

IWATCH Launches at Los Angeles International Airport

Program Encourages Airport Visitors and Communities to Help Fight Terrorism

Los Angeles: This morning at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Congresswoman Jane Harman, LAPD Chief Charlie Beck, Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) Police Division Chief George R. Centeno, and numerous other city and community leaders launched IWATCH LAX, a community engagement effort to fight terrorism.

IWATCH, referred to as the “21st century version of Neighborhood Watch,” is designed to enable members of the public to help protect their communities by identifying and reporting suspicious behaviors and activities known to be used by terrorists. It’s the latest tool in use at LAX to help guard against terrorism.

“Our City is faced with a new kind of threat in the 21st Century that requires us to be vigilant of our communities,” said Mayor Villaraigosa. “IWATCH not only provides an avenue to report suspicious activity, but more importantly it involves and educates the public about suspicious activities and behaviors, not personal characteristics, that may be associated with terrorist activities.”

“I’m excited about maintaining and building upon our partnership with the Los Angeles Police Department in the sharing of potential intelligence information that will help Los Angeles Airport Police further protect LAX Airport,” said LAWA Chief of Airport Police George R. Centeno.

The IWATCH LAX program will feature an airport emergency police contact number in its media materials along with the 1-877-A-THREAT (1-877-284-7328) and IWATCHLA.org contact information, for callers who wish to report suspicious activity or behavior they witness at LAX that requires immediate attention. The reports will be analyzed by trained LAPD detectives.

Mayor Villaraigosa simultaneously launched the IWATCH campaign in multiple languages, a new feature of the LAPD’s website. The www.IWATCHla.org site, if accessed through www.lapdonline.org, allows viewers to scroll to the bottom of the home page and click on a flag consistent with the language they prefer, which will translate all LAPD pages, including the IWATCH page, to the chosen language. IWATCH will also expand its access to Angelenos through a public service announcement (PSA) featuring Mayor Villaraigosa in Spanish and English, and brochures in English, Spanish and Korean.

For additional outreach, the LAPD has created media partnerships for the IWATCH campaign. Our partners include the LA Daily News, LA 18 KSCI-TV, ABC7, La Opinion, KFI 640AM and the Los Angeles Downtown News. Logos and links have been exchanged with our IWATCH media partners to enable users to conveniently and quickly switch from website to website.

Los Angeles residents now have a specific program enabling them to learn about and report suspicious activity or behavior that may have a connection to terrorism. All reports are reviewed by trained detectives and kept confidential. Individuals can call the threat line at 1-877-A-THREAT (1-877-284-7328), call 911 if an emergency or crime is occurring, contact their local police station or go to www.IWATCHla.org to file a report. At the website, more terrorism-related information is also available

by viewing an educational film or PSA, downloading a brochure or reading about the behaviors and activities that may apply to different industries.

IWATCH was developed to complement the Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) system, a reporting program designed by the LAPD for line-level officers.

“Individuals have varying thresholds at which they feel compelled to notify authorities when the activity is not overtly terrorist related,” said LAPD Chief Beck. “The IWATCH program is a giant leap toward overcoming this problem and literally provides millions of new eyes and ears in the terrorism prevention effort. An alert community can act as a deterrent to terrorism, and an educated and trained public can feel more in control of their lives if they partner with law enforcement in the fight against terrorism.”

The IWATCH program is designed to be easily adopted by law enforcement agencies nationwide. The marketing materials, which include the IWATCH brand, a community training video, PSAs, brochures and posters, can be modified to reflect any particular city or community and create an iconic image that can become the umbrella program for the nation.

By downloading videos, brochures and setting up a reporting process through www.IWATCH.org, any city or agency can create its own IWATCH website where the public can get information about the program and terrorism.

For more information, contact the LAPD Media Relations Section at (213) 486-5910.