Iowans urged to report suspicious activity

In the wake of recent violent acts in the United States and abroad, Gov. Terry Branstad and Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds have urged Iowans to pay attention to and report suspicious activity.

“The recent mass shooting in Orlando and other violent acts have underscored the importance of being vigilant and reporting suspicious behavior,” said Branstad at a June 20 press conference. “All Iowans can contribute to the safety of their communities, state and nation.”

The Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEMD), along with the Iowa Department of Public Safety (DPS) have joined together to increase public awareness of the “If You See Something, Say Something™” campaign, which is an initiative of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. In late June public service messages began airing on radio stations throughout Iowa. The radio messages talk about what to watch out for and how citizens can report suspicious activity or behavior.

“This doesn’t mean we should stop living our lives, or live in fear,” said Branstad. “But we do need to pay more attention, and if we do see something, we need to speak up. As individuals, we can make a difference.”

According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, suspicious activity is any ob-

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Iowans urged to report suspicious activity as part of national campaign

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served behavior that could indicate terrorism or terrorism-related crime. This includes, but is not limited to:

• Unusual items or situations: A vehicle is parked in an odd location, a package/luggage is unattended, a window/door is open that is usually closed, or other out-of-the-ordinary situations occur.

• Eliciting information: A person questions individuals at a level beyond curiosity about a building’s purpose, operations, security procedures and/or personnel, shift changes, etc.

• Observation/surveillance: Someone pays unusual attention to facilities or buildings beyond a casual or professional interest. This includes extended loitering without explanation (particularly in concealed locations); unusual, repeated, and/or prolonged observation of a building (e.g., with binoculars or video camera); taking notes or measurements; counting paces; sketching floor plans, etc.

Some of these activities could be innocent—it’s up to law enforcement to determine whether the behavior warrants investigation.

The activities above are not all-inclusive, but have been compiled based on studies of pre-operation aspects of both successful and thwarted terrorist events over several years.

“It is our responsibility as Americans to be vigilant and to act when we see something that isn’t right, that could endanger the safety of our citizens and communities,” said HSEMDF Director Mark Schouten at the governor’s June 20 press conference.

For additional information, visit www.homelandsecurity.iowa.gov.
Des Moines County completes Integrated Emergency Management Course

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had the opportunity to test their response if a tornado were to tear through the city of Burlington, re-
view emergency planning for a large-scale community event, and were provided training on 
public information dissemination, mass care situations, recovery operations, railroad safety, and 
much more.

“The fact that everyone was there together and got immersed in what we were doing was invaluable,” said Hardin. She said plans, poli-
cies and procedures at all levels were reviewed and tested as part of the course.

Participants in the course included elected officials and representa-
tives from hospitals, public health, law enforcement, educational insti-
tutions, volunteer groups, private organizations, and state agencies. Joyce Flinn represented HSEMD as a participant in the course. The Des Moines County delegation was also accompanied by three representatives from local media.

Hardin said EMI sent a representa-
tive to Des Moines County in March of this year to meet with her and other local responders to de-
termine areas to address during the course. “The course was to-
tally formatted around their needs based upon our local hazard anal-
ysis and FEMA’s core capabilities,” she explained.

“In Des Moines County we always work well together and have built good relationships over the years,” said Hardin. “By the end of this course we had built new relationships that will help us to work to-
gether even better in the future.”

Hardin applied for the course in January 2015 and her application was approved in June 2015. Des Moines County is one of only 10 entities that were chosen to par-
ticipate in an IEMC this year. The jurisdiction had to agree to work together to improve its emergency management capabilities, correct any deficiencies noted in the exer-
cise, and provide a written report to FEMA of actions taken or planned by December 2016. Ω


The 13th Annual Iowa Homeland Security Conference will be Oct. 12-13, 2016. This year’s conference will be held at the Community Choice Credit Union Con-
vention Center at Veteran’s Memorial, 833 Fifth Ave., Des Moines.

As in past years, the conference will feature a variety of speakers and opportuni-
ties to network with colleagues.

In addition to the conference, a free preconference workshop will be held Oct. 11. This year’s workshop will focus on leadership and decision making.

Early-bird registration is $145. Starting Sept. 26, the registration fee is $175. Registration includes 
parking fees (except for walk-ins).

Registration will be available soon. Get more information at www.homelandsecurity.iowa.gov. Ω
HSEMD training opportunities

To register for these courses, visit HSEMD’s training website. Full details on each course are available here as well. Contact Beth Lewis at beth.lewis@iowa.gov or Cristie Duric at cristie.duric@iowa.gov with questions.

ALERRT Active Shooter Response Level I
July 19-20, 2016 – Humboldt
Aug. 22-23, 2016 – Knoxville

ALERRT Active Shooter Response Level II
July 21-22, 2016 – Humboldt
Aug. 24-25, 2016 – Knoxville

Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Operations & Planning for All-Hazards Events
July 26-28, 2016 – Sioux City

Post Active Shooter - A Unified Response by Law Enforcement, Fire and EMS
July 27-29, 2016 – State Center
Aug. 1-3, 2016 – Storm Lake

Emergency Management Program Development Session #3
Aug. 4, 2016 – Des Moines

ICS 300 Intermediate
Aug. 27-28, 2016 – Nevada

Other available training

Faith Readiness: An Emergency Preparedness Workshop for Faith Communities
July 26, 2016 – Bettendorf
To register, email Dave Donovan at dave.donovan@scottcounty.iowa.com with “RSVP-Iowa” in subject line, and include participant name, organization, title, email address and phone number.

Post Active Shooter - A Unified Response by Law Enforcement, Fire, and EMS
July 20-22, 2016 – Charles City
To register, contact Lezlie

McCrabb at lmccrabb@floydcoia.org.

ALERRT Active Shooter Response Level I
Aug. 1-2, 2016 – Calmar
To register, email Sean Snyder at ema@co.winneshiek.ia.us and include participant name, law enforcement agency name, cell phone number, and email address.

Emergency Management Standard Training
For more information contact Lindsey Shafer (859)244-8223 or lshafer@csg.org.

ALERRT Active Shooter Response Level II
Aug. 3-4, 2016 – Calmar
To register, email Sean Snyder at ema@co.winneshiek.ia.us and include participant name, law enforcement agency name, cell phone number, and email address.
HSEMD welcomes new employee

Jensen Connor joined the Operations Division of the Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management on June 27. He is an information technology specialist and will work to create new, and enhance existing, GIS capabilities and resources while supporting projects. He will also provide technical support for the team.

Jensen came to HSEMD from the Iowa Soybean Association in Ankeny, where he worked as a GIS specialist. He attended Luther College in Decorah for his undergraduate degree, studying biology, geoscience and computer science. He then attended Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota’s graduate program in geographic information systems.

Jensen grew up on Whidbey Island, Wash., and came to the Midwest in 2008 for college. He and his wife, Katherine, live in Des Moines with their dog Kaeda. In his free time he enjoys hiking, kayaking, brewing beer, and hunting.

Welcome, Jensen!

ON THE CALENDAR

JULY
• National Fireworks Safety Month
• Independence Day (4)*

SEPTEMBER
• National Preparedness Month
• Labor Day (5)*

*State holiday. HSEMD offices will be closed.

September is National Preparedness Month

National Preparedness Month will soon be here!

Each September HSEMD and partner agencies remind Iowans of the importance of being prepared for emergencies and disasters.

Watch for additional information in the August issue of Secure & Prepared and at www.beready.iowa.gov.

Secure & Prepared is published for those involved in the homeland security/emergency management system in the state of Iowa. For more information, contact Stefanie Bond at stefanie.bond@iowa.gov.

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Mark Schouten

HSEMD MISSION
Lead, coordinate, and support homeland security and emergency management functions in order to establish sustainable communities and ensure economic opportunities for Iowa and its citizens.

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