NTAS GUIDE

National Terrorism Advisory System Public Guide
April 2011

Homeland
Security

![NTAS - National Terrorism Advisory System - www.DHS.gov/alerts](logo)

The National Terrorism Advisory System

The National Terrorism Advisory System, or NTAS, replaces the color-coded Homeland Security Advisory System (HSAS). This new system will more effectively communicate information about terrorist threats by providing timely, detailed information to the public, government agencies, first responders, airports and other transportation hubs, and the private sector.

It recognizes that Americans all share responsibility for the nation's security, and should always be aware of the heightened risk of terrorist attack in the United States and what they should do.

NTAS Alerts

After reviewing the available information, the Secretary of Homeland Security will decide, in coordination with other Federal entities, whether an NTAS Alert should be issued.

NTAS Alerts will only be issued when credible information is available.

These alerts will include a clear statement that there is an **imminent threat** or **elevated threat**. Using available information, the alerts will provide a concise summary of the potential threat, information about actions being taken to ensure public safety, and recommended steps that individuals, communities, businesses and governments can take to help prevent, mitigate or respond to the threat.

> ### Imminent Threat Alert
> Warns of a credible, specific, and impending terrorist threat against the United States.
>
> ### Elevated Threat Alert
> Warns of a credible terrorist threat against the United States.

The NTAS Alerts will be based on the nature of the threat: in some cases, alerts will be sent directly to law enforcement or affected areas of the private sector, while in others, alerts will be issued more broadly to the American people through both official and media channels.

NTAS Alerts contain a **sunset** provision indicating a specific date when the alert expires - there will not be a constant NTAS Alert or blanket warning that there is an overarching threat. If

> ### Sunset Provision
> An individual threat alert is issued for a specific time period and then automatically expires. It may be extended if new information becomes available or the threat evolves.

threat information changes for an alert, the Secretary of Homeland Security may announce an updated NTAS Alert. All changes, including the announcement that cancels an NTAS Alert, will be distributed the same way as the original alert.

If You See Something, Say Something™. Report suspicious activity to local law enforcement or call 911.

The NTAS Alert – How can you help?

Each alert provides information to the public about the threat, including, if available, the geographic region, mode of transportation, or critical infrastructure potentially affected by the threat; protective actions being taken by authorities, and steps that individuals and communities can take to protect themselves and their families, and help prevent, mitigate or respond to the threat.

Terrorism Information

Terrorism information and intelligence is based on the collection, analysis and reporting of a range of sources and methods. While intelligence may indicate that a threat is credible, specific details may still not be known. As such, Americans should continue to stay informed and vigilant throughout the duration of an NTAS Alert.

Citizens should report suspicious activity to their local law enforcement authorities. The "If You See Something, Say Something™" campaign across the United States encourages all citizens to be vigilant for indicators of potential terrorist activity, and to follow NTAS Alerts for information about threats in specific places or for individuals exhibiting certain types of suspicious activity. Visit www.dhs.gov/ifyouseesomethingsaysomething to learn more about the campaign.

Alert Announcements

NTAS Alerts will be issued through state, local and tribal partners, the news media and directly to the public via the following channels:

- Via the official DHS NTAS webpage – http://www.dhs.gov/alerts
- Via email signup at – http://www.dhs.gov/alerts
- Via social media
  - Facebook – http://facebook.com/NTASAlerts
  - Twitter – http://www.twitter.com/NTASAlerts
- Via data feeds, web widgets and graphics
  - http://www.dhs.gov/alerts

The public can also expect to see alerts in places, both public and private, such as transit hubs, airports and government buildings.

Sample NTAS Alert

A sample NTAS Alert is provided at the end of this booklet.

If You See Something, Say Something™. Report suspicious activity to local law enforcement or call 911.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Q – What will happen to the color-coded advisory system?
   A - The new National Terrorism Advisory System replaces the Homeland Security Advisory System that has been in place since 2002. The National Terrorism Advisory System, or NTAS, will include information specific to the particular credible threat, and will not use a color-coded scale.

2. Q – How does the new system work?
   A – When there is credible information about a threat, an NTAS Alert will be shared with the American public. It may include specific information, if available, about the nature of the threat, including the geographic region, mode of transportation, or critical infrastructure potentially affected by the threat, as well as steps that individuals and communities can take to protect themselves and help prevent, mitigate or respond to the threat. The advisory will clearly indicate whether the threat is **Elevated**, if we have no specific information about the timing or location, or **Imminent**, if we believe the threat is impending or very soon.

3. Q – As a citizen, how will I find out that an NTAS Alert has been announced?
   A – The Secretary of Homeland Security will announce the alerts publically. Alerts will simultaneously be posted at DHS.gov/alerts and released to the news media for distribution. The Department of Homeland Security will also distribute alerts across its social media channels, including the Department's blog, Twitter stream, Facebook page, and RSS feed.

4. Q - What should Americans do when an NTAS Alert is announced?
   A – The NTAS Alert informs the American public about credible terrorism threats, and encourages citizens to report suspicious activity. Where possible and applicable, NTAS Alerts will include steps that individuals and communities can take to protect themselves to help prevent, mitigate or respond to the threat. Individuals should review the information contained in the alert, and based upon the circumstances, take the recommended precautionary or preparedness measures for themselves and their families.

5. Q – How should I report suspicious activity?
   A – Citizens should report suspicious activity to their local law enforcement authorities. The "If You See Something, Say Something" campaign across the United States encourages all citizens to be vigilant for indicators of potential terrorist activity, and to follow NTAS Alerts for information about threats in specific places or for individuals exhibiting certain types of suspicious activity.

6. Q - I get my news online, so how will I find out about an NTAS Alert?
   A – Americans can go to DHS.gov/alerts to see the most recent advisories. Additionally, advisories will be sent out widely through social and mainstream media.

If You See Something, Say Something[TM]**. Report suspicious activity to local law enforcement or call 911.**

7. Q - How will NTAS Alerts be cancelled or updated?
    A – The NTAS Alerts carry an expiration date and will be automatically cancelled on that date.   If the threat information changes for an alert, the Secretary of Homeland Security may announce an updated NTAS Alert. All changes, including the announcement that cancels an NTAS Alert, will be distributed the same way as the original alert.

8. Q - Do these alerts apply to Americans in other countries?
    A – NTAS Alerts apply only to threats in the United States and its possessions. The Department of State issues security advisory information for U.S. citizens overseas or traveling in foreign countries.

If You See Something, Say Something[TM]. Report suspicious activity to local law enforcement or call 911.

SUMMARY

The Secretary of Homeland Security informs the public and relevant government and private sector partners about a potential or actual threat with this alert, indicating whether there is an "imminent" or "elevated" threat.

DURATION

An individual threat alert is issued for a specific time period and then automatically expires. It may be extended if new information becomes available or the threat evolves.

DETAILS

• This section provides more detail about the threat and what the public and sectors need to know.

• It may include specific information, if available, about the nature and credibility of the threat, including the critical infrastructure sector(s) or location(s) that may be affected.

• It includes as much information as can be released publicly about actions being taken or planned by authorities to ensure public safety, such as increased protective actions and what the public may expect to see.

AFFECTED AREAS

▪ This section includes visual depictions (such as maps or other graphics) showing the affected location(s), sector(s), or other illustrative detail about the threat itself.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

• This section provides information on ways the public can help authorities (e.g. camera phone pictures taken at the site of an explosion), and reinforces the importance of reporting suspicious activity.

• It may ask the public or certain sectors to be alert for a particular item, situation, person, activity or developing trend.

STAY PREPARED

• This section emphasizes the importance of the public planning and preparing for emergencies before they happen, including specific steps individuals, families and businesses can take to ready themselves and their communities.

• It provides additional preparedness information that may be relevant based on this threat.

STAY INFORMED

• This section notifies the public about where to get more information.

• It encourages citizens to stay informed about updates from local public safety and community leaders.

• It includes a link to the DHS NTAS website http://www.dhs.gov/alerts and http://twitter.com/NTASAlerts

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