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TSDB Handling Codes

1 message

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Bringing Justice to Targeted Individuals

TSDB Handling Codes

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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION FIDELITY BRAVERY INTEGRITY

FBI

If you are a Targeted Individual, the FBI is claiming that there is a “reasonable suspicion” that you:

- engaged in,
- have been engaged in, or
- intend to engage in

conduct that constitutes, prepares for, aids, or furthers terrorism or terrorist activities.

Here is the official FBI document from April 2024:

https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/counterterrorism/terrorist-watchlisting-transparency-document-april-2024-050224.pdf

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Handling Codes in the TSDB

Current state and federal law-enforcement reference materials (including 2024–2025 NCIC/TSC training documents) state that there are five handling codes:

- Handling Code 1 — Outstanding arrest warrant / confirmed association with terrorism (arrest if warrant is confirmed; contact TSC immediately).
- Handling Code 2 — Subject of active investigative interest (detain for a reasonable period and contact TSC).
- Handling Code 3 — Possible ties to terrorism (do not alert the person; contact TSC during or immediately after the encounter).
  [Targeted Individuals]
- Handling Code 4 — Limited identifying data or identity provided has possible ties (do not alert; contact FBI/TSC).
  [Targeted Individuals that are not aware they are targeted. They are typically a family member, friend, or associate of Code 3.]
- Handling Code 5 — Possible national-security threat / transnational organized crime (do not detain or arrest solely on this notice; do not advise the person; contact TSC).

The exact wording of the caveats and the precise criteria for each code can change, and some older (pre-2010s) documents listed only four codes.

Targeted Justice believes there is a 6th code, which we refer to as X. It is used to protect the global elites. The message a police officer will receive is: Do not detain or arrest this person, for any reason. This is like having “Diplomatic status.”

Even if a crime has been committed - they will not be detained or arrested.

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Criteria as defined by the FBI

Here are the publicly described criteria and expected responses, drawn from FBI policy excerpts, state/federal NCIC training manuals, and law-enforcement general orders:

Handling Code 1

- Criteria: There is an active arrest warrant in the NCIC Wanted Persons File (the warrant number is included in the record). The subject is associated with terrorism.
- Officer action: Approach with caution. Arrest if the warrant is confirmed. Immediately contact the TSC. Do not tell the person they are on a watchlist. After an arrest the record is typically downgraded to Code 3.

Handling Code 2

- Criteria: The subject is of active investigative interest regarding terrorism, or there is a basis to detain (for example a DHS detainer, administrative warrant, or exigent circumstances). Reasonable articulable suspicion of terrorist activity exists.
- Officer action: Approach with caution. Detain for a reasonable period for questioning. Immediately contact the TSC (which will typically notify the local JTTF). Do not alert the person to the watchlist hit.

Handling Code 3

- Criteria: The record meets the TSDB “reasonable suspicion” standard (articulable facts that the person is engaged, has been engaged, or intends to engage in terrorism or terrorist activities) and contains sufficient identifiers (normally full name + date of birth or equivalent). This is the most common code.

- Officer action: Approach with caution. Do not detain or arrest solely because of the hit. Do not tell the person they may be on a terrorist watchlist. Contact the TSC during the encounter (or immediately afterward) so TSC can confirm identity and collect additional information within the officer's legal authority.

Handling Code 4

- Criteria: Limited biographical data, or the identity provided "may have possible ties" to terrorism / national-security interest. Historically also used for certain military detainees vetted as having no known terrorism nexus.
- Officer action: Do not detain or arrest based on this notice. Do not advise the person they are a "person of interest." Contact the FBI/TSC during or immediately after the encounter.

Handling Code 5

- Criteria: Possible national-security threat, most often associated with transnational organized crime (TOC) rather than (or in addition to) terrorism. Added as the TSC's mission expanded beyond purely terrorist identities.
- Officer action: Do not detain or arrest based on this notice. Do not tell the person they may have ties to TOC or a national-security threat. Contact the TSC to determine whether ties exist and to gather intelligence within legal authority.

Underlying TSDB nomination standard (applies before a handling code is assigned)
A record can be placed in the TSDB only if there is reasonable suspicion of a terrorism nexus and enough identifying information for a screener to make a reliable match-or-no-match decision. Race, ethnicity, religion, or First Amendment-protected activity alone cannot be the basis.Exact internal scoring rules and some derogatory details remain sensitive/law-enforcement-restricted. The descriptions above come from publicly available training documents and older FBI policy excerpts; front-line caveats can be updated, so officers are instructed to follow the exact language that appears in the NCIC hit response.

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Reasonable Suspicion Standard

The reasonable suspicion standard is the core substantive test the U.S. government uses to decide whether someone can be placed in the Terrorist Screening Dataset (TSDS, formerly the TSDB or “terrorist watchlist”). Official definition (FBI, April 2024). The standard is met when, based on the totality of the circumstances, there is reasonable suspicion that the person:

- is engaged in,
- has been engaged in, or
- intends to engage in

conduct that constitutes, prepares for, aids, or furthers terrorism or terrorist activities. The assessment must rest on articulable intelligence or information plus rational inferences drawn from that information. Mere guesses, hunches, or a report of “suspicious activity” by itself are not enough. Reviewers must also weigh any aggravating or mitigating factors that strengthen or weaken the person’s connection to terrorism. Two additional requirements

1. Sufficient identifying information — enough biographic or biometric data (name, date of birth, passport number, fingerprints, etc.) so a screener can reliably decide whether the person in front of them matches the watchlist record.
2. Prohibited bases — a nomination cannot rest solely on race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, or constitutionally protected activity (speech, religion, press, assembly, petitioning the government).

How it is applied

- Nominating agencies (FBI, NCTC, DHS, State, intelligence community, etc.) submit a package of derogatory information.
- NCTC (for international terrorism) or the FBI (for domestic terrorism) performs an initial review.
- The Threat Screening Center (TSC) makes the final decision and can accept, reject, or send the nomination back for more information.
- The same reasonable-suspicion test applies to both U.S. persons and non-U.S. persons, although additional, stricter criteria apply if the person is also placed on the No Fly or Selectee lists.

The standard is deliberately lower than probable cause. It is modeled on the Terry v. Ohio “reasonable suspicion” test used for brief street stops, but it is applied here by executive-branch analysts rather than a judge and can

remain in effect for years. Limited exceptions exist that allow certain records (for example, some associates of known terrorists) to be included even if they do not themselves meet the full reasonable-suspicion threshold; those exception records are generally used only for visa and border screening. The government states that it periodically reviews records to confirm they still meet the standard and that U.S. persons make up a very small fraction of the overall watchlist.

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Keep in mind that the Office of Inspector General (OIG) has done multiple audits of the TSDB - proving that some of the above claims of the FBI are false.

97% of the names on the TSDB have "no known ties to terrorism" - per the OIG.

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