



Nationwide SAR Initiative Partnership With Amtrak

FACT SHEET

Amtrak Enhances Rail Security Through Partnership With Nationwide SAR Initiative

- Over the past several months, Amtrak has been working with the Nationwide SAR Initiative (NSI) Program Management Office and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to establish and integrate Amtrak's suspicious activity reporting (SAR) capability with the Nationwide SAR Initiative process.
- In establishing its SAR capability, Amtrak will utilize NSI's standardized processes, including training of analysts and frontline officers on protection of privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties and how to identify behaviors that may be associated with pre-incident terrorism planning. Highlights include:
 - Up-to-date threat intelligence is being transformed into training for Amtrak law enforcement officers so that they are better able to recognize behaviors and indicators that should be further investigated to prevent acts of terrorism.
 - An upgraded reporting system will allow these suspicious activity reports to be rapidly forwarded to DHS and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) so that they can be investigated and blended with other national intelligence and analyzed.
 - All Amtrak SARs will receive initial vetting within 24 hours.
 - Those SARs that have been determined to have a nexus to terrorism will be forwarded to DHS to be uploaded to the shared space server and will then be shared with all NSI participants.
- This partnership is a pilot project that could be a model for other rail carriers, including commuter rails.
- Protecting the people and goods that move through the rail system is a critical aspect of our homeland security mission—and this collaboration will result in a powerful tool to mitigate the potential threats and prevent terrorist attacks on America's rails.

NSI Processes Enhance Local Counterterrorism Efforts and Protect Privacy

- In 2008–2009, federal, state, and local law enforcement officials worked closely with representatives from privacy and civil liberties groups to develop, test, and evaluate the policies, procedures, training, and technology needed to establish a unified process for gathering, documenting, processing, analyzing, and sharing SARs that are determined to be reasonably indicative of preoperational planning related to terrorism or other criminal activity associated with terrorism.
- The evaluation provided a controlled environment in which agencies could evaluate potential solutions to operational challenges and identify best practices to be incorporated as part of a broader nationwide implementation.



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- One site alone reported that during the evaluation period, 58 arrests were made related to circumstances initially documented in SARs.
- Four key findings from the evaluation were:
 - There was a clear, positive impact on local counterterrorism efforts.
 - It is possible to combat terrorism while protecting privacy.
 - The value of interagency sharing of SAR data continues to show potential.
 - The NSI process is applicable to an all-crimes environment.
- To support nationwide implementation of the NSI process, a Program Management Office (PMO) was established at the U.S. Department of Justice in March 2010 and given the responsibility to coordinate existing resources and manage additional support to further develop and deploy the NSI and support prevention efforts at state and local levels.
- Twelve additional sites are expected to complete implementation of the NSI process by October 2010.
- Nationwide implementation is expected to be complete in 2012.

Background Information

- The Nationwide SAR Initiative (NSI) is an outgrowth of a number of separate but related activities over the last several years that respond directly to the mandate to establish a unified process for reporting, tracking, and accessing SARs in a manner that rigorously protects the privacy and civil liberties of Americans as called for in the *National Strategy for Information Sharing* (NSIS).
- The NSI process is a cycle of 12 interrelated operational activities that address the requirements outlined in the NSIS. The long-term goal is that most federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement organizations will participate in a standardized, integrated approach to gathering, documenting, processing, analyzing, and sharing information about suspicious activity that is potentially terrorism-related.
- On December 17, 2009, the U.S. Department of Justice was named the Executive Agent to establish and operate the NSI PMO.
- Amtrak is the largest U.S. passenger railway program, with annual ridership surpassing 2.7 million.
- In response to terrorist threats and the emphasis that has been placed on transportation systems by terrorists, Amtrak developed multidimensional mobile teams that consist of skilled police officers and special agents of Amtrak's Counterterrorism Unit.