

Considerations for Developing, Producing, Vetting, and Sharing Analytical Products in Fusion Centers



- 1. Clearly identify and articulate the purpose of and audience for the product, and identify any needed dissemination restrictions.** Ensure that the first section of the product contains a clear statement of purpose and identifies the intended audience for the product. Ensure that the content of the product meets the described purpose and the audience's need. A product intended for dissemination to non-law enforcement personnel must be reviewed for greater sensitivity to sources, methods, and privacy concerns.
- 2. If the product is considered criminal intelligence, ensure that there is an evidenced-based criminal nexus before identifying individuals or organizations.** Law enforcement intelligence products are intended to provide information about criminal threats to consumers; therefore, prior to disseminating any product, make sure that it fully discusses the criminal nexus with respect to any individual or organization identified in the product.
- 3. If the product provides an assessment or awareness of other noncriminal hazards (known as all-hazards threat), ensure that it specifically identifies the nature and characteristics of the threat as it relates to public safety and/or public order.** Products should not only provide descriptive information about an all-hazards threat but also identify specific characteristics about the impact of the threat, including indicators, symptoms, effects, and both preventive and safety precautions.
- 4. Ensure that the product specifically applies to the fusion center's service area.** Products should provide information to prepare for threats to public safety and public order within defined geographic areas. All products should focus on the threat as it relates specifically to the population and the industrial and geographic characteristics in the fusion center's service area.
- 5. Ensure that lawful actions of individuals exercising First Amendment activity (speech, association, assembly, petition government for redress of grievances, etc.), even if unpopular or controversial, are not the subject of your intelligence product.** It is inappropriate for a law enforcement intelligence entity to collect, store, maintain, and disseminate constitutionally protected lawful behaviors.
- 6. Ensure that the information contained in the product is accurate and supported by source reliability and content validity.** Accuracy is important for identifying real threats and forecasting their impacts on the community. Accuracy is also important for both protecting civil liberties and ensuring that the analysis of criminal threats is as precise as possible. The product should cite sources utilized to gather the information and should include any known issues regarding the reliability of the source or the validity of the content itself.



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7.

Base the product on facts, interpretations, and conclusions that are objective and relevant, and ensure that the conclusions and indicators contained in the product are logical and consistent with known facts, not tainted by supposition or unsupported conclusions. Information in the product must be based on known behaviors or threat variables, not on popular assumptions, news media reports, personal bias, uninformed estimates, or generalizations associated with race, national origin, ethnicity, religion, or beliefs of persons and organizations who are the subject of an inquiry. Care must be taken to ensure that all statements and conclusions are based on known and verified facts and that the analysis of those facts relies on scientific principles of logic. Risks and threats often evolve with time—ensure that forecasts of threat changes are based on the best available facts and evidence. Suppositions and unsupported conclusions can result in operational responses that are both inefficient and ineffective.

8.

Ensure that the information in the product is timely and relevant to a current or emerging threat. If practicable, the product should be made available in a manner that maximizes the time allowed for operational units to develop a response and put it in place. Because threats can change rapidly, be certain to update, cancel, or develop new products for timely dissemination when the threat substantially changes.

9.

Ensure that the product is comprehensive to fully inform the consumer about the totality of circumstances surrounding the information in the product. Indicators and evidence of threats cannot be viewed in isolation but must be presented in context, so as to see how all of the pieces of information fit into the puzzle that constitutes a threat.

10.

Provide sufficient detail in the product to make it actionable. The product should provide sufficiently definitive information that operational activity or response may be developed from the information.

11.

Verify facts and seek input from subject-matter experts (SME) related to the threat. Many times, a threat involves knowledge related to a specific area of expertise. Subject-matter experts in the areas of public health; fire; emergency management; critical infrastructure and key resources (CIKR); chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE) incidents; and severe weather or other naturally occurring hazards can be called on by fusion center analysts to provide specialized information, review conclusions, and help interpret threat information.

12.

Establish and follow a process for review and approval of products prior to dissemination. The process should include review by (1) another analyst who did not write the product (peer review), (2) a senior-level manager or supervisor, (3) the appropriate subject-matter experts, and (4) the agency's privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties officer or attorney. The product should be reviewed from both content and grammatical perspectives. The reviewing supervisor must ensure that all of the conditions described above are intact and should review the product from the perspective of a member of the public (in the event that it is publicly disclosed and published in a newspaper or other media).

Additional resources and training on privacy and civil liberties issues in the Information Sharing Environment are available at

<http://www.it.ojp.gov/PrivacyLiberty>

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