



Terrorist Screening Center

Supporting the front line against terrorism: that's what the Terrorist Screening Center, or TSC, is all about. Born out of the events of 9/11 and created in 2003, the TSC maintains the U.S. government's consolidated Terrorist Watchlist—a single database of identifying information about those known to be or reasonably suspected of being involved in terrorist activity. By supporting the ability of front-line screening agencies to positively identify known or suspected terrorists trying to obtain visas, enter the country, board aircraft, or engage in other activity, the consolidated Terrorist Watchlist is one of the most effective counterterrorism tools for the U.S. government.

Consolidating Government Watchlists into a Single Database

- Before the TSC was created, various government agencies maintained nearly a dozen separate watchlists designed to screen persons of interest to U.S. law enforcement and intelligence officials. While some lists were shared, there was little integration and cooperation between agencies, and there was no central clearinghouse where all law enforcement and government screeners could access the best information about a potential person of interest. That all changed when TSC consolidated the government's approach to terrorism screening. Today, the TSC is the global authority for watchlisting and identifying known and suspected terrorists.

Supporting the Fight Against Terrorism

- Three of the 9-11 hijackers—Mohammed Atta, Ziad Jarrah, and Hani Hanjour—were stopped by state or local law enforcement for routine traffic violations in the days leading up to 9/11. At that time, however, no central system existed to identify them as having an association with terrorism.
- Today, state and local law enforcement officials, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol agents, Transportation Security Administration and State Department personnel, and other law enforcement officials have the TSC to help inform them if they are encountering a known or suspected terrorist. This information sharing has led to major improvements in counterterrorism efforts and public security, both at home and abroad. TSC makes terrorist identity information accessible through the National Crime Information Center system to more than 870,000 state and local officers nationwide.

Maintaining the Terrorist Watchlist, the No Fly List, and the Selectee List

- The Terrorist Watchlist (also known as the Terrorist Screening Database, or TSDB), contains thousands of records that are updated daily and shared with federal, state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement; intelligence community members; and international partners to ensure that individuals with links to terrorism are appropriately screened. The No Fly and Selectee Lists are two much smaller subsets of the Watchlist.

Note: The numbers below are approximate as of September 2011 and are constantly being adjusted according to threat level and as intelligence is gathered.

- There are approximately 420,000 individuals on the Terrorist Watchlist.

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- Approximately 98 percent of these individuals are non-U.S. persons.

The No Fly List and Selectee Lists

- Inclusion on the No Fly List prohibits a known or suspected terrorist from boarding a commercial aircraft that departs from or arrives in the United States. It also prohibits an airplane carrying an individual on the No Fly List from transiting U.S. airspace. The Selectee List is used to perform additional screening on individuals.
- There are approximately 16,000 individuals on the No Fly List.
- There are fewer than 500 U.S. persons on the No Fly List at this time.
- There are approximately 16,000 individuals on the Selectee List.

Protecting Privacy and Safeguarding Civil Liberties

- The TSC only receives information collected by other government entities with pre-existing legal authority to do so. Each agency that contributes data to the TSC must comply with the law, as well as with its own policies and procedures, to protect privacy rights and civil liberties.