A Call to Action

A Unified Message Regarding the Need to Support Suspicious Activity Reporting and Training

Efforts to address crime and threats in our communities are most effective when they involve strong collaboration between law enforcement and the communities and citizens they serve. As a law enforcement or homeland security professional, you understand that homeland security is hometown security. State, local, tribal, territorial, campus, and federal representatives are united in efforts to make our country safer.

One of these efforts relates to **suspicious activity reporting**, a concept in which law enforcement and homeland security leaders have partnered to create a strategy that unifies the work of agencies and organizations in identifying and sharing information reasonably indicative of preoperational planning associated with terrorism or other criminal activity. The result of this collaborative partnership is the Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) Initiative (NSI). This partnership focuses on (1) protection of privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties; (2) increasing public awareness and reporting of suspicious activity to law enforcement; (3) generating suspicious activity reports by law enforcement; (4) analysis conducted by fusion centers, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS); and (5) investigation by the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs).

As a law enforcement or homeland security professional, you are responsible to ensure the public you serve understands how to report suspicious activity and your agency or organizational members support the collection, analysis, and submission of suspicious activity reports to your fusion center or FBI JTTFs.

Fusion centers, FBI Field Intelligence Groups (FIGs), and FBI JTTFs seamlessly share suspicious activity reports. Through the NSI technology platform, NSI participants can make their suspicious activity reports available to fusion centers and other NSI participants, instantaneously sharing critical information. The NSI was established to ensure that information received and vetted by a fusion center, regardless of what mechanism is used to receive the information, can be quickly reviewed by the FBI's JTTFs for possible investigation and shared with other fusion centers, the FBI, and DHS for additional analysis.

Detailed below are key points and action items that all law enforcement and homeland security personnel should be aware of, support, and institutionalize within their area of responsibility:

Reporting Suspicious Activities

- Agencies at all levels of government should utilize the "If You See Something, Say Something™" program to raise public awareness of indicators of terrorism and to emphasize the importance of reporting suspicious activity to the proper law enforcement authorities, while protecting privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties. (See "Outreach Activities" below for more details.)
- The public should contact law enforcement via 9-1-1 when an immediate response is needed regarding suspicious activity for any type of crime, including terrorism.
- Personnel from your agency should prepare suspicious activity reports and forward them to fusion centers or FBI JTTFs for follow-up and mutual coordination and deconfliction.
- Other potentially terrorism-related tips or leads reported directly to FBI JTTFs should be evaluated for investigation, coordination, and entry into the NSI as appropriate.

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Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting Initiative (NSI)

The NSI establishes standardized processes and policies that provide the capability for law enforcement and homeland security partners to share timely, relevant suspicious activity reports while working to ensure that privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties are protected. The NSI SAR Data Repository (SDR) serves as the technology solution for the NSI. State, local, tribal, territorial, and federal law enforcement agencies and state and major urban area fusion centers have multiple options for entry of suspicious activity reports, including the eGuardian User Interface, the SAR Vetting Tool (SVT), and various records management systems connected to the SDR.

Before a suspicious activity report can move from an agency system to be shared in the NSI SDR, two levels of vetting must occur: (1) supervisors at source agencies, which initially receive suspicious activity reports or other tips or leads from law enforcement officers, public safety agencies, private sector partners, or citizens, must initially review each report to determine whether it is eligible for consideration as a terrorism-related suspicious activity report, and (2) trained analysts or investigators at a participating federal agency or fusion center must then analyze the report and make a determination, based on the relevant context, facts, and circumstances, whether the suspicious activity report has a potential nexus to terrorism. If so, the resulting report can be submitted to the SDR for sharing with NSI participants. Throughout the submission, vetting, and sharing process, privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties are vigilantly and actively protected.

Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) Training

It is important to ensure that your agency's personnel have received the frontline officer training on identifying and reporting those behaviors that are potentially indicative of terrorist or other criminal activity while emphasizing the protection of privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties. This training is coordinated by the NSI, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the FBI, and state and local partners for nationwide implementation and is available online via the following site:

NSI Suite of Online SAR Training for Law Enforcement and Hometown Security Partners:
http://nsi.ncirc.gov/training_online.aspx

It is vitally important that law enforcement agencies conduct SAR training with all law enforcement personnel, including supervisors, and document completion of the training. Officers, chiefs, sheriffs, training officials, and other executives should integrate SAR training into initial and recurring training curricula.

Fusion Centers, FIGs, and JTTFs

Fusion centers serve as focal points within the state and local environment for the receipt, analysis, gathering, and sharing of threat-related information among state, local, tribal, territorial, and federal partners. They produce actionable intelligence for dissemination, which can aid other law enforcement organizations, including the FBI JTTFs, in their investigative operations.

FBI JTTFs are multiagency task forces designed to combine the resources, talents, skills, and knowledge of state, local, tribal, territorial, and federal law enforcement, as well as the Intelligence Community, into a single team that investigates and responds to terrorist threats. FBI JTTFs investigate suspicious activity reports and other terrorism tips and leads.

FBI FIGs, the hub of the FBI's intelligence program in the field, are the primary mechanism through which field offices identify, evaluate, and prioritize threats within their territories. Using dissemination protocols, FBI FIGs contribute to regional and local perspectives on threats and serve as an important link between fusion centers, the FBI JTTFs, and the Intelligence Community.

Outreach Activities

The "**If You See Something, Say Something™**" public awareness campaign is a simple and effective program to raise public awareness of indicators of terrorism and violent crime. DHS uses "If You See Something, Say Something™" with permission from the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority. Agencies, companies, or groups interested in partnering with DHS on this campaign should contact nsiinformation@ncirc.gov.