

NTAS Frequently Asked Questions

The following are frequently asked questions regarding the National Terrorism Advisory System.

Q - What happened to the color-coded advisory system?

A - The National Terrorism Advisory System replaced the Homeland Security Advisory System that had been in place since 2002. The National Terrorism Advisory System, or NTAS, includes information specific to the particular credible threat, and does not use a color-coded scale.

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.

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](https://www.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.

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.

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 Alert for information about threats in specific places or for individuals exhibiting certain types of suspicious activity.

Q - I get my news online, so how will I find out about an NTAS Alert?

A – Americans can go to [DHS.gov/alerts](https://www.dhs.gov/alerts) to see the most recent advisories. Additionally, advisories will be sent out widely through social and mainstream media.

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.

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.

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