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MIAC ALERT

Suspicious Activities Involving School Buses and Licensing

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Attention: School district officials should be aware that distribution of this alert does not indicate there is an imminent danger to the school system, students, or any school related activities. This flyer serves only to increase awareness in school administrators and licensed carriers, of the potential for terrorist activities to be directed against their institutions and student body.

Recent investigations by federal, state and local authorities, including Joint Terrorism Task Forces reveal disturbing trends in the number of foreign nationals purchasing school buses and acquiring licenses to drive them. Although the great majority of these activities appear to be legal and have no terrorism nexus, some of the individuals are of 'investigative interest' and have ties to extremist/terrorist organizations. There is no proof at this time that a direct attack is being planned, however the ease with which the individuals have been able to acquire the buses and licensing is of concern.

Some districts have reported an increase in the number of foreign nationals seeking school bus driver positions. In some of these cases, a link has been established between the applicants and known terrorist groups. In other cases, the applicant has openly sympathized with the goals and objectives of some terrorist organizations. Most concerning is the fact that some of the applicants had already been reported as having an interest in the application of explosives.

Terrorists have historically been interested in using large, enclosed vehicles to transport and deliver Improvised Explosive Devices (IED's) School buses would make an ideal delivery vehicle and school bus parking lots generally have very lax security. In extreme cases, some lots may be unfenced, not monitored at all, and keys left in the vehicles for quick removal.

Although most states require background checks through the FBI or another state agency, some states do not even check for proof of residency or legal status. Once a CDL is issued in such a state, a hazardous materials endorsement may be easily added, and a CDL license more easily obtained in another state. Compounding this problem is the fact that many states still allow "Third Party" testing for CDL applicants. The "Third Party" testing system has been proven to encourage CDL fraud schemes in which applicants easily acquire a CDL from corrupt third party testers.

School District administrators must be aware of these risks and contracted student carriers should know the indicators of highly suspicious activities such as:

- A. Drivers who possess a valid CDL, but obviously have very limited driving skills.
- B. Reports of unusual surveillance of bus storage facilities, in-transit buses, and the bus waiting

lines at the educational institutions.

C. Student reports of unusual changes in route, and/or suspicious behavior of the drivers.

D. Attempts to purchase buses directly from the school district or private bus vendors that cause some unease on the part of the sellers.

E. Theft of buses or tampering with security devices at school bus lots or storage facilities.

F. Unexplained loss of keys to particular vehicles.

G. Obvious incursions into secure bus areas, but no thefts or damage to equipment, may indicate a "dry run" tactic.

H. Suspicious inquiries regarding school bus schedules, and/ or suspected surveillance of school bus routes.

Any of the above-cited activity should be immediately reported to local law enforcement authorities, the local Missouri State Highway Patrol Troop headquarters, and the Missouri Information Analysis Center. It is suggested that all these government entities be made aware of the concerns in order to ensure a coordinated response. The Missouri Information Analysis Center may be contacted toll-free at 1-866-362-6422.

Missouri Information Analysis Center

Division of Drug & Crime Control, P. O. Box 568, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0568

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Missouri Information Analysis Center