

# CIDB Data Contributor Manual

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## Introduction

The Canadian Incident Database (CIDB) is a publically accessible database for researchers studying terrorism and violent extremism in Canada. The CIDB is intended to be a living document, to be updated on a regular basis. This short manual is designed to provide CIDB data contributors with standardized criteria for adding and amending entries, guidance on sourcing, as well as answers to frequently asked questions.

## Event Selection Criteria

To be included in the CIDB, an event must meet the TSAS definition of “terrorism” or “violent extremism.”

## Defining Terrorism

The Canadian Criminal Code identifies a terrorist act to be committed “in whole or in part for a political, religious, or ideological purpose, objective, or cause” with the intention of intimidating the public:

...with regard to its security, including its economic security, or compelling a person, a government, or a domestic or an international organization to do or to refrain from doing any act (Criminal Code, R.S.C. 1985, s. 83.01).

Terrorism represents a specific form of violent extremism that is criminal and political in nature. In practice this means in order to consider an incident for inclusion in the CIDB as an act of terrorism, all three of the following attributes must be present:

1. The incident must be intentional – the result of a conscious calculation on the part of a perpetrator;
2. The incident must entail some level of violence or threat of violence - including property violence, as well as violence against people; and
3. The perpetrators of the incidents must be sub-national actors. This database does not include acts of state terrorism.

Terrorism is a more restrictive definition than violent extremism.

## Defining Violent Extremism

Violent extremism is defined as serious threats, harm, murder, mayhem, and damage to property that are motivated and justified by extremist beliefs. (Events may be coded as both terrorism and violent extremism). All terrorist incidents are considered violent extremism; however, not all violent extremist incidents meet

the criteria for terrorism (see above). While the classification of an incident as violent extremism or terrorism often overlaps, violent extremism generally distinguishes itself from terrorism by its lack of “broader social harm; rather, it targets specific actors responsible for perceived social ills” (Powers, 2014, p. 235).

**Adding Entries:**

All entries are added through the CIDB website - [www.extremism.ca](http://www.extremism.ca) - using the login credentials supplied to the data contributor by TSAS.

If an event meets the selection criteria, information about it is entered into the database via the web entry form. There are a number of quantitative variables, as well as a qualitative description, for any one incident. Seven variables are necessary to generate the Event ID:

1. Year;
2. Month;
3. Date;
4. Location ID;
5. Event Type ID;
6. Target ID; and
7. Record #.

The Event ID is used to export the data and also serves as a check against duplicate entries. The CIDB Codebook provides in-depth information on how to populate the variables.

For example, if a terrorist incident had occurred on October 23, 2014 involving a pipe bombing at a private residence in Vancouver, BC a data contributor input the event in the following manner:

Event ID	2014102302E03T14001					
Validated?	Yes					
Event Date (YYYY/MM/DD)	2014	/	10	/	23	Time (HH:MM) : :
Event Date Range (YYYY/MM/DD)	From		/		/	Time (HH:MM) : :
	To		/		/	Time (HH:MM) : :

The first eight digits of the event ID are comprised of the year, month, and day of the event. Take care to insure the event date is the date of the incident, rather than the date of reportage. The time of the event should be recorded, if known precisely, but is not necessary to generate the Event ID.

The next two digits of the event ID identify the Location ID of the incident, which represents the province in Canada where the incident occurred. Note that if the incident occurred outside of Canada, the Location ID is coded as “99” – Not Applicable

Event ID	2014102302E03T14001
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Location	Vancouver	BC	Canada	Location ID 02
	City	Province	Country	
Event ID	2014102302E03T14001			
Event Type	Bombing/Explosion	Event Type ID	E03	
Target	1:			
	2:			
	3:			
	4:			
	Target ID	T14		

The next six characters of the Event ID correspond to the Event and Target Type IDs. In this example, the incident was a Bombing/Explosion attack; the corresponding Event Type ID is therefore coded as E03.

The Target ID refers to the classification of the physical site of the attack. A private residence would be classified as a target in the “Private Citizens & Property” category – so it is coded as T14. This section of the Event ID is therefore coded as E03T14.

The final three characters of the Event ID refer to the Record Number of the incident. There can be several records for one incident if one attack targeted multiple locations, for instance, bomb threats called into three separate government buildings within one city on the same day would be logged as 001, 002, and 003. In this instance, if separate Record Numbers were not recorded, there would be duplicate Event IDs within the database that would create issues when exporting the data.

Event ID	2014102302E03T14001
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Multiple Record Numbers are also occasionally used for disparate incidents abroad. Since this Location ID for all incidents occurring abroad is “99”, regardless of the specific country, there are more opportunities for duplicate record numbers. For instance, if there was a car bombing targeting civilians on the same day in Afghanistan and Pakistan, separate Record Numbers are used to distinguish between two Event IDs and more easily export and comprehend the data.

There are two special-entry data codes for missing or incomplete data:

**Amending Entries**

There are several instances where existing entries should be amended:

1. New information about an existing incident (e.g. perpetrators, weapon sub-type, group ideology) that was not available at the time of entry warrants recoding existing variables;
2. Existing variables in an incident are coded, but should be unknown '-88' or not applicable '- 99'. In other words, information that was previously assumed to be true has been found to be incorrect; and
3. Several seemingly disparate incidents within one day are subsequently found to be connected. In this instance, the data contributor would generate new Event IDs that are identical and simply add additional record numbers (001, 002, 003, etc.).

Data contributors should take care when amending an incident's variables that the Event ID reflects these changes.

### **Citations**

All citations within the CIDB must come from publically available materials. Data contributors may cite electronic news sources, existing datasets, legal documents, books, journals, and any other open-source material. Relevant materials should be uploaded in the web entry form; website links may be cited by their URLs.

TSAS employs the following hierarchy of credibility, in priority, in assessing the reliability of its sources:

1. Appellate court proceedings;
2. Other court proceedings;
3. Indictments;
4. Government reports and chronologies;
5. Peer-reviewed scholarly articles, books, and databases;
6. Media reports;
7. Watch-group reports and databases;
8. Extremist websites; and
9. Other sources.

While TSAS recognizes that the lack of official documentation chronicling very recent events may cause data contributors to rely heavily on media reports, data contributors should corroborate information across multiple sources, whenever possible, to enhance the reliability of the data and add official documentation as it becomes available.

All sources, including URLs, must be cited within the raw data file. PDF documents may be appended to the event record.

### **Searching Incidents**

Existing incidents may be searched by using the "Incident Search" tool on the CIDB website.

Incidents may be searched by date, location, type (terrorism or violent extremism), the validity of the data, the ideological motivation of the incident, target type, event type, or by keywords.

### Frequently Asked Questions

*Q: Who makes the decision to include certain events as acts of terrorism?*

A: The CIDB is continually updated and reviewed by its core project team, as well as its approved data contributors. Data contributors are national security professionals, researchers, and graduate students.

*Q: I would like to become a data contributor; whom shall I contact?*

A: Please refer to our criteria regarding data contributors. If the person meets the criteria, feel free to have them get in contact with Joshua.Kilberg@carleton.ca.

*Q: What is the method for addressing particularly contentious incidents?*

A: In the event of a particularly contentious incident or data point, please consult with a member of the CIDB team who will consult with colleagues and, if the event cannot be resolved, the information will be passed to the CIDB board of directors.

*Q: Does the CIDB include failed or foiled plots?*

A: Whenever possible, the CIDB includes plots/attacks that have failed or been disrupted by security forces. The criterion is that concrete steps must have been undertaken on the part of the individual or group to carry out the attack before its failure or disruption.

Incident Search

YYYY	MM	DD	Location	Type A <span style="float: right;">v</span>	Yes <span style="float: right;">v</span>	Search
Motivation <span style="float: right;">v</span>		Target <span style="float: right;">v</span>	Event Type <span style="float: right;">v</span>		Keywords	

Less Filters

*Q: How should I code “hoaxes” in terms of whether they are successful or not?*

A: A hoax should be coded as successful if it disrupts the operations of the threatened facility or mode of transportation, or affects the daily routine of private citizens as a result of the threat. A failed (or foiled) hoax may be included in the CIDB, as appropriate.

*Q: What constitutes a “Canadian target”?*

A: A Canadian target is one or more of the following: a Canadian citizen, permanent resident, or official building, in Canada or abroad (e.g., an embassy, consulate, or Canadian-owned/operated business).

*Q: Why does the data collection only begin in 1960?*

A: In consultation with our governmental and other partners, TSAS decided that a temporal “bookend” was needed in order to have a complete picture of modern terrorism in Canada. It was felt that collecting data from 1960 onwards was the best use of TSAS’s resources and the most effective way to harness the abilities of our approved data contributors, whilst presenting a complete picture of modern terrorism in Canada.

### **Points of Contact**

In the event of any discrepancies in the data, or questions regarding adding or amending entries that cannot be answered in the manual, please contact:

James O. Ellis III – Project Lead: [James.Ellis@ubc.ca](mailto:James.Ellis@ubc.ca)

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