

# LEXICON PROGRAM AND STANDARDIZATION OF DEPARTMENT TERMINOLOGY

---

## I. Purpose

This directive establishes the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) policy, responsibilities and requirements regarding the standardization of terminology. Standardized terminology supports robust and unambiguous communications and information sharing. The DHS Lexicon Program provides the source for the Department's standardized terminology facilitating consistent and unambiguous communications and information sharing across the national homeland security community.

## II. Scope

This Directive applies throughout DHS.

## III. Authorities

- A. Public Law 110-53, "Implementing the Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007," Title V, "Improving Intelligence and Information Sharing with the Federal Government and with State, Local, and Tribal Governments"
- B. Public Law 111-274, "Plain Writing Act of 2010"
- C. DHS Secretary's Memorandum "Unity of Effort," April 22, 2014
- D. DHS Directive 262-05, "Information Sharing and Safeguarding"
- E. Homeland Security Advisory Council Implementation of the DHS Lexicon Program, June 2004
- F. DHS Efficiency Review Initiative, "Language Services Acquisition"
- G. DHS Delegation 04000, "Delegation for Information Technology"

## IV. Responsibilities

- A. The **Under Secretary for Management**:
1. Designates the Program Manager for the DHS Lexicon Program;
  2. Promotes DHS Lexicon Program services for providing support in the development and use of a common vocabulary across the Department and homeland security community; and
  3. Resolves conflicts on terminology or definitions.
- B. The **Program Manager, DHS Lexicon Program**:
1. Establishes and maintains governance for the DHS Lexicon Program;
  2. Establishes a process to add, modify, or remove DHS Lexicon terms and definitions, always in consultation with all affected DHS Components; and
  3. Issues DHS Lexicon Program publications.
- C. The **DHS Chief Information Officer**: Works with the Program Manager, DHS Lexicon Program, implementing methodologies for the use of terms and definitions of data in support of data management and information sharing.
- D. The **Component Heads**:
1. Ensure terms and definitions of homeland security community interest and usage, as determined by their Component, are submitted to the DHS Lexicon Program for harmonization and inclusion in the DHS Lexicon;
  2. Provide (where appropriate to their Component) subject matter expertise for term and definition development activities; and
  3. Support the use of DHS standardized terminology as provided by the DHS Lexicon Program.

## V. Policy and Requirements

The DHS Lexicon Program provides the Departmental focus for development and use of consistent terminology and definitions.

A. **Policy:** The DHS Lexicon Program implements and oversees DHS policies regarding this program. The DHS Lexicon Program:

1. Implements a methodology for creating unambiguous, common use terms throughout the Department to improve information sharing and internal / external Departmental communication with stakeholders;
2. Develops and maintains a lexicon of terms and meanings designed to facilitate the clear exchange of data and information among all DHS Components to meet DHS missions, goals, targets, and objectives; and
3. Provides a methodology to support foreign language translation.

B. **Requirements:**

1. The Program Manager may include in the DHS Lexicon terms used by homeland security communities of interest or practice (such as terms used by DHS and other homeland security personnel who administer or enforce the immigration laws; protect cyber security; or prevent, mitigate, respond to, or recover from, disasters or emergencies). Terms included in the DHS Lexicon are from Department policies, Department publications, statutes, and other documents or sources;
2. Term and definition development:
  - a. DHS Components cooperate with the DHS Lexicon Program to standardize their use of terminology, consistent with the purpose of the DHS Lexicon Program;
  - b. The Program Manager of the DHS Lexicon Program may provide assistance with respect to any term or definition of interest to the homeland security community, even if such term or definition is used by only one DHS Component; and
  - c. Conflicts that cannot be resolved within the various communities of practice are then resolved by the Under Secretary for Management.

C. **No Legal Effect.**

The DHS Lexicon Program is intended to facilitate communication; the terms and definitions developed by the program do not, and are not intended to, carry any legal or policymaking effect. The DHS Lexicon Program has no legal or other authority to establish official agency positions with respect to the interpretation of statutes, regulations, or sub-regulatory policy. Such interpretations, whether they carry the force of law or not, are generally announced under separate administrative procedures, such as by rulemaking, adjudication, or guidance, in consultation with agency counsel and other decision makers.

## VI. Questions

Address any questions or concerns regarding this Directive to the Program Manager, DHS Lexicon Program at [lexicon@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:lexicon@hq.dhs.gov).

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chip Fulghum  
Acting Under Secretary for Management

6/8/17  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date