What is a Terrorism Liaison Officer Program?

The Terrorism Liaison Officer (TLO) program is a statewide multi-jurisdictional information sharing program between law enforcement, emergency response, fire services, industry, health, critical infrastructure, and private sector partners. It is also a part of a statewide networking initiative that is connected to state and federal assets to provide an effective and free flow of information as well as developing consistent protocols that provide enhanced public safety capabilities.

The TLO program revolves around the principles of building communities of trust and increasing terrorism awareness within their own jurisdiction. The TLO program serves as a liaison network for the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security (TDOSHS) Field Agents, Tennessee Highway Patrol (THP) Homeland Security Lieutenants, and the Tennessee Fusion Center (TFC).

Are there requirements to become a TLO?

Requirements to serve as a TLO vary from agency to agency. What is most desired in a prospective TLO is good communication skills, a passion for learning about the threat of terrorism, and ways to protect our communities.

TLOs should be willing to contribute and give of themselves to the overriding public interest. Reluctant, and/or “ordered,” acceptance of the position will quite probably lead to an unsuccessful outcome.

The TLO must be willing to seek and attend additional education and training that will enhance their ability to perform in this challenging role.

All TLOs are subject to a criminal history check.

TLOs fill a necessary and vital role of an overall national strategy to counter the threat of terrorism in the United States.

The TLO program is designed for first responders and private sector partners across the state of Tennessee who have been selected by their agency and DOSHS to participate in these initiatives. Selected participants will receive approved training prior to becoming an operational TLO.

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What is a Terrorism Liaison Officer?

A Terrorism Liaison Officer (TLO) is an individual that functions as the principle point of contact for an entity in matters related to terrorism information. TLOs are not authorized to represent themselves as an employee of DOSHS. The TLO, though not necessarily an expert in terrorism, attends meetings and receives information from the local Fusion Center or other local entities engaged in terrorism intelligence or investigations. The TLO then educates others within his or her department or area of responsibility.

TLOs are a vital link in keeping those engaged in public safety professions, aware of current terrorist tactics, techniques and practices. Through the diligent performance of their duties, public safety personnel are alerted to terrorism indicators and warnings that might otherwise go unreported.

TLOs are typically contacted when suspicious activities are witnessed that could potentially be related to terrorism. They then forward the lead or Suspicious Activity Report (SAR) to their Homeland Security Agent, Fusion Center or local police.

TLOs raise the level of prevention and preparedness within our communities and better prepare public sector personnel to deal effectively with the threat of terrorism.

What are some typical duties for a TLO?

Duties and responsibilities of the TLO include the following:

- Collects, reports, retrieves and shares materials related to terrorism including the completion of SARs;
- Serves as point of contact for internal or external inquiry;
- Serves as point of contact for communicating with community stakeholders in matters related to terrorism;
- Serves as contact person for community and private sector relationships;
- Conducts, coordinates and facilitates departmental training with regard to terrorism and terrorist-related subjects;
- Conducts, coordinates and facilitates community meetings, conferences and other information sharing activities.

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Do all TLOs perform the same duties?

No. TLOs can be representatives of police, fire, public health and the private sector. Each of these disciplines has unique needs in dealing with the threat of terrorism. Although the education and information received is frequently the same, the role that these agencies play are quite different. Therefore, information is frequently provided according to the need and training needs will differ at times.

Some examples of activities that are frequently associated with terrorist attack planning:

- Breach/attempted intrusion
- Misrepresentation
- Theft/loss/diversion
- Sabotage/tampering/vandalism
- Cyber attack
- Express or implied threat
- Aviation activity
- Eliciting information
- Testing or probing security
- Recruiting/financing
- Photography
- Observation/surveillance
- Materials acquisition/storage
- Acquisition of expertise
- Weapons collections/discovery
- Sector specific incident

These are designed to provide basic information about the types of suspicious activities that should be reported. Keep in mind that this list is not 100% comprehensive since terrorist tactics are always evolving. Should you witness any abnormal activities or circumstances that don't seem right, please report it. We take all information reported seriously.