

HARRIS COUNTY HOMELAND SECURITY & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
Suspicious Activity Report (SAR) Form
First Responder Only

PROCEDURAL BULLETIN

DATE: September 14, 2015

SUBJECT: Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) Procedure

PURPOSE:

To provide guidance and consistency for Harris County Fire, EMS and rescue personnel in recognizing and reporting suspicious activities, behaviors, or materials relating to possible criminal or terrorist activities, which they may observe during the course of their normal duties.

POLICY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

Provide a uniform and consistent method to report activities that Harris County Fire, EMS and Rescue personnel may encounter during the course of their normal duties that meet the criteria for reportable suspicious activities, define suspicious activities and the potential nexus to criminal or terrorist behaviors or plots and understand the legal parameters of such reporting.

DEFINITION:

Suspicious Activity: An observed behavior, reasonably indicative of pre-operational planning related to terrorism or other criminal activity.

Defined Criminal Activity and Potential Terrorism Nexus Activity:

- **Breach/Attempted Intrusion:** Unauthorized personnel attempting to or actually entering a restricted area or protected site. Impersonation of authorized personnel (e.g., police/security, janitor)
- **Misrepresentation:** Presenting false or misusing insignia, documents, and/or identification, to misrepresent one's affiliation to cover possible illicit activity or gain access to sensitive areas.
- **Theft/Loss/Diversion:** Stealing or diverting something associated with a facility/infrastructure (e.g., badges, uniforms, identification, emergency vehicles, technology or documents {classified or unclassified}, which are proprietary to the facility).
- **Sabotage/Tampering/Vandalism:** Damaging, manipulating, or defacing part of a facility/infrastructure or protected site.
- **Cyber Attack:** Compromising, attempting to compromise, or disrupt an organization's information technology infrastructure.
- **Spoken or Written Threat:** Communicating a spoken or written threat to damage or compromise a facility/infrastructure.
- **Aviation Activity:** Operation of an aircraft in a manner that reasonably may be interpreted as suspicious, or posing a threat to people or property. Such operation may or may not be a violation of Federal Aviation Regulations.

Potential Criminal or Non-Criminal Activity Requiring Additional Fact Information During Investigation:

- **Eliciting Information:** Questioning individuals at a level beyond mere curiosity about particular facets of a facility's or building's purpose, operations, security procedures, etc., that would arouse suspicion in a reasonable person.
- **Testing or Probing of Security:** Deliberate interactions with, or challenges to, installations, personnel, or systems that reveal physical, personnel, or cyber security capabilities.
- **Photography:** Taking pictures or video of facilities, buildings, or infrastructure in a manner that would arouse suspicion in a reasonable person. Examples include taking pictures or video of infrequently used access points, personnel performing security functions (patrols, badge/vehicle checking), security-related equipment (perimeter fencing, security cameras), etc.
- **Observation/Surveillance:** Demonstrating unusual interest in facilities, buildings, or infrastructure beyond mere casual or professional (e.g., engineers) interest such that a reasonable person would consider the activity suspicious. Examples include observation through binoculars, taking notes, attempting to measure distances, etc.
- **Materials Acquisition/Storage:** Acquisition and/or storage of unusual quantities of materials such as cell phones, pagers, fuel, chemicals, toxic materials, and timers, such that a reasonable person would suspect possible criminal/terrorist activity.
- **Acquisition of Expertise:** Attempts to obtain or conduct training in security concepts; military weapons or tactics; or other unusual capabilities that would arouse suspicion in a reasonable person.
- **Weapons Discovery:** Discovery of unusual amounts of weapons or explosives that would arouse suspicion in a reasonable person.
- **Sector-Specific Incident:** Actions associated with a characteristic of unique concern to specific sectors (such as the public health sector), with regard to their personnel, facilities, systems or functions.

Note: These activities are generally First Amendment-protected activities and should not be reported in a SAR absent articulable facts and circumstances that support the source agency's suspicion that the behavior observed is not innocent, but rather reasonably indicative of criminal activity associated with terrorism, including evidence of pre-operational planning related to terrorism. Race, ethnicity, national origin, or religious affiliation should not be considered as factors that create suspicion (although these factors may be used as specific suspect descriptions).

REPORTING PROCEDURE:

- Reporting a SAR should not impede or effect the completion of the department's primary response or activities. Behavior or materials that meet the criteria for a SAR, but do not present an immediate threat, can be reported upon the conclusion of the incident after returning to the fire station
- All suspicious activity should be reported to local law enforcement as soon as reasonably possible
- Immediately contact your local communications center if the observed behavior or material presents a threat to life safety or property.
- Complete the SAR Form and email the form to Intel@oem.hctx.net.
- If the observed behavior or material presents an immediate threat to life safety or property, a reasonable attempt should be made to safely maintain/secure the scene until the arrival of police. Examples of this would be, but are not limited to, the storage of large amounts of chemicals, Improvised Explosive Devices in late stage of development, operational chemical labs.
- Be prepared to give as much detail as possible and identify the reason you believe the behavior or indicator is suspicious. Reference the above descriptions as a guide to terminology.