What is the origin of the TLO program?

Shortly after 9/11, several police chiefs in the South Bay area of Los Angeles County organized a Terrorism Advisory Group as an effort apart from the existing TEW. One of the concepts that came out of this effort was that each agency should designate a Terrorism Liaison Officer. These officers became the principal points of contact for all terrorism-related information for their respective agencies.

Recognizing the extraordinary potential for the TLO Program to be an effective force-multiplier, the concept was grafted into the TEW and expanded to include fire and public health agencies.

The Sacramento RTAC/CCIC became operational in January 2006. It is the first comprehensive information center of its kind in the Eastern District of California. It fully integrates the information intake, vetting, analysis/fusion, and synthesis as part of the National and State model.

The SACRTAC/CCIC mirrors the Federal Eastern District of California (88,000 square miles) and is responsible to provide support to 34 California Counties. The SACRTAC/CCIC will disseminate developed information, provide analytical case support, analyze trends, and provide tailored analytical products to end users.

The SACRTAC/CCIC is staffed with full-time personnel, both analysts and sworn, from local, state, and federal agencies. Its mission is to provide coordination and support to all TLOs throughout the 34 county regions. It will build and maintain a cohesive, well-trained team that enhances our ability to detect, deter, and defend against terrorism.
What is a Terrorism Liaison Officer (TLO)?

A TLO is an individual that serves as the principal point of contact for a public safety agency in matters related to terrorism information and intelligence. The TLO, though not necessarily an expert in terrorism, attends meetings and receives terrorism training, information, and intelligence from the Sacramento Regional Threat Assessment Center (SACRTAC), and other entities engaged in terrorism intelligence and investigations. The TLO educates others within their agency, thereby enhancing situational awareness, early warning, and operational preparedness.

TLOs are a vital link in keeping those engaged in public safety professions knowledgeable about current terrorist tactics, techniques, and practices. The TLO serves to educate public safety personnel to indicators and warnings of potential terrorist activity that might otherwise go unnoticed and unreported. TLOs are typically the persons contacted when such suspicious activity is encountered. They then forward the information to the SACRTAC/CCIC who is responsible for the initial analysis of the information. If actionable information is discovered, the SACRTAC/CCIC provides the lead to the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF).

TLOs raise the level of terrorism prevention and preparedness within our communities and enable public safety personnel to deal more effectively with the threat of terrorism.

Do all TLOs perform the same duties?

No. TLOs largely represent public safety agencies (Police/Fire). Each of these disciplines has unique needs in dealing with the threat of terrorism. Although the information, intelligence, and training provided is frequently the same, the role that these agencies play is quite different. Some TLOs may be more focused on detection and deterrence, whereas others may be more concerned with response issues. The role of the agency will dictate the specific TLO responsibilities that extends beyond the sharing of information.

What are some of the typical duties for a TLO?

The duties and responsibilities of a TLO may include:

- As appropriate, receive and share information and intelligence in matters related to terrorism with others in their agency.
- Receive leads that originate from within their jurisdiction regarding possible terrorism activity and forward it to the SACRTAC/CCIC for analytical evaluation. SACRTAC/CCIC then forwards the lead to the FBI/JTTF for appropriate investigative follow-up.
- Serve as their agency's point of contact for public and private sector relationships in matters related to terrorism.
- Conduct, coordinate, and/or assist with department training in topics related to terrorism.
- Conduct, coordinate, and/or facilitate community meetings, conferences, and other terrorism information sharing activities.

Are there requirements to become a TLO?

A TLO is any peace officer, firefighter, state investigator, federal agent, military investigative or security services, or anyone working closely within the public safety/homeland security community.

What is most desired in a prospective TLO is good communication skills and 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 for the overriding public interest. Reluctant or ordered acceptance of the TLO position will most likely have an unproductive outcome.

The work of the TLO requires equal measures of initiative and intelligence. The TLO needs to be pro-active, but in a planned and thoughtful manner. TLO's need to be able to collect and understand data, some of which is complicated and convoluted; but then must be willing and able to appropriately report that data without hesitation to their Fusion Center/JTTF.

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

How can your agency join the TLO program?

All public safety agencies are welcome and encouraged to participate in the TLO Program. To join, go to www.sacrtac.org and click on “How to become a TLO.” Fill out the TLO designation form and submit via the website. Also, print this form and obtain an authorization signature from your department head. Bring this completed form with you to the TLO basic course.