threat Condition, Federal departments and agencies would implement a corresponding set of "Protective Measures" to further reduce vulnerability or increase response capability during a period of heightened alert.

This system is intended to create a common vocabulary, context, and structure for an ongoing national discussion about the nature of the threats that confront the homeland and the appropriate measures that should be taken in response. It seeks to inform and facilitate decisions appropriate to different levels of government and to private citizens at home and at work.

The Homeland Security Advisory System shall be binding on the executive branch and suggested, although voluntary, to other levels of government and the private sector. There are five Threat Conditions, each identified by a description and corresponding color. From lowest to highest, the levels and colors are:

Green - LOW. This condition is declared when there is a **low risk** of terrorist attacks.

Blue - GUARDED. This condition is declared when there is a **general risk** of terrorist attacks.

Yellow – ELEVATED. An elevated condition is declared when there is a **significant risk** of terrorist attacks.

Orange – HIGH. A high condition is declared when there is a **high risk** of terrorist attacks.

Red – SEVERE. A severe condition is declared when there is a **severe risk** of terrorist attacks.

Under most circumstances, the Protective Measure for a Severe Condition are not intended to be sustained for substantial periods of time.

The higher the Threat Condition, the greater the risk of a terrorist attack. Risk includes both the probability of an attack occurring and its potential gravity. Threat Conditions shall be assigned by the Attorney General in consultation with the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security. Except in exigent circumstances, the Attorney General shall seek the views of the appropriate Homeland Security Principals or their subordinates, and other parties as appropriate, on the Threat Condition to be assigned. Threat Conditions may be assigned for the entire Nation, or they may be set for a particular geographic area or industrial sector. Assigned Threat Conditions shall be reviewed at regular intervals to determine whether adjustments are warranted.

For facilities, personnel, and operations inside the territorial United States, all Federal departments, agencies, and offices other than military facilities shall conform their existing threat advisory systems to this system and henceforth administer their systems consistent with the determination of the Attorney General with regard to the Threat Condition in effect.

The assignment of a Threat Condition shall prompt the implementation of an appropriate set of Protective Measures. Protective Measures are the specific steps an organization shall take to reduce its vulnerability or increase its ability to respond during a period of heightened alert. The authority to craft and implement Protective Measures rests with the Federal departments and agencies. It is recognized that departments and agencies may have several preplanned sets of responses to a particular Threat Condition to facilitate a rapid, appropriate, and tailored response.

A decision on which Threat Condition to assign shall integrate a variety of considerations. This integration will rely on qualitative assessment, not quantitative calculation. Higher Threat Conditions indicate greater risk of a terrorist act, with risk including both probability and gravity. Despite best efforts, there can be no guarantee that, at any given Threat Condition, a terrorist attack will not occur. An initial and important factor is the quality of the threat information itself. The evaluation of this threat information shall include, but not be limited to, the following factors:

1. To what degree is the threat information credible?
2. To what degree is the threat information corroborated?
3. To what degree is the threat specific and/or imminent?
4. How grave are the potential consequences of the threat?

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