AVOIDING AGENCY CONFLICTS IN THE FIELD

Deconfliction Is an Essential Officer Safety Tool

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The work performed by the law enforcement community is dangerous, and despite continuous improvements in officer safety, more needs to be done. Unfortunately, some of our best officer safety tools are not always used — with tragic results. Examples are officers shot while not wearing a bulletproof vest or officers involved in vehicle accidents who weren't wearing a seatbelt. Deconfliction is another indispensable officer safety tool that should be used as routinely as a bulletproof vest or seatbelt, and failure to do so can have tragic consequences.

WHAT IS DECONFLICTION?

There are two types of deconfliction: event deconfliction and target deconfliction (also referred to as case or investigative deconfliction).

The use of an officer safety event deconfliction system (RISSafe) provides controlled and secure monitoring of operations and the immediate notification of affected parties when potential conflicts arise with other law enforcement actions or events. The events can be anything from enforcement operations (e.g., warrant services, parole or probation searches, knock and talks, etc.) to surveillance operations. It is critically important for law enforcement personnel to be aware of other planned law enforcement operations occurring at the same or a nearby location. Event deconflictions occur frequently, and those in charge of the operations must be able to communicate and safely coordinate a plan of action.

Target deconfliction (RISSIntel) is the process of identifying independent investigations that are targeting the same person, location, vehicle, etc. Connecting the investigators not only eliminates duplication of work and the possibility of one investigation compromising the other, but it often strengthens investigations by facilitating the sharing of information.

I could share countless examples in which the use of event and target deconfliction averted disasters. Unfortunately, there are also many stories in which the failure to use deconfliction resulted in preventable, dangerous situations or compromised investigations. I will share a personal experience that touches on both forms of deconfliction. While working in a multijurisdictional drug task force, we initiated an investigation of a mid-level drug dealer that took several weeks of surveillance and CI buys to finally get an undercover agent introduced to the dealer. We were confident that our undercover agent would help us identify the dealer's suppliers. During an undercover operation, a local detective from the city where our operation was occurring saw me and pulled his car next to mine. I quickly realized we were both monitoring wires and that we were listening to the same conversation. The detective confirmed they were also at our location conducting a quick CI buy so they could "paper the house." I was furious. All of our information was in WSIN's deconfliction system, not to mention we had notified the detective's own police department about the operation. The local agency's quick-kill case would have compromised our more comprehensive investigation, but a greater concern would have been the police serving a search warrant while our unsuspecting undercover agent was inside the house. There is no excuse for allowing this type of thing to happen.

> ## TYPES OF DECONFLICTION SYSTEMS
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WHAT DECONFLICTION IS NOT

It is not a tool for investigators to go on fishing expeditions for intelligence. It is also not a system that allows anyone to poach your case. If someone makes an RISSIntel inquiry and hits on any of your information, we notify you and provide the contact information for the person who viewed your record. If you submit an operation into RISSafe, no one will know any of the information unless there is a conflict, which then results in all parties being notified. In rare circumstances when an investigation is particularly sensitive, the "no release" category causes us to notify you about an inquiry on your case (including the inquirer's contact information), but we will not notify the inquirer of the hit.

Deconfliction is also not just for drugs. Deconfliction is available for all Part I crimes (robbery, rape, murder, arson, human trafficking, terrorism, etc.). Regardless of your investigative

discipline, everyone needs to participate in deconfliction. As you all know, these various types of investigations often overlap and involve the same suspects.

A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE: SYSTEMS UNITE

There are currently three nationally recognized event deconfliction systems in the United States: the RISS Officer Safety Event Deconfliction System (RISSafe), which was developed and is used by RISS, as well as some of the HIDTAs and other law enforcement partners; and Case Explorer and the Secure Automated Fast Event Tracking Network (SAFETNet), which are used by some HIDTAs. Each of these systems has different users and stakeholders. The systems are not duplicative; rather, they work together to help ensure event deconfliction coverage across the entire United States.

An event deconfliction policy group and a technical working group, composed of representatives from the three systems and other partners, were established, and work began to identify a technical solution, develop policies and procedures, and create educational materials. With direction from this group, the Partner Deconfliction Interface (PDI) was developed. The PDI serves as a pointer (system-to-system) solution. When a submission is made into one of the systems, the PDI enables a query against the two other systems. If a conflict is identified, information regarding that conflict is returned, and notifications are made to the affected officers. The PDI was built using recognized national standards and proven technologies.

WESTERN STATES INFORMATION NETWORK

The Western States Information Network (WSIN) is part of the Regional Information Sharing System (RISS) which encompasses six regions throughout the country. WSIN covers California, Oregon, Washington, Hawaii and Alaska. WSIN also maintains a watch center that is operated 24/7/365 and serves as the backup for all RISS watch centers nationwide. Beyond deconfliction, WSIN also provides analytical services, equipment loans, and intelligence and informational bulletins. WSIN membership is free.

WSIN's region uses RISSafe for event deconfliction. For those of you outside of WSIN's region, visit the Nationwide Officer Safety Event Deconfliction website to learn more about the systems and available resources in your area at *www.ncirc.gov/Deconfliction*.

HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE IN DECONFLICTION?

Access to officer safety deconfliction is free and easy. See the resources box below for further information.

Kent Shaw is the Executive Director of WSIN and represents the RISS directors in the National Deconfliction Policy Group. Shaw is also a lifetime member of CNOA. CNOA
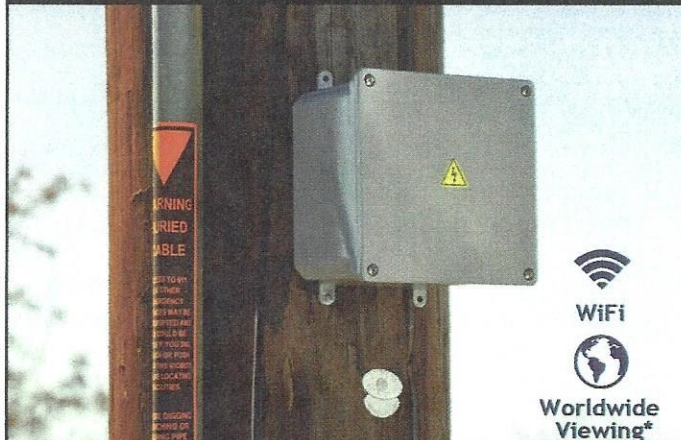

DECONFLICTION RESOURCES

For more information about RISSafe and how to access the officer safety event deconfliction system, visit *www.riss.net/Resources/RISSafe*.

For more information concerning RISSIntel, visit *www.riss.net/Resources/RISSIntel*.

To inquire about WSIN membership, email *info@wsin.riss.net*.