

Today's FBI



Mission

Chapter 2
Heading

The Mission of the FBI is to uphold the law through the investigation of violations of federal criminal law; to protect the United States from foreign intelligence and terrorist activities; to provide leadership and law enforcement assistance to federal, state, local, and international agencies; and to perform these responsibilities in a manner that is responsive to the needs of the public and is faithful to the Constitution of the United States.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is the principal investigative arm of the United States Department of Justice (DOJ). Title 28, United States Code (U.S. Code), Section 533, which authorizes the Attorney General to "appoint officials to detect...crimes against the United States," and other federal statutes give the FBI the authority and responsibility to investigate specific crimes. At present, the FBI has investigative jurisdiction over violations of more than 200 categories of federal crimes.

Information obtained through an FBI investigation is presented to the appropriate U. S. Attorney or DOJ official, who decides if prosecution, or other action, is warranted. Top priority has been assigned to the five areas that affect society the most: counterterrorism, drugs/organized crime, foreign counterintelligence, violent crimes, and white-collar crimes.

In 1998, Director Freeh articulated five core values that guide employees in support of the FBI's mission; rigorous obedience to the Constitution; respect for the dignity of all those we protect; compassion; fairness; and uncompromising personal and institutional integrity.

Part of the FBI's mission articulates its responsibility to provide assistance and leadership to local law enforcement. For example, the nucleus of the Disaster Squad consists of the FBI Laboratory's Latent Fingerprint Specialists. Since its 1940 inception to August 1998, the Squad has assisted law enforcement in examining almost 7,262 victims in over 176 disasters. Of these, 4,150 were positively identified through fingerprints, palm prints, and footprints. Recent incidents requiring Disaster Squad assistance include: the Oklahoma City bombing; the bombing of a U.S. military housing facility in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia; the crash of TWA Flight 800 off the coast of Long Island; and the bombing of U.S. Embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.