



Saliant, Inc.

Law Enforcement Regional Technology Assessment (LERTA) and Gap Analysis



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Prevent, Protect, Respond, Recover

Homeland Security Challenge:

As illustrated graphically by the events surrounding the September 11th terrorist attacks and the natural disaster of Hurricane Katrina, law enforcement plays an integral role in emergency preparedness and response. At the World Trade Center, law enforcement and other first responders were key components in establishing command, control and communication, and providing for public evacuation and security. In New Orleans and the surrounding areas, a clear lesson-learned is that relief operations work better when order is restored in a disaster zone.

Research Project Solution:

The LERTA survey was designed to address key facets of law enforcement's role in homeland security using the benchmark target capabilities and technology criteria of the National Response Plan. The LERTA survey was specifically intended to do the following: 1) compare existing law enforcement capabilities with the National Response Plan's Target Capabilities List (TCL) criteria (DHS 2005); 2) identify technology needs and research opportunities; 3) identify high return-on-investment opportunities for improving law enforcement's role in regional homeland security; 4) assess lessons learned and planning issues which could be formulated into best practices; 5) support preparation of baseline evaluation of key procedural, operational, and technological needs and issues for the southeastern region; and 6) provide an initial assessment of the contribution of law enforcement to community resiliency.

National Implications:

The LERTA survey was conducted by a retired chief of police in three southeastern states— Tennessee, Georgia, and Mississippi— with specific cities and departments selected to achieve diversity in size and location. The survey established a peer-to-peer dialogue with some ninety police and sheriff departments in small, midsize, and large municipalities throughout the three southeastern states. The survey differs from past homeland security surveys of law enforcement in its regional focus, its peer-to-peer on-site interview process, its comprehensive treatment of various facets of law enforcement, and its introduction of the role critical law enforcement capabilities play in either building or enhancing community and regional resilience.

Law Enforcement Regional Technology Assessment (LERTA)

LERTA is a survey conducted with police and sheriff departments in small, midsize, and large municipalities to identify preparedness gaps and opportunities for improving regional homeland security readiness and effectiveness through improvements in:

- Command, Control, Communications and Regional Coordination
- Information and Intelligence Sharing
- Technology
- Training
- Law Enforcement Resiliency

Nearly 90 law enforcement agencies were surveyed in Tennessee, Mississippi, and Georgia.

Top 10 LERTA Survey Findings

1. Readiness for terrorist acts and natural disasters has improved; however, there is no accepted metric for gauging homeland security preparedness and no personnel accreditation standards for law enforcement.
2. Federal and state homeland security grants and expanded training programs have contributed most to homeland security improvements; however, regional based homeland security training for law enforcement personnel remains inadequate.
3. Training, information sharing, and intelligence are considered the three most important homeland security capabilities or capacities for law enforcement.
4. Insufficient budget, manpower and lack of regional integration are the three most significant impediments to achieving homeland security goals.
5. Threat assessment cooperation is seen as more effective between local law enforcement and the FBI, JTF, and state fusion centers, than between local law enforcement organizations within the region.
6. Improving preparedness for natural disasters and developing interoperable communications are the top regional homeland security priorities for law enforcement.
7. Improvements in fully interoperable communications offer the highest potential "return on investment" for homeland security for law enforcement.
8. While more advance homeland security technology has been introduced, almost half of all respondents indicated key technology needs have not been addressed.
9. Regional law enforcement agencies are generally satisfied with homeland security information received from federal and state sources with respect to timeliness, accuracy and relevancy.
10. Larger law enforcement agencies (>100 personnel) act as "hubs" for nearby, smaller departments for homeland security training delivery, thereby leveraging regional training and response capacity.

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