



The risk to pedestrians from Vehicle As a Weapon (VAW) attack remains a real possibility during the COVID-19 pandemic. Social distancing measures will require businesses to manage customers flows and numbers going into premises. As such it is likely that customers will form or be asked to form orderly queues to enter premises.

In order to minimise the risk to queues of people, organisations can take practical and achievable measures to either deter or disrupt a Vehicle as a Weapon Attack. Vehicles (such as cars, vans and lorries) are widely available, easy to acquire and use. Vehicles may be purchased, rented, stolen or hijacked by terrorists. Consequently, driving a vehicle into crowds of people is a common attack method compared to more complex alternatives.

In general, VAW attacks have been the first part of a layered attack. The attacks frequently begin on public roads with little or no warning and are often followed by a wider firearms or bladed weapon attack.

During a VAW attack, the terrorist is unlikely to comply with the rules of the road. Terrorists may park illegally just before the attack then speed, ignore traffic signals, drive on the wrong side of the road, mount footways and enter pedestrianised zones. However, as attackers intend to harm as many people as possible during a VAW attack, they are less likely to drive in a manner that risks ending the attack prematurely: rendering the vehicle unusable or seriously injuring themselves. Consequently, the terrorist may tend to avoid obstacles, including relatively insubstantial ones.

The end of a VAW attack may look similar to a road traffic incident: the vehicle losing control and crashing into barriers, buildings, street furniture or other vehicles. Individuals may approach the vehicle to help the occupants, inadvertently becoming targets for a follow-on bladed weapon or firearms attacks.

1. In producing online and local messaging, including signage be mindful of how detailed information can be very useful to those with hostile intent – giving credible, detailed information that could identify an attractive target about queue locations, times and number of people or even security arrangements.
2. In the first instance and where already present, queues should be positioned behind existing rated vehicle security barriers ([IWA14-1](#) & [PAS 68](#)).
3. Consider and mitigate the risks created when queues are created outside normally protected areas.
 - a. Queues
 - Work with near neighbouring premises to develop a plan for queues.
 - Move queues to areas where vehicles are not naturally there.
 - Avoid creating long **straight** queues and if possible, keep them short.
 - Place “Do not join the queue” signs when its length or position increases the risk to people.
 - Queues should be oriented, so they are perpendicular to potential vehicle attack routes: avoid positioning queues parallel to potential vehicle attack routes. If



- queues have to run parallel then try to get street furniture in between the queue and the traffic.
 - Queues should not be positioned near live traffic i.e. roads. If they have to be then move them away from the kerb edge, closer to buildings.
 - Where possible, orientate the queues so people can see hazards or dangers approaching.
 - Consider fast dispersal / escape routes for pedestrians.
- b. Vehicle management
- Reducing vehicles in the areas of queues will make it safer for pedestrians.
 - Close off vehicle access to shared spaces when queues are present.
 - In car parks, create a vehicle safety zone by preventing or limiting parking next to queues of people. Consider enforcing 'no parking' near to the queues with cones or more robust barriers.
 - If not possible then introduce reduced speed limit and temporary traffic calming measures.
- c. Barriers
- In the first instance and where already present, queues should be positioned behind existing rated vehicle security barriers (IWA14-1 & PAS 68).
 - The presence of street furniture should be viewed as an opportunity to offer some protection.
 - Street furniture should not be removed. Place markers on benches etc. to support social distancing measures.
 - Footway widening: If implemented then it should incorporate temporary rated vehicle security barriers (IWA 14-1, PAS 68, [CPNI VADS](#) or road safety barriers) to ensure people in the vicinity are afforded some protection.
 - Where long or multiple queues form, consider deploying vehicle barriers (refer above) along the footway to disrupt a vehicle being able to drive down its length.
 - Do NOT remove any security features / useful street furniture items without considering protective security in the round.
- d. [Raise awareness](#) of the full range of safety risks to the public through staff briefings.