



Suspicious Activity Reporting Training for Hometown Security Partners

Background

The Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) Initiative (NSI) training strategy is a multifaceted approach designed to increase the effectiveness of state, local, and tribal law enforcement and public safety professionals and other frontline partners in identifying, reporting, evaluating, and sharing pre-incident terrorism indicators to prevent acts of terrorism. The overarching goal of the training strategy is to facilitate appropriate agency implementation of the SAR process and to enhance a nationwide SAR capability. To increase the effectiveness of this multifaceted approach, the NSI has developed both classroom and online training programs for frontline officers, analysts, and chief executives regarding the behaviors and indicators of terrorism-related criminal activity.

While continuing to provide high-quality training for the law enforcement community, the NSI has developed SAR awareness training for partners with similar missions, or “hometown security partners.” These partners include:

- Fire and emergency medical services (EMS) professionals
- Public safety telecommunications professionals (e.g., 9-1-1 operators)
- Emergency managers
- Corrections and probation and parole officers
- Maritime industry professionals
- Private sector security personnel and those charged with protecting the nation’s critical infrastructure
- Public health and health care professionals

The purpose of the training is not to empower public safety officials to act on behalf of law enforcement but to have them understand the critical role they play in identifying and reporting suspicious activity to state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement.

Outreach and Coordination

The success of the NSI largely depends on the ability to earn and maintain the public’s trust. As such, advocacy groups served an essential role in the shaping of the NSI Privacy Protection Framework and also assisted in the development and review of NSI products and resources. As the NSI moves forward, community outreach will help in addressing concerns of citizens and advocates by demonstrating that agencies engaged in the SAR process have adopted and maintain appropriate privacy and civil liberties safeguards.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s “If You See Something, Say Something™” campaign is a simple and effective program to raise public awareness of indicators of terrorism and terrorism-related crime and to emphasize the importance of reporting suspicious activity to the proper local law enforcement authorities. Both the “If You See Something, Say Something™” campaign and the NSI underscore the concept that homeland security begins with hometown security, where an alert public plays a critical role in keeping our nation safe.





These key foundational elements of the NSI are being administered within the development of the SAR awareness training products and processes for hometown security partners for corrections officials, the fire service, private security, 9-1-1 call centers, emergency managers, maritime professionals, and public health and health care professionals. As a part of this engagement effort, the NSI has also developed and participates in the Building Community Partnerships (BCP) initiative. The BCP initiative was established to assist fusion centers and law enforcement agencies in engaging with and developing productive relationships with the critical sector and community stakeholders they serve to enable partnerships in the protection of critical infrastructure and the prevention of crime and terrorism. In addition, agencies can use this opportunity to present their privacy policy and outline the safeguards built into the information sharing system.

Supporting Critical Partners

With the outreach of the NSI's training portfolio to other key constituencies, the NSI is now working to identify gaps and develop necessary training to ensure that timely, relevant information is shared with and among law enforcement agencies and other public safety partners.

Because 9-1-1 is the number most people in the United States call to obtain help in a police, fire, or medical emergency, 9-1-1 call takers can play an important role in SAR awareness with their unique position of receiving calls for emergency services. The responsibilities of the emergency management community include working closely with operators and owners of critical infrastructure and key resources, responding to emergency situations, and gathering information about disasters, which may place them in a unique position to observe suspicious activity-related behaviors and indicators that, when viewed within the context, facts, and circumstances, may indicate preoperational planning of a terrorist-related incident. Firefighters and emergency

medical services (EMS) personnel also have a significant reach into communities across America. In their efforts to prevent and respond to life and property losses, firefighters and EMS personnel enter homes, businesses, vehicles, and other assets thousands of times each day and, as a result, may be exposed to behaviors and indicators of criminal activity. Community corrections professionals are also in a position to recognize criminal or potential terrorism activity, especially while this activity may be in the planning phase, due to their contact with offenders and families and friends of offenders.

There are more than 2 million security officers who protect our nation's critical infrastructure, and these public safety and security professionals can be "force multipliers" to sworn law enforcement officers to help protect communities and to recognize and report suspicious activity. The integration of public health and health care professionals into the SAR process will benefit the collective homeland security effort by enhancing the preparedness of public health and health care organizations across the country, while supporting the prevention, protection, response, and recovery efforts of all homeland security partners. In addition, the NSI has partnered with the National Maritime Intelligence-Integration Office (NMIO) to offer SAR training to professionals in the maritime port security industry. It is the goal of the Maritime SAR Initiative (MSI) to expose the maritime industry to the NSI and emphasize the critical role port security personnel play in this nationwide information sharing capacity.

These seven training modules are delivered in the form of short training programs that can be accessed via familiar sector-specific training portals and hard-copy CDs and will serve to educate those whose professions have a great potential of exposure to indicators and behaviors associated with criminal and/or terrorist activity.

Visit <http://nsi.ncirc.gov/> for more information about the NSI and current training opportunities.

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